

Philippine-American War

During the Spanish-American War, rebels in the Philippines proclaimed their independence after 300 years of Spanish rule... only to have their hopes for a free nation written off with a few pen strokes when the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1898, handing the Philippines to the United States. Rebel leader Emilio Aguinaldo—who had convened a revolutionary assembly that drew up the first democratic constitution in Asia—launched a revolt.

The United States responded by sending in troops and by war's end, over 4,000 American soldiers had died, ten times the number of Americans killed in the Spanish-American War. Losses among locals were worse: 20,000 Filipino insurgents and an unknown number of civilians lost their lives in the fight for independence.

David Silbey, associate director, Cornell in Washington and author of *A War of Frontier and Empire: The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902*, writes that the Philippine-American War “was our last war of manifest destiny and western expansion and our first imperial land war in Asia. It was the United States testing out what role it would have on the world stage and bringing with it all the complicated racial and cultural attitudes that shaped American society at home.”