The Americans Peril

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The podcast under discussion is of Dan Carlin named “The American Peril”. It starts with a memorable quote of Winston Churchill; “Never let a good crisis go to waste”. This historical quote underpins the entire podcast. During the podcast, Carlin shed a light on the wars and significant political events that occurred during the 1800s and the consequences, repercussions, and the impact they had. There is a wide range of events on which Carlin talked. Be it the Civil War, the Spanish-American War or any other significant event, Carlin talked about all. All these mentioned events are tied to a single theme; never let a crisis go to waste. The question that crops up is that who benefitted from all this?

Although the Civil War spanned for just 4 years from 1861 to 1865, the subsequent conflicts continued until years later[[1]](#footnote-1). Racism was still a big issue that concerned the general population. However, the world seemed to progress following the war. Apart from the change in the shape of the globe, telegraphs underwent a change as well. The agriculture era that once dominated the US changed into the Industrial revolution. The time after the Civil War saw the influx of immigrants that resulted in Americans getting frustrated. Due to efficient transportations, people made their ways to the US in search of better opportunities. As a result, Americans started to feel unsafe due to the growing number of immigrants.

With the immigrants finding their feet in the US, the Americans started to feel that immigrants are stripping them off of their jobs. Americans resorted to the notion of Social Darwinism and started to label races based on their superiority. To put it simply, a white man was considered superior to African Americans and any other immigrants. The purpose underlying the Civil War was to emancipate the slaves; African Americans were treated as second-degree citizens by the Americans. Although the Civil War was successful in breaking the fetters of slavery, once and for all, Racism remained a scourge[[2]](#footnote-2).

After explaining this, Dan Carlin introduced the listeners to the fact that in order to compete with other major powers, the US had to dive in the business of Colonies. This was not an easy task to accomplish unless a crisis raises its head and offer them an opportunity. All the New World colonies of Spain slipped from their finger by the late 1800s. The only remaining colonies of Spain were Puerto Rico and Cuba. It was February 1895 when the Cubans decided to rebel against their Spanish masters. Cuba sought independence from its master, Spain[[3]](#footnote-3). Different Unions got together and supported the Cuban demand of right to self-determination. To emancipate Cuba, the US helped the rebellions by supplying arms to them.

The US believed that whoever controlled Cuba, essentially, wielded power throughout the Caribbean. The US in return of control over Cuba agreed to help to achieve independence. The fundamental of Manifest Destiny was in line with the national ideals which promoted enlarging or expanding to the lands where people had freedom. As a result, the US founded the No Transfer Clause. According to the clause, the Cuban land was to come under the US control if Spain loses it. As a result, Spaniards residing in Cuba started to burn plantations sowed using American investment and damage the railroad system.

During the unrest caused due to the rebellion, Spain sent their military commander, General Arsenio Martinez Campos, tasked with assessing the situation. General Campos in his report said the situation to be critical. The methods that were employed in the Cuban rebellion were the benchmark of counterinsurgency during the 19th Century. Spaniards burned down important infrastructure. Moreover, the Cubans were incarcerated into reconcentration camps to teach a lesson to those who put up resistance against the Spanish rule. The reconcentration camps and policy were headed by a well-known Spanish liberal, Lieutenant General Valeriano Weyler. Due to the large number of Cuban deaths, Lt. General Weyler earned the title of “The Butcher”[[4]](#footnote-4).

Spain employed brutish tactics to strike fear deep into the hearts of Cubans under its rule. These tactics shocked the US. As a result, the US started to deploy ships as a warning which calmed the situation to a certain extent. The USS Maine was exploded near the coastal line of Havana on 18th February 1898. Media pointed a torpedo behind the event and suggested it as the beginning of an end for the Spanish. The United States was adamant that Spain is behind the attack on their ship and termed it as an act of war. Ultimately, this reason paved the way for the US to start a war with Spain[[5]](#footnote-5).

William McKinley had been sworn in after the elections of 1896. McKinley never kept diaries which earned him the title of ‘Ultimate Blank Slate'. Prior to this ascend to the Presidency, the US had little information regarding him. However, what everyone was certain was that McKinley will never wage war and rather opt for peace, given his religious and business stature as a Republican leader. Dan Carlin presented a quote of McKinley during the podcast that; “We want no wars of conquest. We must avoid the temptation of territorial aggression. War should never be entered upon until every agency of peace has failed. Peace is preferable to war in almost any contingency”. Everyone was confused because McKinley had gathered people around him that held views in complete opposition to him. Henry Cabot Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt were two hyper-nationalist and jingoistic characters that remained in McKinley’s administration despite him assuring that they will be sent home[[6]](#footnote-6).

In 1989, the Spanish American war came to its conclusion. Following the war, the world witnessed Spain ceding its rest of the colonies to the US as obliged in the Treaty of Paris. Philippines came under US rule after that. The country once helped by the US was now treated badly and deemed incapable to self-govern. The US sent troops to the Philippines to educate the Filipinos and develop infrastructure of all sorts. However, the natives started to attack American troops.

As Filipinos wanted independence, Guerilla warfare started all over the Philippines. It is one of the most vicious attacks known till day as women and children participated in them. The residents of Philippines compelled the US to withdraw from their land and acknowledge their right to self-determination[[7]](#footnote-7). At last, the US signed a treaty and the Philippines a part of its land. However, the bad decisions of Filipinos earned them independence from the US.

Furthermore, the podcast of Dan Carlin elaborated the events of Civil, Spanish-American, and the Philippine-American war and their connection to the theme. The Civil War saw the opening of new beginnings of not only Americans but the African Americans as well. The shift towards industrialization allowed people to find newer job opportunities[[8]](#footnote-8). The Spanish-American war emancipated colonies suffering repressive Spain rule. Moreover, the freed colonies were captured by the US and increased its global power. No matter how gruesome the nature of American-Philippine war was, it ultimately resulted in the Philippines getting emancipated[[9]](#footnote-9).

The results and impacts of every crisis were different and unfavorable but somehow worked for everyone. The world today is significantly impacted by these events. The events were not wasted because every time the US got their hands onto something. While the colonies were emancipated, the US was on its way to becoming the superpower[[10]](#footnote-10).

# End Notes

1. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* (2014): 7-21.
1. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (2014): 7-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (2014): 7-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (2014): 7-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (2014): 7-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (2014): 7-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (2014): 7-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (2014): 7-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (2014): 7-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (2014): 7-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Archer, John. "The resilience of myth: the politics of the American Dream." Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (2014): 7-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)