

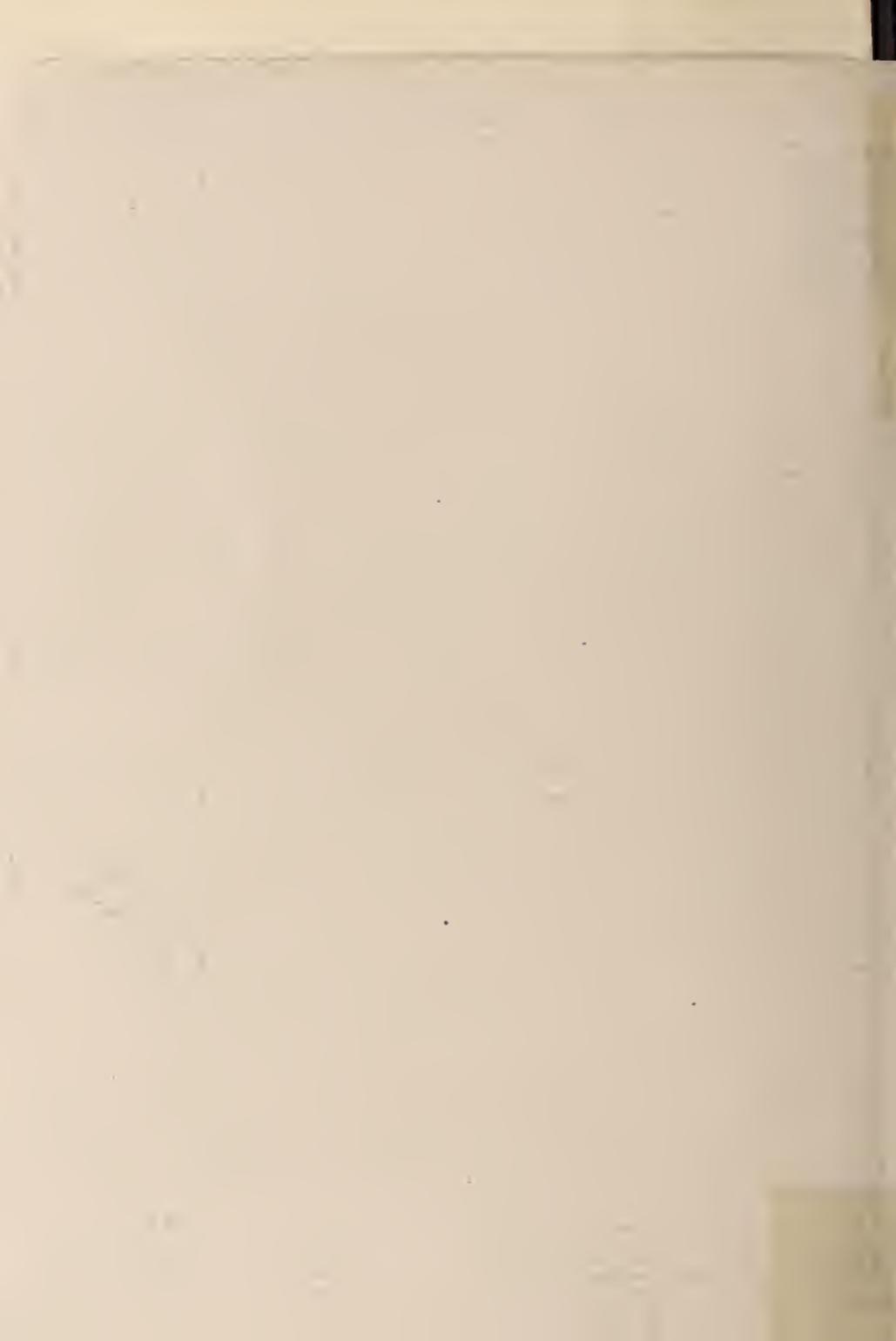
WORLD RECONSTRUCTION PAPERS—No. 9

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New Days  
For the Philippines

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## NEW DAYS FOR THE PHILIPPINES

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The vital relationship between America's experiment in the Philippines and the transactions about the peace table in Paris should not be overlooked. America's championship of the rights of the smaller nations is based not upon theory, but upon the actual achievements of upwards of two decades in dealing with Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines.

In some sense it was the logical development of one of the principles of Secretary John Hay's far eastern diplomacy, "the non-spoliation of subject peoples." A fairly well authenticated story is told of John Hay's student days at Brown which may perhaps have a bearing upon the enlightened Christian policy inaugurated by America in the Far East of which he was the protagonist. It seems that while Hay was at college a young man from the country by the name of Gordon entered the freshman class. Gordon was headed for the ministry, and in the amiable fashion of the undergraduate body the boys of the sophomore class descended upon his dormitory

one day to take a rise out of him. Placing him upon the table they insisted that he should preach them a sermon. Gordon, who was possessed of a ready wit, proceeded to do so and chose for his text: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves." The appropriateness of the text was recognized at once and in the melee which followed, it was John Hay who rushed to Gordon's aid in beating off the young bandits.

The interesting thing about the story is that while John Hay became one of America's foremost diplomats, Adoniram Judson Gordon developed into a missionary leader of world-wide influence. It is a fair question whether the association of those early days may not have furnished, at least in some measure, the Christian impulse which dictated in later days Hay's oft-quoted trilogy of diplomatic principles in dealing with the Far East: "the open door in China, the non-partition of China and the non-spoliation of subject peoples."

Following Hay's enlightened lead the same principles were summed up in ex-President Taft's Philippine policy, which might be expressed in the phrase "the little brown brother." By and large, America has faithfully carried out this policy to date. Working side by side with the Filipinos themselves American educators, missionaries and government officials have given of their best in guidance and support, gradually relinquishing the leadership, un-

til today the Philippine government service is almost entirely Filipinized. It is this demonstration of fair dealing and good faith which has given America a position of moral leadership which she is now displaying in the post-war settlements and reconstruction plans.

But the task of America in the Philippines is not completed. The menace of Bolshevism is possible at present in any land on the globe. Class rule of any kind is based upon an ignorance which is associated with debased or non-existent religious faith.

Prior to the American occupation in the Philippines there was a class rule whereby the great mass of the people were kept in peonage to the comparatively small number of "*illustrados*." Their illiteracy and ignorance combined to render this possible. There was practically no middle class. In the home of a missionary in the Philippines there served as cook an interesting young fellow by the name of Geronimo. He presented himself before the missionary one day, bashful and trepidant, asking for a loan of seven pesos. Inquiry developed that he needed the sum to pay to the priest as a first installment upon a marriage fee.

"But why not come to me?" the missionary inquired, "I will marry you for nothing."

There was a curious reluctance, however, upon the part of the young man to pursue the matter further. He attempted to evade questioning and showed a dis-

position to give an extremely sketchy account of the circumstances. He had been in the family some years, however, and an appeal to his affections elicited the entire story. It seems that the young lady in the case was a lower class servant in the home of a prominent family of the town. She had been there for many years, owed them the sum of twenty pesos (\$10.00), and being thus hopelessly in debt with the prospect of remaining so and therefore subject to permanent servitude, the situation was dominated by the family, who insisted that the marriage be solemnized by the priest. It should be added that the missionary was more than glad to advance the sum of the debt (as a wedding present) and release the young woman who had been virtually a bond slave.

Striking at the root of the evils which rendered possible such conditions the achievements under American leadership have been of a twofold character. First, the broad diffusion of popular education, and, second, the introduction of evangelical missions bringing new moral fibre to the people.

It should be borne in mind that the Americans have not undertaken to do things for the Filipinos so much as to lead them to do things for themselves. That they have been apt pupils is demonstrated by a recent action of the Philippine congress appropriating thirty million pesos for the further development of primary school work. It is proposed to put a school into every remote mountain or seaside *barrio* of the archipelago.

This action will greatly modify the work of every evangelical mission. It will probably render unnecessary the expenditure of money and energy in primary education, but will at once emphasize the importance of further development of secondary and higher education. Already the mission schools are a real factor in the development of the nation. Silliman College at Dumaguete on the island of Negros is to a large extent paralleling in its influence upon the province, the experiment of Robert College in the Near East. The Jaro Industrial School on the island of Panay bids fair to wield a similar power. Not only in these and similar institutions is the church affecting the student life, but also by means of the dormitories and hostels which are maintained in large numbers throughout the islands by the missions of every denomination working there. These hostels are associated with the government high schools, normals and colleges and are supplementing the work of the distinctly Christian schools by furnishing Christian home influences for thousands of young men and women who attend government institutions.

The writer well remembers a Bible class among a group of young men in a dormitory which was in his care. He had been curious enough to ask the young men to give their idea of the meaning of "the church." The definitions given were most illuminating as indicative of the way the minds of the boys

were working and the extent to which they had already been modified by evangelical ideals. Here are some of them:

“The congregation of faithful men in which the pure word of God is preached.”

“The church is the whole body of Christians.”

“The church is a religious organization for the purpose of serving God.”

“The church is a society of those who meet together to speak about the words of Jesus Christ and to follow them.”

These definitions were given by young men not at that time members of an evangelical church, although several of them have since become so. They evidence a somewhat surprising grasp of the genius of the Christian message. Similarly throughout the Islands groups of young men and women are being impressed with a new understanding of the heart of the evangelical faith. Many of them may never become affiliated with evangelical churches, but it is very certain that their point of view and openness of mind toward Christian truth have been affected for all time.

A tree frequently seen bordering the highways of the Philippines is commonly called the cotton tree. It rises gaunt and bare to a considerable height and then gives off a few lank branches which at the proper season carry a crop of pods containing a filmy cotton down. Passing beneath the tree one may occasionally hear the popping of a pod and the

downy fibres are flung far and wide upon the breeze. It would be as impossible to crowd the liberated ideas of the young men and women with whom we have been dealing back into the old narrow mold of past days as to gather again these cotton fibres and fit them into the split pod. These young men are becoming the leaders of their own people, business men, physicians, lawyers, legislators, and the stamp of the Christian missionary message will be manifest to some extent in their future work, whether they will or no.

Behind the work of the educationalist is the fundamental service being rendered by the evangelistic missionary, who is penetrating the remotest village with the stimulating message of Christian faith. He awakens interest in outside affairs, implants an ambition to learn to read the gospels, and by the application of the New Testament to the life of the people lays the foundations of true democracy which must be the safeguard against any future form of class rule. Together the educationalist and the evangelist are helping the Filipino to avoid the two Bolshevist errors of anti-faith and anti-democracy, as well as to eradicate the age-old superstition of animism and a superimposed Romanism.

It is interesting to note how the ancient animistic beliefs still underlie the later teachings of the Roman Church. One of the heartiest responses ever elicited from the peasant Filipinos was to an address upon

the text: "that he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." As a young Filipino worker put it: "The people are afraid of the spirits, and the message that Christ is able to overcome them brings a new courage." They frequently attribute their illnesses to evil spirits. For example, a middle-aged man who visited the dispensary dressed in a heavy mackinaw, a singularly inappropriate garment for a tropical country, stated that he had been passing through a nipa swamp, and that the fronds of a nipa palm touching his shoulder had permitted the demon within the palm to afflict him with the rheumatic condition from which he was suffering. We have heard Filipinos using the word for demon in derision, calling each other by the term "aswang" or spirit. Certain it is that, as among Malaysian peoples generally, animistic superstitions have a profoundly depressing effect upon their inner life, and that the message of sunshine and liberation in the Gospel comes to them as a happy deliverance.

The new post-war emphases of the Philippine task are very clear. They may be stated thus:

1. The task is unfinished.
2. There exists an unprecedented opportunity for Christian education to impress the future leaders of the nation with the Spirit of Christ.
3. There is need of redoubled emphasis upon

co-operation with the Filipinos themselves in the building up of a vigorous evangelical church which will be the moral backbone of the nation.

4. The need and opportunity of the present hour constitute an imperative call to earnest, well equipped young men and women of America to give their lives for the completion of our national task in the Philippines.









