

Resolution 33: Confronting Cornell's Legacy in American Imperialism in the Philippines

Abstract: This resolution calls for acknowledgment of Cornell President Jacob Gould Schurman's role in the colonization and conquest of the Philippines.

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Reviewed by: Diversity Committee, 10/19/21, 12-0-0

Type of Action: Recommendation

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Current Status: New Business

Whereas, few students and campus community members are aware of the role that the namesake of Schurman Hall, Jacob Gould Schurman, played in American imperialism and the colonization of the Philippines,

Whereas, Schurman, Cornell's 3rd President, was also the Chairman of the Schurman Commission, [appointed](#) by President William McKinley in 1899 to determine the path forward for the conquered Philippines after the end of the Spanish-American War,

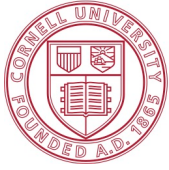
Whereas, the Schurman Commission was tasked with deciding the structure of American imperial rule in the Philippines after the brutal American conquest,

Whereas, the Schurman Commission explicitly [concluded](#) that America needed to retain control of the Philippines, writing, "the United States cannot withdraw. ... We are there and duty binds us to remain. The Filipinos are wholly unprepared for independence ... there being no Philippine nation, but only a collection of different peoples",

Whereas, Schurman personally [advocated](#) for a version of Rudyard Kipling's White Man's Burden, in which Filipinos would be "taught to govern themselves as Americans or Englishmen govern themselves",

Whereas, Schurman [engaged](#) in racist rhetoric, calling Muslim Filipinos "heathens", and declaring that America "must first eliminate the Mohammedan",

Whereas, Schurman [viewed](#) all Filipinos as inferior, writing that "even educated Filipinos do not possess our conception of civil liberty or of official responsibility",



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30 **Whereas**, Filipino independence advocate Sixto Lopez challenged the Schurman-led “Philippine
31 Commission’s depiction of the Philippine “tribes,” ridiculing its report as “shoddy, inaccurate,
32 and deliberately misleading”,

33 **Whereas**, none of Cornell’s biographical information on Schurman on official [websites](#) makes
34 any reference to his viewpoint and comments on Filipinos,

35 **Whereas**, there is no reference or explanation of Schurman’s role in Filipino colonization and
36 genocide on the premises of Schurman Hall,

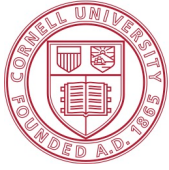
37 **Whereas**, Cornell has never officially apologized for Schurman’s role in the imperialist conquest
38 of the Philippines by America,

39 **Whereas**, 200,000 Filipinos were [killed](#) during the American imperialist war of occupation,

40 **Whereas**, October marks Filipino-American History Month,

41 **Be it therefore resolved**, the Student Assembly formally calls upon Cornell University to:

- 42 1. Formally apologize for President Schurman’s role in American imperialism in the
43 Philippines,
- 44 2. Establish corrective measures by dedicating a memorial in Schurman Hall to the
45 countless Filipino lives lost under American rule and imperialist conquest,
- 46 3. Rename Schurman Hall,
- 47 4. Establish a class to teach students the history of American imperialism and Cornell’s
48 complicity in it,
- 49 5. Build and expand an Anti-Imperialist Studies program at Cornell to help expand this
50 knowledge,
- 51 6. Expand all Ethnic Studies departments/programs including but not limited to Southeast
52 Asian Studies, Asian Studies, Africana Studies, Indigenous Studies, Latina/o Studies, and
53 Asian American studies by increasing efforts, funding, and allowing them all as majors to
54 make these histories available to all students,
- 55 7. Address the history of military exploitation and the continued military involvement of
56 Filipino people and students in the US and abroad,
- 57 8. Condemn the Visiting Forces Agreement that is continuing Schurman’s imperialism in
58 the Philippines today,



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- 59 9. Establish a plaque in Schurman Hall explaining Schurman's role in the conquest and
60 colonization of the Philippines,
- 61 10. Post information about Schurman's opinion on Filipinos on the Cornell Presidents
62 website, in addition to a campus wide email condemning Schurman's views and a social
63 media post from the Cornell administration,
- 64 11. Create a Cornell Committee to investigate Cornell's ties to imperialism and economic
65 exploitation, and promote public knowledge of Cornell's investments and ties to
66 imperialism both abroad and domestically,

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68 Respectfully Submitted,

69 Joseph Mullen '24

70 *Vice President of Internal Operations*

71 Cornell Filipino Association

72 *Alyssandra Ortanez, Frankie Reed, Sofia Vaquerano*