

No. 7

YANKEE COLONIES

**by
Harry Gannes**

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**INTERNATIONAL PAMPHLETS
799 Broadway New York**

PUBLISHERS' NOTE



THIS pamphlet is one of a series prepared under the direction of the Labor Research Association and published by International Pamphlets, 799 Broadway, New York, from whom additional copies may be obtained at 10 cents each. Special rates on quantity orders.

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Printed in the U. S. A. (1930)

COMPOSED AND PRINTED BY UNION LABOR

YANKEE COLONIES

*IMPERIALIST RULE IN THE PHILIPPINES, PORTO RICO,
HAWAII AND OTHER POSSESSIONS*

By HARRY GANNES

WAR AND THE COLONIES

UNMISTAKABLE signs that a new World War is brewing can be seen everywhere. There is the tremendous advance of armaments, stimulated by the pressing need for more world markets. American imperialism is chafing at the bit, desirous of a dash for new colonies. At every step, both in North and South America, British and American imperialism tread on each other's toes.

The entire billion-dollar naval armament scheme passed by Congress following the London Naval Conference revolves around the strategic position of the American colonies. The new cruisers are built to span the distance between the various colonial fortresses speedily in war time.

The axis of the American naval machine is the Panama Canal and the Caribbean area with its flank of war bases. Farther out in the Pacific Ocean, 2,000 miles west of the mainland, lie the Hawaiian Islands, one of the most completely fortified naval bases in the world, and 5,000 miles farther out, the Philippine Islands.

American imperialism maintains in Hawaii a standing army of between 15,000 and 30,000 men at Schofield Barracks. Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, vies with Singapore in its military importance. Hawaii stands at the cross-roads of the Pacific, like a compass, pointing out the most important trade routes to the North, to the South, to the East and to the West.

So vital for American imperialism and its war preparations are the Philippines that Admiral Hilary Jones has declared the

abandonment of the Philippines is "tantamount to abandonment of our ability to protect our interests in the Far East."¹

When the American imperialists and their military leaders discuss trade in the Orient, the starting point is the Philippines. When they talk of war in the Pacific and the Far East, the first line of attack and defense is the Philippines. When the question of tropical raw materials comes up, particularly rubber, eyes are turned first to the Philippines. "The acquisition of these islands," wrote Major General Henry T. Allen, "has bridged the Pacific Ocean for us and has extended the American coast line 7,000 miles across the ocean."²

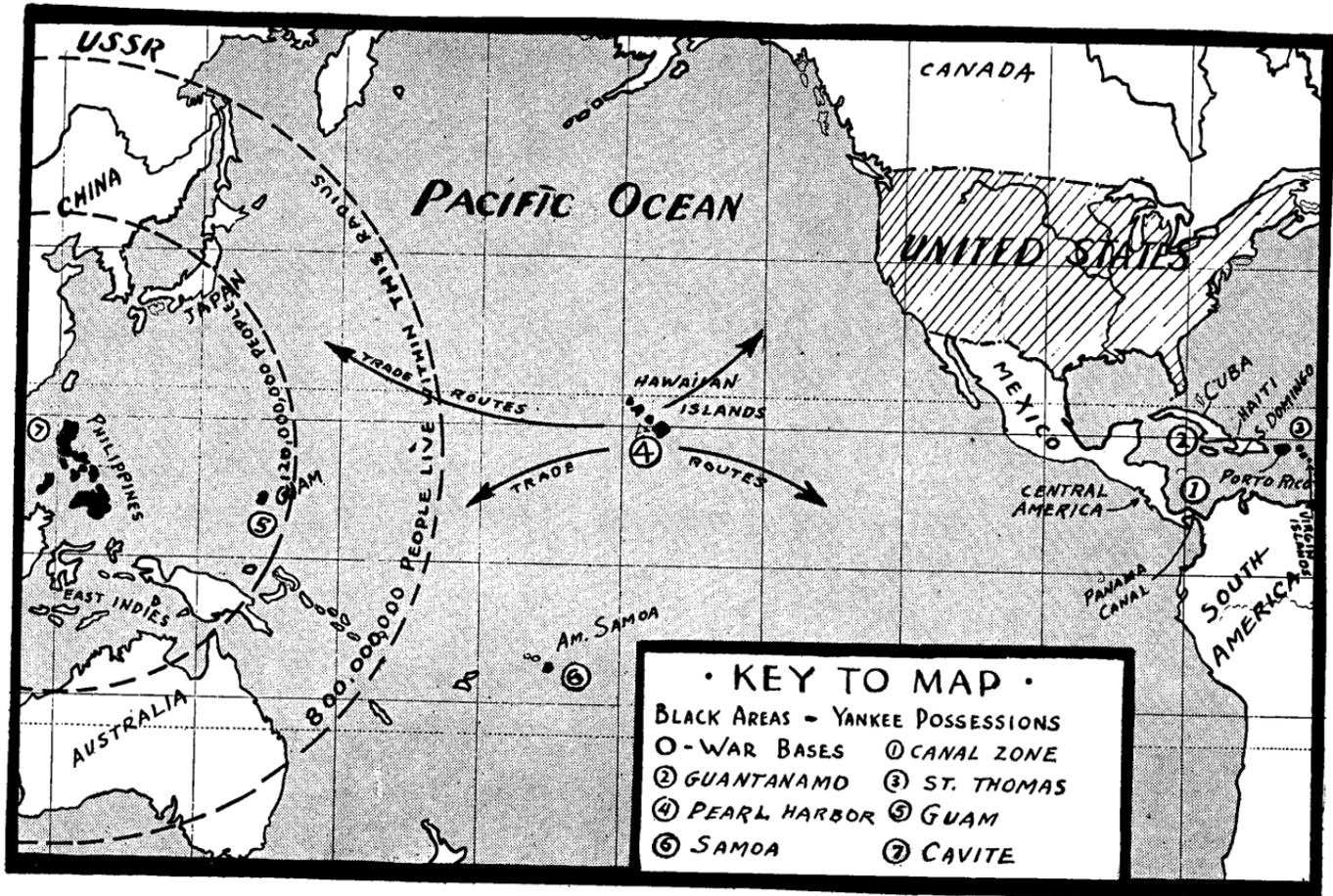
In the present sharpening conflicts of the imperialist powers, the revolutionary uprisings in India, China and Egypt, it is necessary to consider the colonial empire of Wall Street.

Steel Girders of Empire

There are two main types of colonies which imperialism chains to its chariot wheels. Especially in considering American imperialism is this important. Its colonial empire within the so-called independent countries, such as Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti, Santo Domingo, Panama and Mexico, is of far vaster extent than its outright colonies. In these semi-colonial countries the struggle for domination and control is keener, as conflicting imperialist interests are represented.

Yet the outright possessions form the steel girders on which rests colonial penetration. In these outposts of empire are situated the most important naval bases and military stations. They straddle the important trade routes to the South and East. They are in the midst of the scene of future wars. For American imperialism they are the jumping-off places leading to greater prizes in Latin America and in the Orient. An examination of American colonial acquisition and the strategic commercial and military importance of its colonial territory clearly explains this.

The Spanish-American War of 1898 marked the first plunge of the United States into the colonial arena. For many years, the developing forces of imperialism had looked with a covet-



USSR

CANADA

PACIFIC OCEAN

UNITED STATES

CHINA

PHILIPPINES

AUSTRALIA

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

MEXICO

CENTRAL AMERICA

SOUTH AMERICA

100,000,000

200,000,000

400,000,000

800,000,000

PEOPLE LINE

TRADE ROUTES

TRADE ROUTES

CUBA

HAITI

S. DOMINICA

PORTO RICO

PANAMA CANAL

PERU

CHILE

ous eye on Cuba, Hawaii and Central America. At the close of the "war for the liberation of Cuba" the United States grabbed the Philippines, Porto Rico and Guam from Spain.

The vista which opened up to the "pioneer" imperialists was the control of the Caribbean Sea. Here was a vantage point for encroachment upon the vast Latin-American continent. Over 7,000 miles off the Pacific Coast, the seizure of the Philippines had flung the American empire into the front door of Asia.

It now became the aim of the imperialist masters, not only to make of the Caribbean Sea an American lake, but to let the waters of this lake flow through the Isthmus of Panama, via a Wall Street owned canal, and to bridge the Pacific Ocean with Yankee-controlled islands.

A War of Conquest

Before 1898, the older imperialist powers, Great Britain, France and Germany, had partitioned the world among themselves. Over 90 per cent of Africa had been seized; 98 per cent of the island areas of the Pacific; 56 per cent of Asia; all of Australia.

War was the only way open for the acquisition of new territories. Colonies had to be wrested from other powers. Spain owned the colonies most desired by the United States business class. War against Spain was declared. Flimsy pretexts were invented and forgotten in the scramble for greater prizes.

For American imperialism this war was eminently successful. It was a windfall. The immediate objective was Cuba, pearl of the Antilles. As the war developed, other jewels fell, or rather, were pulled into the lap of Wall Street. The Philippines were invaded and held. The Treaty of Paris, signed in December, 1898, at the conclusion of hostilities gave the United States the Philippines, Porto Rico and Guam.

In three instances at least the "independence" of the colonies concerned gave the excuse for grabbing them. Cuba had to be "liberated" from Spain—so it could be shackled with the Platt Amendment. Porto Rico was handed "the banner of

freedom," plus military invasion. And the aspirations of the Filipinos for freedom from Spain were encouraged—so they could obtain Wall Street's blessings.

At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War the Hawaiian Islands were already largely in American hands. A revolution was cooked up by the American residents of the islands. On July 7, 1898, Congress ratified a treaty making Hawaii an American colony. A few days previous, on July 4, 1898, "Independence Day," the Wake Islands, in the direct route from Hawaii to Hongkong were occupied. In 1899, Samoa (Tutuila) became an American possession. Later, in 1917, after long negotiations, and to "save" them from the Kaiser, the Danish West Indies (The Virgin Islands), "the Gibraltar of the Caribbean," was purchased from Denmark.

Thus since 1898 Wall Street had gathered unto itself the following territories and peoples:

U. S. COLONIAL POSSESSIONS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date annexed</i>	<i>Square miles</i>	<i>Population, 1930</i>
Philippines	1898	115,000	13,000,000
Hawaii	1898	6,450	350,000
Porto Rico	1898	3,435	1,500,000
Guam	1898	206	17,000
Wake and Midway Islands	1898	29	Varying naval and military detachments
American Samoa ...	1899	75	9,000
Virgin Islands	1917	133	21,000

THE PHILIPPINES

For many reasons the Philippines are of first importance in studying the dollar colonial empire. They are a veritable gold mine of tropical raw materials. Trade with the Philippines has grown by leaps and bounds. They are the largest and most important of the colonies. While Wall Street holds the Philippines with an iron grasp, the technical, legal status of the Islands has not been fixed. Within the islands the great mass

of people constantly struggle for their independence and have a revolutionary tradition.

The Philippines are situated to the southeast of Asia, with the Pacific Ocean on the north and east, the Celebes Sea on the south and the China Sea on the west. They are 631 nautical miles from the nearest port of China, and 1,306 miles from the nearest Japanese port. The total area of the islands exceeds the combined territory of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware—namely, 115,026 square miles. The Philippine group includes 7,083 islands, most of them small. The most important are the larger islands of Luzon, Mindoro, Samar, Mashbate, Leyte, Panay, Negros, Cebu, Bohol, Paragua, and Mindanao.

Like all other colonial countries, the Philippines are predominantly agricultural. The aim of the American imperialists, of course, is to control the basic products and raw materials and to use the Philippines as a market for manufactured goods.

John M. Switzer, one of the leading imperialists in the Philippines, urging the permanent retention of the islands, makes the following arguments. In 1927, the United States consumed \$2,068,961,000 of tropical and sub-tropical products. This is 15 per cent more than the amount of such products consumed by Great Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Italy and Spain combined. "We must go to the tropical countries for raw tropical products," he goes on, "and in fact we must look to them more and more for an outlet for manufactured products." ³

With the American drive against Manchuria and the preparation for war against the Soviet Union, the Philippines become important to the imperialists for other reasons.* In fact, Major General Henry T. Allen argues: "With Manila as a distributing center Asiatic Russia must receive due consideration. From Kamchatka to the Ural Mountains there are great mineral and agricultural possibilities which may be the storehouse in the coming years for American enterprises." ⁴

The enterprising general insists that the Philippines be held

* See Henry Hall, *War in the Far East* (International Pamphlets).

as a springboard into Russian territory. When mentioning Manila as the "distributing center" he had in mind these facts. Manila is the capital and largest city of the Philippines. It has a population of over 325,000. It is a very important Pacific port. It occupies a commanding position in regard to North Australia, Australasia, French East Indies and Southern China. Within a radius of 1,700 miles, or a distance from Manila to Yokohama, it is estimated that there are 126,000,000 people; while within a larger circle, one of 3,500 miles—a short area in this day of wireless, fast cruisers and airplanes—live nearly 800,000,000 or about one half of the world's population.

"Investments in Patriotism"

The resources of the Philippines have barely been scratched. Their immediate value is great to imperialism, but they come especially within the category referred to by Lenin when he said, "not only are the already discovered sources of raw materials of importance to finance capital, but also the possible sources of such materials. . . ." ⁵

Of 70,000,000 available acres, 9,000,000 are under cultivation. There are between 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 acres of land suitable to rubber cultivation. The chief crops grown in the islands are sugar, hemp, cocoanut oil, copra, tobacco, coffee and rice. It is estimated that there are 200,000,000 board feet of lumber available.

Pointing out that there are 430,000,000 metric tons of high grade iron ore available in the Philippines, H. Foster Bain, an engineer of wide experience in the Orient, in his book *Ores and Industry in the Far East*, declares: "From these figures it is evident that there is available in the Philippine Islands a quantity of iron ore of commercial grade of world importance." Besides, there are 60,000,000 tons of coal.

It was these facts which made Charles Hodges, assistant director, division of Oriental commerce and politics, New York University, exclaim: ⁶

The crux of the situation is the titanic struggle for raw material now being waged by the great industrial powers of the world. . . .

From the standpoint of the Americans on the firing line of this bitter competition in the Orient for the essential products and strategic raw materials, the Philippines seem to mean much to the future of the United States. Rubber, cocoanut oil, hemp, sugar, petroleum become investments in patriotism.

How tightly the Philippines have been geared to the American imperialist machine can again be seen from the fact that during the period 1925-1928, inclusive, 74 per cent of all Filipino exports went to the United States. In turn the United States supplied 60.5 per cent of the imports into the Philippines.

Investments in the Philippines have not developed as rapidly as in other colonies or semi-colonies of Wall Street. It is not that Wall Street is unwilling, or that the petty-bourgeois political leaders of the islands are unsubmitive. In 1926 the Firestone Rubber Co. planned to invest \$500,000,000 in rubber plantations. Ford proposed to invest hundreds of millions, as did the Sieberling rubber interests. But, many years ago the Taft administration was so short-sighted as to sanction a law limiting land holdings. The main object of this law was to wrest the land from the friars who held hundreds of thousands of acres, as well as to assure U. S. government ownership of the vast tracts of uncultivated and unsurveyed territory. It was during the period of "conservation." Measures are now being gradually introduced to get around this early legislation, and thus permit American private exploiters to hold large land areas.

At present the total American investments in the Philippines amount to about \$400,000,000. Nearly \$100,000,000 of this is outstanding in Philippine government bonds officially issued by the U. S. War Department. According to unanimous testimony before the Senate Committee Hearings the War Department guarantees payment. There are over 150 American corporations in the islands with a capital investment of more than \$300,000,000. During 1929, the U. S. Department of Commerce reported that \$9,230,000 went into the Philippines. The total for the year was undoubtedly much greater.

Hypocritical Promises

The struggle for independence of the Philippines dates from more than a century before the American occupation in 1898. In the latter year the situation was critical. Spanish domination was being weakened. The money masters of the United States and their government, then headed by President McKinley, obtained the islands under the pretense to the Filipino people that what really was intended was not the acquisition of the Philippines by the United States, but the attainment of independence of the islands. A more ruthless, brutal, lying conquest has seldom been recorded. Moorfield Storey and Marcial P. Lichauco in their book, *The Conquest of the Philippines*, tell the history of American intrigues, invasion and wholesale slaughter in all its lurid details. Every known subterfuge was used to enslave the Filipino masses—bribery, stirring them to rebellion, promises and finally bloody suppression.

There has been no greater hypocrisy and sham than the United States "promise" of independence for the Philippines. It is exceeded only by the fashion in which the Filipino misleaders have led the masses to rely on the "good faith" of American intentions.

This promise of independence to the Filipino masses, under the administration of Wilson, was written into law. The Jones Law, passed by Congress in 1916, says: ". . . it has always been the purpose of the people of the United States to withdraw their sovereignty over the Philippine Islands and to recognize their independence."

The ever-widening path of the American colonial empire is paved with just such "intentions."

But what has actually happened? Every act of the Yankee imperialist government, since the day of the passage of the Jones Law, has been to rivet tighter the bonds that tie the Philippines to Wall Street.

Will independence ever be "granted" to the Philippines, a territory of the United States, by those imperialist rulers who

enslave such so-called "independent" countries as Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama, Santo Domingo, Mexico?

The Traitors

A new stage has been reached in the Philippines in the struggle for independence. With the penetration of American investments, the rapid development of foreign trade with the United States, and the impoverishment of the Filipino peasants and workers, new class forces have changed the entire character of the independence movement.

Under American rule, those who have benefited from collaboration with the imperialist rulers are the Filipino businessmen, rich land owners and lawyers. It is this class that dominates the Filipino government.

In the early days of the agitation against American imperialism, the two leading political parties in the islands, the Nationalista and the Democrata, carried on a vague but determined struggle for independence. Even to-day both these parties *formally* request "complete, absolute, and immediate independence from the United States." The real purpose of this demand is to get the votes of the masses who desire independence above all else.

But nothing is further from the minds of the present leaders of these parties. Manuel Quezon, Manuel Roxas, Sergio Osmena, Pedro Guevera, Pedro Gil, and others regard the Wall Street government as their loyal friend. They are all embryo Machados, Chiang Kai Sheks, or Ortiz Rubios.

During the hearings before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, beginning January 15, 1930, the Filipino members of the Independence Commission vied with each other in declaring their abject loyalty to the United States.

Pedro Guevera, speaking for his class brothers in the Philippines, assured the American Senators of their "undying faith and loyalty" to American "history and traditions." For the Philippines this "history and tradition" meant that in the island of Luzon alone 600,000 men, women and children had

been slaughtered by American soldiers or died as the result of the Wall Street war.⁷

Kow-towing to the Senate

Manuel Roxas, the leader of the Commission, kow-towed even lower. "We feel that it is the desire of America," he said, "to remain in the Philippines so long—and only so long—as she can be useful to the islands." To prove his loyalty to American finance-capital, and to assure it that in the next war of conquest the Filipino bourgeoisie can be counted on to "do their bit," Roxas recalled the proffered help in the last World War. "We organized a regiment of 25,000 Filipinos and offered it to the President of the United States for actual service. . . . Our loyalty and gratefulness cannot be doubted."⁸

Some time before the meeting of the Committee, Manuel Quezon, who was to head the Commission but conveniently remained at home, cabled Roxas that he should under no circumstances antagonize the chairman of the Senate Committee, Hiram Bingham. The attitude of Bingham toward the Philippines is epitomized in his statements at the Committee hearing, when he said:

Do you think the American people would have paid \$20,000,000 for something that they knew they were going to give up in such a short time? Is that the way we do things? When we paid Russia \$7,000,000 for Alaska, did we have any intention of giving up that territory? When we got the Louisiana Purchase from France for \$15,000,000, did we have any intention of giving that up? Similarly, there is nothing in the debates with regard to the Philippines to show that we are just handing over that amount to Spain as a gift for territory we did not propose to keep.⁹

Bingham speaks for Hoover. Hoover is American imperialism incarnate. Quezon urged his cohorts to cultivate the friendship of this man who blankly declares U. S. imperialism bought the Philippines with its 13,000,000 people for \$20,000,000 and that it is now as much a part of the United States as Louisiana.

From nearly every source, including former associates in the struggle for independence, and outright imperialists who

have close contact with the leaders of the Democrata and Nationalista parties, the unmistakable conclusion is that the Filipino business interests and landowners *dread* independence. Their mechanical petitioning for freedom is merely to befog the masses of Filipino workers and peasants.

Nicholas Roosevelt, New York *Times* writer and author of several vicious books on the Philippines, has been a close confidant of the Filipino leaders. His open stand against independence and his friendship with the Filipino leaders earned him the appointment of Vice-Governor, but he was forced to resign in the face of mass protest before even going to the islands. An account of the Senate Committee hearings states: "In confidential talks with Filipino leaders in the island, Mr. Roosevelt said that he found many of them did not believe independence advisable."¹⁰

This is verified by John M. Switzer, an imperialist who has lived in the islands for thirty years. He assures his fellow-exploiters that "for the past year or so, an era of good feeling has grown up, and if any requests were made for independence, it was merely on principle,—perfunctory."

Why the Change?

The whole drift of the leaders of the stripe of Quezon, Roxas, Osmena, Gil, Guevera and Osias, and the class forces in the Philippines they represent, has been felt by the capitalist press in the United States. The New York *World* made it the subject of a leading editorial in which it points out:

The absence of Manuel Quezon, former president of the Philippine Senate, from this (independence) delegation has attracted attention. . . . His failure to accompany the new delegation may possibly reflect the change of attitude which is reported to have taken place on the part of the Filipino leaders toward the nationalist movement.¹¹

Why the change? At first the exploiting class in the Philippines believed they could profit most by bleeding the Filipino masses without foreign "aid." They have learned that with efficient American methods more can be squeezed from the workers and peasants. True, a large share goes to the imperial-

ists. But there is always room for bargaining. In fact, Ludwell Denny, in his book, *America Conquers Britain*, tells us that this "change of attitude of the Filipino leaders" is motivated by the desire for "large scale American capital exploitation of their islands *provided they* [the Filipino bourgeoisie] *personally* shared the profits." (My emphasis.—*H. G.*) Also the United States is their principal market and they do not want to see it closed by a tariff barrier.

And to settle the whole matter of the real policy of these Filipino leaders we need quote only a few lines from a letter written in 1928 by former Congressman Clyde H. Tavenner to the All-America Anti-Imperialist League.

Tavenner is the editor of the *Philippine Republic*. For over ten years he has had close connections with every Filipino politician who visited Washington. This is his estimate of their intentions:

The Filipino leaders . . . are aligned with the powerful American forces opposing independence. The Filipino people desire independence without a question, in my judgment, but the leaders do not seek more freedom for the masses, but only more freedom and power for themselves to serve those interests that exploit the masses.

Throughout Asia the masses are becoming increasingly revolutionary. In India, China, and Egypt, the tide of revolt surges on. Powerful reverberations are felt in the Philippines. The demands for independence intensify. Realizing the danger to American imperialism, the Filipino misleaders frantically ask for a settlement of the final relation of the Philippines to the United States. The last thing they want is independence. They desire a definite determination of the status of the Philippine Islands as a part of the American business empire. They know this would be more profitable to them than independence and the consequent revolutionary demands of the workers and peasants. Roxas made this very clear in his speech before the Senate Committee, when he pleaded that

The indefiniteness and uncertainty of the status of the islands is *preventing the investment of capital*, hindering the development of the

country, and greatly paralyzing progress. Former Governor-General Stimson recognized this fact when he said in his report for 1924: There is "hesitancy of foreign capital to enter the islands while their future political status is deemed to be uncertain."¹² (*Italics mine.—H. G.*)

Words—and Deeds

Independence is being less and less spoken about in the Philippines by these bourgeois politicians. But the struggle is being taken up with more determination by the workers and peasants who see the double danger of increased imperialist exploitation in which Filipino rich landowners and business men will participate. Not only has the desire for "coöperation" with Wall Street assumed the form of an underhanded fight against liberation, but it has translated itself into concrete laws passed by the Filipino legislature. The following are a few recent measures passed by the Filipino bourgeois politicians to strengthen the imperialist stranglehold:

1. The land laws have been revised to facilitate the entry of American capital. In order to aid corporations, especially rubber and sugar plantations, the law limiting holdings to 2,500 acres has been set aside.

2. An American financier is to be appointed superintendent of banking, which gives Wall Street practically a financial dictatorship.

3. An act was passed making the Philippine tariff on tobacco automatically conform to the American tariff on tobacco, thus preventing the possibility of any Sumatran or other form of wrapper tobacco gaining a cheaper entrance into the American market by way of the Philippines. This is of advantage to the American tobacco trust.

4. Important shipping laws have been enacted in the interest of the Dollar Steamship Co., an American concern.

5. Radio and long-distance telephone franchises have been given to the American power trust controlled by the House of Morgan.

Many other laws, giving advantages to American capitalists in the Philippines, have been passed.

Sugar, Tariff and Independence

Agitation for independence has more recently come from hybrid sources in the United States. It all rests on a very shifty basis—sugar and cocoanut oil. American imperialism has a sure cure for this temporary love of liberty, whenever it wants to use it. A tariff is all that is necessary.

The National Grange, the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Dairy Union, spokesmen of the rich farmers in this country, have come forward with what they term a plea for Filipino independence. This is sheer nonsense. The wealthy farm organizations wholeheartedly favor the imperialist policy of the United States.

These so-called agrarian groups are not dominated by farmers. They do not express the will of the American farmers. They are controlled by the big banks which are the chief exploiters of the farmers.

The sugar beet corporations in the United States, having been defeated in their attempts to raise the duty on Cuban sugar to the level of other foreign countries, now retaliate by mouthing phrases about independence for the Philippines. There is method in this madness. The talk of "independence" by these farm organizations and beet sugar corporations is a threat by which they hope to get tariff laws passed against Filipino sugar and cocoanut oil. They want to protect the American beet sugar growers in their exploitation of child labor.

Chester H. Gray of the American Farm Bureau Federation, testifying before the Senate Committee, 1930, admitted that their talk about Filipino independence was a subterfuge. He said:

This question of independence, as I have intimated first in this hearing this morning, *comes to us as a secondary solution of a primal condition which we wanted solved by adequate rates of duty on Philippine products.*¹³ (Italics mine.—H. G.)

A. M. Loomis, secretary of the National Dairy Union blurted out: "I am speaking, first, in behalf of a tariff." He

did not want to be mistaken for one insisting on independence. All the farm champions of independence boiled their sudden love of independence for an enslaved people down to the more practical matter of tariff regulations.

The most vicious attitude toward the Filipino masses, under the guise of the demand for independence, is that of the American Federation of Labor. It embodies the same spirit of race hatred that the employers deliberately foster to set the workers against each other. It was this type of agitation, vigorously propagated by the A. F. of L., that led to the California race riots in January, 1930, resulting in the death of a Filipino worker and injury to scores of others. Repeated resolutions have been passed by the A. F. of L. national conventions asking for Philippine "independence." The basis of the resolution is that the immigration of Filipino workers to the United States constitutes a "cancer in American private and public life."¹⁴ The same resolution refers in like words to Mexican, Negro and Japanese workers. What the A. F. of L. leaders desire is not independence for the Philippines, but exclusion and deportation of all Filipinos from the United States.

Workers and Peasants

While the Filipino petty-bourgeois leaders draw closer and closer to Wall Street, the masses become more militant in their fight for independence. The Filipino workers and peasants have always been the backbone of the century-old battle for freedom.

In the Philippines Dr. José Rizal is glorified as the Filipino George Washington. He was just that—leader of the rising bourgeoisie. The real leader, however, was Andreas Bonifacio, founder of the Katipunan, the political and insurrectionary organization that struck the successful blow for independence from Spanish tyranny. It was composed mainly of workers and peasants. Bonifacio himself was a laborer. He made a life-long study of the class struggle in all countries. He was an indomitable revolutionist.

Bonifacio organized the workers for revolution, while Rizal

and his followers spun fine phrases. The Katipunan was composed of workers, regardless of race or creed. It was the vital force that led the Filipino masses in their early struggles against Spain, and later against American imperialism.

Andreas Bonifacio was deliberately assassinated at the order of General Aguinaldo, petty-bourgeois commandant of the insurgent forces. The murder of Bonifacio cleared the way for Aguinaldo's betrayal of the Filipino revolution to the American masters. Aguinaldo is still alive. To-day he openly espouses the imperialist cause. He was a close collaborator of General Leonard Wood, whose rule in the Philippines even the other betrayers could not stomach. Aguinaldo has now made an alliance with Quezon, Osmena and Roxas because their line now fully agrees with his.

The spirit of the Katipunan and of Andreas Bonifacio is not dead in the Philippines. With the constant increase in the number of landless peasants and exploited proletarians, there is arising a revolutionary force that is now taking the leadership in the struggle for immediate, unconditional independence of the Philippines, and the establishment of a Soviet Republic.

The great majority of the Filipino people are peasants. Most of them live in peonage. The average land holding of the Filipino peasant is three acres. In most instances this is heavily mortgaged to the rapacious landlords. There has been a rapid growth of tenant farmers. From 1903 to 1918, under American protection to the money-lenders and rich landowners, the number of tenant farmers increased from 658,500 to 1,520,000. Share-croppers increased, during the same period, from 132,400 to 257,000. Besides, there are millions of wage-earning farm laborers in the islands. Their wages average 35 cents a day.

Filipino rich landlords, called *caciques*, usually contrive to involve their tenants and laborers in debt. These tenants and laborers cannot leave their employment until the debt has been paid. The interest rates are huge—from 10 to 20 per cent a month. As a result, millions are in virtual slavery, peonage.

In 1912, the Philippine Commission, controlled by American

members, agreed to an act which imposed a fine or imprisonment upon farm laborers who attempted to get away from usurious payment. A prison sentence was imposed on any peasant laborer who deserted his job to escape peonage.

While the Philippine Legislature repealed this law in December, 1927, the system still remains with all its ramifications.

The peasants are being driven off their land to make way for the big American corporations. During 1929 in the Province of Bataan, 500 peasants were evicted. In Rizal and Laguna, 1,000 and 3,000 respectively were driven off their land. At Pililla, Rizal, a large tract of public land which was the sole means of livelihood for 400 poor peasants was sold, on the order of the Filipino bourgeois politicians.

American imperialism constantly stirs up divisions between the Moros, who are Mohammedans inhabiting the Southern Islands of the Philippines, just as the British inspire cleavages between the Hindu and Mohammedan Indians. During the agitation of the rubber trusts for wholesale penetration into the Philippines, the Bacon Bill was introduced in Congress providing for a splitting up of the Philippines, so that Mindanao, largely inhabited by Moros, could be torn away from the rest of the Philippines and American domination tightened.

Growth of the Filipino Proletariat

According to the last Filipino census, in 1918, there were 865,698 persons engaged in manufacturing and in construction and repair work. Since then, this number has grown to at least 1,000,000. More than half a million workers are employed in the various industries. They work from 9 to 12 hours a day for an average wage of 60 cents.

Imperialism constantly boasts of its "achievements." But even so loyal a friend of the United States as Manuel Roxas is forced to admit that the Philippine workers' earnings are barely equal to what they were under the Spanish régime. "Everybody intimately acquainted with the life of a Filipino laborer," he writes, "knows that if he is to depend exclusively on his earnings to support himself and his family, his difficul-

ties are greater to-day than they were thirty years ago.”¹⁵

Rafael Palma, president of the University of the Philippines, declares that “the great rank and file of our citizens lead a life of abject poverty, of penury. . . . The morrow is ever to them a question mark and a constant worry. To see people under-nourished and poorly clad is a common sight in our barrios.”¹⁶

Unions and Peasant Leagues

In June, 1927, the leading central body of labor unions in the Philippines, the *Congressa Obrera Filipinas*, affiliated to the revolutionary Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. At its national congress in Manila, May 1st, 1929, a revolutionary demonstration for Filipino independence was organized, in which over 50,000 workers participated. A split was inspired by the business interests and led by their labor lieutenants, Tejada and Balmori, who opposed a militant class program and affiliation to the Pan-Pacific Secretariat. The great majority of the workers withdrew and formed the Proletarian Labor Congress. It stands for an unrelenting revolutionary struggle against imperialism, together with the workers of all countries.

Because of its revolutionary program, the rich landowners engineered a split on December 1-2, 1928, in the Philippine National Confederation of Peasants. All sorts of fake peasants leagues have been organized by the business element to win the peasants away from the revolutionary leadership of the Philippine National Confederation. The latest grouping, the “Palihang Bayan,” was organized by the leaders of the bourgeois political parties and the native business class. It is a non-dues paying organization whose sole aim is to kill the growing influence of the revolutionary peasants organization.

Besides, there is an active section of the League Against Imperialism in the Philippines, which is constantly hounded by the Governor-General. There is also a Young Workers' League. The workers and peasants are responding to the revolutionary message of these organizations.

All these revolutionary organizations in the Philippines are constantly being persecuted both by the Governor-General and the Filipino boss class. The Governor-General has gone so far as to deny these organizations and their leaders all mailing rights.

PACIFIC NAVAL BASES

Since the close of the World War, American imperialism has rushed the building of its war bases in the Pacific Ocean. In the Philippines, **Cavite** is an important naval station and base. The three other main island possessions of Wall Street in the Pacific, **Hawaii**, **Guam** and **Samoa**, form a triangle in the mid-Pacific, within which center the Far Eastern war plans of the American imperialists. A good part of the billion dollar naval appropriation, the outcropping of the London Naval Conference, will go to extending their fortifications.

In his book, *Sea Power in the Pacific*, H. C. Bywater refers to these war bases in the Pacific as "the finest strategical positions imaginable." With this chain of naval bases fortified in accordance with the nearly completed plans, Bywater points out that they permit Wall Street to wage war "with the whole of its available resources."

Guam, 1,500 miles East of the Philippines, is economically unimportant. But in war preparations it looms large. It is to American imperialist interests in the Far East what Malta is to the British in the Mediterranean. Work is under way to increase the fortifications in Guam. As a result, the United States navy will achieve greater effectiveness in its war preparations. In 1920 the Secretary of the Navy reported that "the project for the development of Guam as a naval base in accordance with the announced policy of the Navy Department is progressing." At the Washington Naval Conference, 1922, plans were apparently modified. But in secret these war preparations go ahead full blast.

American Samoa, further to the south, near Australia, is also being fortified and improved for the coming imperialist war. In Guam, as well as in American Samoa, powerful radio

stations have been erected by the Navy Department. Huge oil storage tanks have been installed in Cavite, Philippines; Guam and American Samoa. In the drive for world markets and for more colonies, and in war plans against the Soviet Union, these war bases are the spearhead.

The most completely equipped base in the Pacific, however, is at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Development of this base has been steadily progressing since 1920. At the present time it has a large naval dry dock and repair shops; a naval air station at Ford Island; two thousand feet of reinforced concrete wharfage; a large oil supply depot; a radio station; an ammunition depot and a submarine base. A marine reservation is maintained near the base. Extensive fortifications and defenses are maintained by the War Department. Battleships and airplane carriers of the *Maryland* and *Lexington* class can be docked at Pearl Harbor and, in the event of war, can be repaired by the naval station force.

Many years before the final annexation of the Hawaiian Islands they had been the object of American penetration. By the time Congress passed the act for annexation, the sugar trusts had already secured the most valuable lands.

The Hawaiian Islands—the cross-roads of the Pacific—are twenty in number, of which nine are inhabited. They lie in the North Pacific Ocean, 2,000 miles from the nearest mainland.

Sugar growing and pineapple canning are the leading industries. Both are completely in the grasp of finance-capital. Over \$175,000,000 is invested in the Hawaiian sugar industry. The yield per acre is larger than in any other country. About 900,000 long tons are produced annually. There are 45,000 workers employed on the sugar plantations, shipped to Hawaii mainly from the Philippines under contract. Their conditions are little short of slavery. Wages are low and hours are long.

The second largest industry is the growing and canning of pineapples. The capital investment exceeds \$30,000,000, controlled by American corporations. Over 11,000 workers are employed in the canneries and fields.

The Federal Government maintains its largest army post

on the islands. Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, has quarters for 30,000 men.

American "civilization" has practically wiped out the native Hawaiian race. When the islands were first discovered in 1778, there were 200,000 Hawaiians. Bibles and syphilis spread like a plague and American domination hastened the race murder. In the 1925 census there were only 21,145 native Hawaiians left.

THE IRON CHAIN OF THE ANTILLES

Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands are vital links in the iron chain of the Antilles. The Caribbean area, gateway to Latin America, is a valuable source of raw material as well as a rich market for American imperialism. It is more important, however, as a war base and a wedge in the heart of Latin America. However, the great economic importance of Cuba, which has \$1,500,000,000 of U. S. capital invested in it, cannot be overlooked.

Cuba, Santo Domingo, Haiti, Porto Rico, the Virgin Islands are really a unit. Wall Street dominates throughout, and makes little distinction between actual possession, protectorate or semi-colony. Under the Platt Amendment and with the rapid penetration of U. S. capital into Cuba, that country, the largest island of the Antilles group, is in many ways more completely a colony than, for instance, Porto Rico, an outright possession. Guantanamo, Cuba, is the leading American war base in the Antilles.*

Porto Rico is a comparatively small island, covering 3,435 square miles. It is about a hundred miles long and 35 miles wide. However, it is the most thickly populated of the Caribbean Islands, with over 1,500,000 people. About 73 per cent are white and the remaining 27 per cent Negro.

At precisely the time when the Porto Rican people, through repeated rebellions, had wrested a modicum of autonomy from

* The colonies and semi-colonies not treated in this pamphlet are included in another pamphlet in this series under the title, *The Fight for Latin America*, by Henry Hall (International Pamphlets).

Spain in 1898, the American fleet began to bombard San Juan, the capital and chief city. In July, 1898, an American force took possession of the island. In the customary fashion Major-General Nelson A. Miles, commander of the conquering forces, issued a proclamation asserting that the American troops had "come bearing the banner of freedom."

The Foraker Act, passed by the United States in 1900, provided for a Porto Rican legislature, and an American dictator, to be known as the Governor. The form of government under the Foraker Act was much more reactionary than the legislative rule granted by Spain, in 1898.

An inferior sort of third-class American citizenship was conferred on the Porto Ricans by the Jones-Shaffroth Act, adopted by the U. S. Congress March 2, 1917. The Porto Rican currency had already been changed to U. S. currency, with great profit to American bankers; and in the same fashion the Porto Ricans were "transferred" into American citizens, with no added rights except to vote for 19 members of an Insular Senate which is completely under the thumb of the Governor-General, appointed by the President of the United States. Even the elections are under the scrutinizing eye of a General Superintendent of the Insular Board of Elections, chosen by the American government.

The Governor-Generalship of Porto Rico is a particularly juicy plum for the political protégés of the capitalist party that happens to be in power in Washington. In addition to a yearly salary of \$10,000, paid by the U. S. Government, he receives from the Porto Rican legislature an annuity of \$25,000 to cover "incidental expenses." Besides, he is furnished, rent free, a magnificent palace and grounds; and the legislature chips in for the payment of whatever servants are needed to maintain him in his accustomed standards of luxury. An automobile is also provided for his "excellency" at the expense of the starving masses.

"The banner of freedom," borne into Porto Rico with the support of bayonets and cannon fire has resulted in the impoverishment of the great mass of Porto Rican people. Over

80 per cent of the Porto Ricans depend on agriculture for a livelihood.

The big American sugar and tobacco corporations have dispossessed the Porto Rican peasants, grinding them down to the lowest depths of poverty and disease.

Over 95 per cent of the best lands have fallen into the hands of the Yankee invaders. The poor peasants have been expelled from their lands and are forced to go to the mountains if they want to cultivate the earth for their bread. Or they are forced to become farm laborers or factory workers. How rapidly the Porto Rican peasants have been reduced to the starvation level can be seen from the fact that while in 1910 there were 58,371 peasant proprietors, to-day there are less than 25,000.

Wall Street Walks In

Instead of raising the necessary food crops to feed the people, American imperialism has transformed Porto Rico into a sugar-producing factory. Over 90 per cent of the exports go to the United States. American sugar corporations have over \$54,000,000 invested in Porto Rico and own thousands of acres of the richest lands. There are outstanding over \$35,000,000 in Porto Rican bonds held in the United States. Besides, all the railroads and public utilities are owned by American corporations.

Porto Rico is thus completely in the grasp of American imperialism politically and economically.

The United States Army has a 999-year "lease" on a large tract of land at **San Geronimo**. This is a base for winter war maneuvers, as well as a station for marines who are shipped to various points in Central and Latin America whenever Wall Street interests require their presence there.

When Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., became governor of Porto Rico early in 1930, he was forced to admit in a public statement that the great majority of the people suffered from malnutrition—starvation. On September 13, 1930, he reported that conditions were worsening for the masses. In 1928, Dr.

Cayetano Coll y Toste, a prominent Porto Rican, in a letter to President Coolidge spoke of the Porto Rican worker and peasant as "one of the most unfortunate beings in the world." His food, he said, "is only putrid salt meat, codfish filled with rotten red spots and Indian rice."

A great many are denied even these luxuries by the constant encroachments of the big sugar and tobacco corporations.

A recent statement by the American Red Cross declared that in Porto Rico 242,292 persons were in immediate need of food to keep from starving to death; 22,868 were practically naked; 32,526 families could not pay rent for their rotten dwellings; and 129,514 required immediate medical attention.

American imperialists like to blame the hurricane of September, 1928, for the inescapable fact that the conditions of the Porto Rican workers and peasants are constantly sinking to lower depths. This is the best excuse they can find. But no greater hurricane ever hit Porto Rico than when the imperialist forces landed, and were followed by the long reach of the big banks.

Not only does Porto Rico have to ship out most of its agrarian products, but it is forced to import a large part of its foodstuffs from the United States. These come in at tremendously high prices. Wages for farm laborers, tobacco factory and other workers in Porto Rico average from 25 to 60 cents a day. It requires at least \$2.00 a day to keep above the starvation level.¹⁷

Iglesias—the Socialist

Porto Rico has a Socialist Party, which is as much an aid to American imperialism as the British Labor Party is to British imperialism. Santiago Iglesias heads the Socialist Party. Among his other functions for Wall Street are Spanish-secretaryship of the Pan-American Federation of Labor, and head of the Porto Rican Federation of Labor, which is under the thumb of William Green and Matthew Woll of the American Federation of Labor.

The Socialist Party stands for closer alliance with the

United States and final incorporation of Porto Rico as a state. The Socialist Party has made election alliances with the Pure Republican Party, which has in its ranks many exploiters of labor, rich farmers and even bankers.

With the coalition of the two leading parties, the Republican and the Unionist, the Socialist Party has become the second leading party in the island. It is a useful tool to the big U. S. corporations, and attempts to keep the workers passive with their worsening lot.

There is also a Nationalist or Independence Party, which carries on a half-hearted struggle for the type of "independence" which Cuba has obtained.

The leading political grouping, which invariably supports the American dictator, is an alliance between the Unionist and Republican Parties.

A Communist Party is being formed in Porto Rico, to carry on a relentless struggle for the absolute, immediate and complete independence of Porto Rico from American imperialism. One of the main tasks of the Communists is to fight against the traitorous rôle of Iglesias and the Socialist Party who, through the instrumentality of the Pan-American Federation of Labor, help American imperialism not only in Porto Rico, but throughout Latin America.

THE VIRGIN ISLANDS—A WAR BASE

The Virgin Islands, which are just to the East of Porto Rico, were purchased by the United States from Denmark in 1917 for \$25,000,000. The purpose of the purchase was to add a strong link to the chain of war bases in the Caribbean. The value of these small islands to the United States is mainly military. With the purchase of the islands came the domination of 26,000 people, who are ruled by the Navy Department.

There are three main islands, St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John. These islands were discovered by Columbus on his second voyage in 1493. They were first settled by Danes. A wide-spread slave trade was developed. The population to-day

remains predominantly Negro. American imperialist domination has transferred to the Virgin Islands the same treatment for the Negroes that it metes out to the Negroes in the United States. They are ruled with an iron hand by a naval governor appointed by the President of the United States. All efforts by the people to attain civil government for the islands have been defeated.

After their acquisition Senator Kenyon said that the Virgin Islands were not purchased as an "investment" but as a war base. "St. Thomas," he declared, "and its harbor is the strongest and most easily fortified spot in the West Indies. It can be made for us both an impregnable fortress and a valuable commercial and shipping station."¹⁸

A marine corps detachment is stationed permanently at St. Thomas, and the commandant of the naval station is in charge of all naval activities in the Porto Rico-Virgin Islands area.

In the Caribbeans the British have important naval bases at Jamaica, Trinidad, British Honduras and Bermuda. The island of Jamaica, commanding the approach of the Panama Canal is of greater strategic importance than the other British bases, and the British have been scouting for other important airplane bases near the Panama Canal in preparation for the fast developing war between these two imperialist powers.

Nor is American imperialism slow in constantly building up its war machine in the Canal Zone, which is an outright U. S. possession. Panama proper, which once was a part of Colombia, is the creation of an American-inspired "revolution" engineered for the sole purpose of turning over the Canal Zone to the United States. Around \$25,000,000 a year is spent for military upkeep and fortification of the Canal. Over \$113,127,000 had been spent by 1928 for fortifications alone.

WAR DANGER AND THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Wall Street is looking for other island sites for naval bases. For some time negotiations have been under way with the

puppet governments of Colombia and Ecuador looking to the transfer to the United States of important islands in the Atlantic and Pacific approaches to the Panama Canal.

Why is there such speed-up in Wall Street's war preparations? Why the rapid improvement of old war bases and the frenzied quest for a new fortified Atlantic-Pacific Canal?

There is a drive for markets now going on among all the imperialist powers. During the first seven months of 1930, American exports dropped 30 per cent. The home market in the United States is rapidly shrinking. The United States and the British Empire battle for control of the markets in all Latin-American countries, particularly in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Hand in hand with the struggle for world markets goes the tremendous rise in armaments.

In China, Egypt, India and Africa the United States exploiters are extending their foreign markets at the expense of their British rivals. The "unthinkable" war, in fact, is inevitable.

Hence the colonial bases are being strengthened and made ready for war.

The interest of the colonial masses is tied up with that of the workers and poor farmers in the United States. For the workers here are exploited by the same business class that profits by the subjugation of the colonial peoples.

To further swell these profits of imperialism, thousands of Latin-American workers are induced to come to this country by steamship companies, under false promises of good wages and wonderful conditions. Once here they soon find that they are intensively exploited; they are forced to work for the lowest wages—if they can find jobs; and they face race discrimination and lynching. The employers stir up race hatred in order to divide the American, Latin-American and Filipino workers. In California this has resulted in race riots in which Filipinos were brutally murdered. More bitterly exploited even than the American workers, the colonial workers here find that their interests are identical, and their enemies the same. They learn that the struggle against imperialism in

the United States as in the colonies is a struggle against the imperialist masters.

In the Philippines and Porto Rico the fight for independence, led by the class-conscious and militant workers and peasants, is breaking away from the grasp of the petty-bourgeois tools of imperialism.

To unite the efforts of all forces fighting imperialism, the Anti-Imperialist League has been organized in Latin America, the Philippines, Porto Rico and the United States. It carries on a vigorous campaign among the American workers, as well as among the colonial peoples toward the goal of real independence for all Yankee colonies. The national office of the League is in New York City. Recognizing that the battle against imperialism is world wide, it is affiliated to the International League Against Imperialism.

Independence will never be "granted" to the colonies. It must be fought for. It will be wrested from the imperialists by a united front of the workers in the United States, fighting against their owning class, together with the millions of exploited Filipino, Porto Rican and Hawaiian workers.

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For more details on the labor movement in the Philippines, see past and current issues of the *Pan Pacific Monthly*, Workers' Library Publishers, New York.

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