



Readings in Philippine History

GROUP 3 - LUNA

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THE FILIPINO GRIEVANCES AGAINST GOVERNOR LEONARD WOOD



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1. Background of the Author

Gregorio F. Zaide was a well-known Filipino historian, teacher, and writer whose books contributed extensively to recording the Philippines' history. His historical studies and teaching efforts influenced how Filipinos perceive their past. Of the numerous events in history that he researched, one of the most important was the struggle between Filipino leaders and Governor-General Leonard Wood, which was reflected in the paper "Filipino Grievances Against Governor Wood." This event was a pivotal point in the fight for Philippine independence during American colonial rule.

2. Historical Background of the Document

Under Governor-General Leonard Wood's rule from 1921 to 1927, Filipino complaints against Governor-General Leonard Wood resulted from his policies, which many saw as erasing Filipino autonomy and self-governance.

Governor-General Leonard Wood rejected sixteen laws enacted by the Philippine Legislature in his first year, a notable rise from his predecessor, Francis Burton Harrison, who vetoed only five measures during his whole seven-and-a-half-year reign. It was viewed as a misuse of veto authority, this was undermining parliamentary procedures and Filipino self-governance.

Tensions between Governor Leonard Wood and Filipino leaders over governance and autonomy came to a head in 1923 when Wood interfered in administrative affairs. He reappointed a Manila police detective accused of misconduct, disregarding the recommendations of Filipino officials. This controversy led to a major political dispute known as the "Cabinet Crisis of 1923."

Wood reversed initiatives meant to enhance Filipino involvement in government by assigning Americans to roles even in cases when qualified Filipinos were ready and this was perceived as a turn back from the advancements toward autonomy and self-governance.

The Economic Decides Favoring American Interests which Wood's economic policies were thought to favor American companies over Filipino ones, which hampered the growth of a self-sufficient Filipino economy and put local company owners at a financial disadvantage.

3. Content Presentation

A. Analysis of the Important Historical Information Found in the Document

During the 1920s, Filipino leaders harbored significant grievances against Governor-General Leonard Wood, primarily due to his governance style and policy decisions, which were perceived as undermining Filipino autonomy and interests.



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1. Veto of Legislative Measures

In his initial year as Governor-General, Wood vetoed 16 bills passed by the Philippine Legislature. Critics viewed this as an overreach, especially when compared to his predecessor, Francis Burton Harrison, who had vetoed only five measures during his entire seven-and-a-half-year tenure. This action was seen as a misuse of the veto power, exacerbating tensions between Wood and Filipino legislators.

2. Reinstatement of Detective Ray Conley and the 1923 Cabinet Crisis

A pivotal incident was Wood's reinstatement of Detective Ray Conley, a Manila police officer accused of immorality and misconduct. Interior Secretary José P. Laurel had sought Conley's removal, but Wood overruled this decision, ordering Laurel to reinstate him. In protest, Laurel resigned, followed by other Filipino members of Wood's cabinet and the entire Council of State. This mass resignation, known as the "Cabinet Crisis of 1923," highlighted the deep-seated conflicts between Wood's administration and Filipino officials, further straining relations until Wood's death in 1927.

3. Economic Policies and Privatization Efforts

Governor-General Wood advocated for fiscal reforms, including the privatization of government-owned enterprises established during the Harrison administration. He argued that these entities were financially burdensome, with the government having invested approximately ₱70 million by 1922, surpassing the average annual budget prior to the 1921 financial crisis. Filipino politicians opposed these neoliberal policies, fearing they would harm national interests and benefit American capitalists.

4. Leadership Conflicts and the Quezon-Osmeña Split

The period also saw a leadership crisis within the Filipino political elite. Senate President Manuel L. Quezon and House Speaker Sergio Osmeña, both prominent figures, had a falling out over governance approaches. Quezon accused Osmeña of autocratic tendencies, leading to a split in the Nacionalista Party into the Colectivistas (led by Quezon) and the Unipersonalistas (led by Osmeña). This division weakened Filipino political cohesion, complicating unified opposition to Wood's policies.

B. Contribution of the Document in Understanding the Grand Narrative in Understanding the Grand Narrative of the Philippine History

The grievances against Governor Leonard Wood play an important role in understanding the history of the Philippines, especially the country's long fight for independence. During the American colonial period, many Filipinos believed they were finally moving towards self-rule after the Jones Law of 1916, which promised eventual independence. However, when Governor Wood took office in 1921, he reversed many of the policies that allowed Filipinos to participate more in the government. This led to conflicts between Filipino leaders and the American administration, showing how difficult it was for Filipinos to gain real political control over their own country.



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One of the most significant events that came from this conflict was the Cabinet Crisis of 1923. When Wood removed some Filipino officials from their government positions, it was seen as an insult to Filipino leadership. In response, almost all Filipino members of the cabinet resigned in protest. This showed that Filipino leaders were united in their demand for greater political power and self-governance. It also proved that they were capable of making independent decisions, which later became one of the strongest arguments for Philippine independence.

Another important lesson from this period is how the struggle against Governor Wood helped shape the future of Philippine politics. Leaders like Manuel Quezon and Manuel Roxas stood firm against Wood's strict policies, proving that Filipinos were not just passive subjects under American rule. Their resistance made it clear that the Philippines could not be governed effectively without the cooperation of Filipinos themselves. This argument became stronger over time, eventually leading to the passing of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934, which created a pathway for full independence in 1946.

The grievances against Governor Wood also show how Filipinos viewed their identity and rights under colonial rule. While the Americans introduced new systems of government and education, Filipinos still wanted to govern themselves. The conflict with Wood reminded the people that even though the Philippines was under American rule, the fight for self-governance was not over. The event helped inspire future generations of leaders who continued pushing for full independence.

Looking at this period in history, we can see how early Filipino leaders laid the foundation for national sovereignty. The resistance against Wood was not just about a disagreement with one governor—it was part of a bigger movement towards complete independence. It showed that Filipinos were ready and capable of leading their own country, and their persistent efforts eventually led to the Philippines becoming a free nation in 1946. By studying these important events, we gain a clearer understanding of how the Philippines struggled to achieve self-rule. Independence was not simply given—it was earned through the sacrifices, determination, and efforts of Filipino leaders who fought for their rights and refused to be treated unfairly in their own country.

C. Relevance of the Document to Contemporary Times

Filipinos' complaints against Governor-General Leonard Wood in the 1920s are still alive to this day concerns about national sovereignty, governance, and civil-military ties in the Philippines. The consolidation of power, economic changes that gave preference to foreign interests, and cultural insensitivity, especially in the Moro Province, were among the contentious policies that characterized Wood's tenure (1921–1927).. His economic policies, such as the privatization of public assets, sparked worries about national patrimony, and his substitution of military attachés for Filipino constitutional advisers was seen as a danger to democratic processes.



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Furthermore, his strategy in the Moro Province showed little consideration for regional traditions and political systems, as evidenced by incidents like the First Battle of Bud Dajo. Concerns over foreign influence on domestic sectors, the necessity for culturally sensitive governance, especially in areas with different identities, and the distribution of power between civilian and military authorities are all current challenges that are echoed by these past complaints.

Understanding these earlier conflicts helps one to better understand the Philippines' current battles to achieve sustainable development and true autonomy. Resources like Michael Onorato's *Leonard Wood: His First Year as Governor General, 1921–1922*, and Vicente Angel S. Ybiernas' *The Politics and Economics of Recovery in Colonial Philippines in the Aftermath of World War I, 1918–1923* offer more in-depth analyses of the political and economic conflicts of the time. Accounts of the First Battle of Bud Dajo also demonstrate how Wood's leadership had a long-lasting effect on ties between the United States and the Moro.

4. Individual Reflection/Learning Experience

A black and white portrait photograph of Elderico Nacua, a young man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a dark tie.	<p>As a Filipino, learning about the grievances of the Filipino people towards General Wood made me realize how lucky I am to take for granted the freedom I have today. It reminded me that the freedom we enjoy today was not simply handed down to us. It was earned and built upon years of sacrifice, persistence, and resistance to colonial rule, courtesy of our forefathers' bravery.</p>
A black and white portrait photograph of Gian Lloyd Laberinto, a young man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored shirt.	<p>"Filipino Grievances Against Governor Wood" shows the growing frustration of Filipino leaders with Governor-General Leonard Wood during the American colonial period. They felt that Wood was ignoring their efforts toward self-governance, rejecting their decisions, and ruling with a heavy military hand. This clash highlighted the ongoing struggle between American control and the Filipino push for independence. Overall, the book reflects an important chapter in the country's fight for self-rule and the challenges of dealing with colonial rule.</p>



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Alexsandra Mopon

The grievances against Governor Wood highlight the Filipino people's strong desire for self-governance and resistance against oppressive leadership. His refusal to recognize Filipino authority and his authoritarian policies led to widespread opposition, proving that Filipinos were ready to assert their political rights. The Cabinet Crisis of 1923, where Filipino leaders resigned in protest, was a powerful statement of unity and resistance against colonial rule.

This event taught me the importance of leadership that listens to the people's voices and respects democratic principles. It also reinforces the idea that independence is not simply given but fought for through collective action and persistence. The Filipinos' response to Wood's governance serves as a reminder that true sovereignty requires courage, unity, and the willingness to stand against injustice.



Jennifer Mae V. Lopez

Governor Leonard Wood's tenure as Governor-General of the Philippines from 1921 to 1927 was marked by Filipino grievances, primarily centered around limited self-government, economic concerns, land reform, labor rights, and national identity. Filipinos sought greater autonomy and representation in their government, but Wood's unilateral decisions often sidelined their voices. The concentration of land ownership among wealthy elites left many farmers landless and impoverished, and Filipinos called for land reforms to improve rural conditions.

I gained a better understanding of the details of colonial governance and the Filipino struggle for sovereignty by researching the grievances made against Governor Leonard Wood during his time in the Philippines. I learned to see that because identical injustices still exist in modern-day Philippine culture, the concerns of worker rights, land reform, and limited self-government are still relevant today.



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 <p>Zion Lozano</p>	<p>Re-reading this topic has given me new insights into America, especially how Wood ran his administration. His actions contradicted the U.S. propaganda of bringing freedom, democracy, and equality to the territories they occupied. His poor decision-making during his term actually made me laugh because it showed that America was more focused on power and saw war as a business rather than a mission for justice</p>
 <p>Rianne Vincent V. Mislang</p>	<p>The complaints against Governor Leonard Wood were not political; they were about dignity, self-government, and the Filipinos' right to determine their own destiny. Envision struggling for independence for decades, only to have someone arrive and discard all the advances toward self-government. It must have been maddening for Filipino leaders to watch their efforts taken away, their policies vetoed, and their hopes discarded.</p> <p>Governor Wood's term was characterized by tension—his strict, military-style rule conflicting with the increasing Filipino desire for self-rule. The Filipinos who opposed him were not merely politicians; they were members of a nation eager to demonstrate its capacity for self-government. When they resigned as a body in protest (what came to be called the Cabinet Crisis of 1923), it was not merely a political gesture; it was a symbolic and emotional act—a joint declaration that Filipinos would no longer stand to be treated like second-class servants in their own country.</p> <p>In retrospect, I view this chapter in history as more than a struggle for power. It was a moment of national identity—a testament that the struggle for sovereignty is not only about policy and legislation but about people standing up for what they perceive as right. Even now, this struggle is relevant, reminding us that real freedom is not bestowed—it is taken, guarded, and constantly fought for.</p>



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 <p>Mark Alfred Mejia</p>	<p>Studying the Filipino Grievances against Governor Wood reminds me that the pursuit of freedom and justice requires perseverance and unity. It also teaches the importance of good governance and that leaders must listen to the voices of their people, respect their rights, and work toward their nation's progress.</p>
 <p>Arth Angelo Mendoza</p>	<p>Governor Leonard Wood's leadership highlighted the struggle between Filipino self-rule and American colonial control. His rejection of Filipino leadership and decisions led to frustration and strengthened the nationalist movement. The Cabinet Crisis of 1923, where Filipino officials resigned in protest, showed their unity and determination to stand against oppression and this makes the part of history reminds me that true independence isn't just given, it's fought for with courage, resilience, and strong leadership. Wood's oppressive rule may have delayed progress, but in the end, it only fueled the Filipino spirit and determination to be free.</p>
 <p>Andrei Lawrence Lacbay</p>	<p>In light of the Filipinos' complaints against Governor Leonard Wood, I believe that this was a pivotal point in the fight for independence during the American colonial era. Due in large part to his rigorous enforcement of American authority and contempt for the ambitions of Filipino politicians, Wood's stint as Governor-General (1921–1927) was characterized by intense conflict with Filipino leaders. Widespread resistance to his policies, which put American interests ahead of Philippine autonomy, culminated in the Cabinet Crisis of 1923, when Filipino ministers resigned in protest.</p>



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Joselito A. Gulas Jr.

I am deeply moved by the bravery of our historical figures, who stood firm against American policies despite the risks to their lives and careers. Their willingness to challenge an oppressive system reflects their deep commitment to the nation's sovereignty and democratic ideals. Additionally, I am impressed by the professionalism of our Filipino leaders, who, rather than resorting to violence, chose diplomatic means such as resignations and organized resistance to express their strong opposition. Their actions remind me of the importance of standing up for what is right, even in the face of great adversity, and inspire me to appreciate the sacrifices made for our country's freedom.

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