



NATIONALISM *in* MINNESOTA

During the SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

PETER MICKELSON

THE TERM nationalism has received a number of definitions, but probably the most useful is that supplied by Carlton J. H. Hayes: patriotism fused with a consciousness of nationality. In other words, nationalism is the love of land and fellow citizens—the ancient concept of patriotism—redirected toward the nation and its government.¹ Historians agree that this sort of devotion is a relatively recent phenomenon. It appeared in embryonic form in the eighteenth century with the American and French revolutions and gained force during the nineteenth century with the spread in Europe and Latin America of nationalist movements associated with the idea of democratic government. Not until the twentieth century, however, did it reach full development. Then the fall of

colonialism coincided with the rise of nationalism among emerging peoples in Asia and Africa, while in Europe nazism and fascism carried it to extreme forms.

Americans have been reluctant to speak of American nationalism, despite the fact that the birth of their own nation was associated with the early spread of the idea. One of the few histories of the subject, for example, speaks instead of "American loyalty."² Among the frequently cited reasons for this are the great size and geographical diversity of the country, the federal form of government with its emphasis upon the power of individual states, the sectional conflicts that culminated in the Civil War,

¹ Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Nationalism: A Religion*, 2 (New York, 1960). For a listing of the varying beliefs and conditions which comprise nationalism, see Boyd C. Shafer, *Nationalism: Myth and Reality*, 3-11 (New York, 1955).

² Merle Curti, *The Roots of American Loyalty* (New York, 1946).

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and the tremendous influx of foreign immigrants. Under these conditions, the concept of "Americanism" was slow to gain a hold upon the public imagination, and in the years between the Civil War and the turn of the century class, sectional, and ethnic loyalties frequently seemed to overshadow national allegiance.

In Minnesota this was, perhaps, even more true than elsewhere. Although the state population was highly literate, and newspapers and magazines covering national affairs were widely distributed, it is questionable whether a Minnesotan thought of himself primarily as an American, or whether he first identified himself as a farmer, a midwesterner, a Norwegian, a Lutheran, or perhaps a Republican. The political and economic conflicts of the years between 1865 and 1898 were strongly sectional in nature, and Minnesota had witnessed two major waves of agrarian protest against the financial and political power of the East. In addition, the state's population included an unusually high proportion of foreign-born, and its ethnic groups tended to be tightly knit and tradition-conscious.

In 1898 national affairs suddenly burst into prominence. Americans had watched sympathetically for nearly three years as Cuban rebels attempted to end Spanish control of their island, and many people in this country were demanding that the United States government actively assist the rebel cause. This demand was stimulated in part by the desire of American business interests on the island for relief from the destruction of prolonged warfare; it can also be attributed to the sensation-seeking of the "yellow press"—notably William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*—and to leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and Alfred T. Mahan who interpreted the old doctrine of Manifest Destiny to include foreign dependencies and world-wide influence. Tensions approached the breaking point in the early months of 1898 with the theft and publication of an inflammatory letter written by the Spanish envoy in Washington

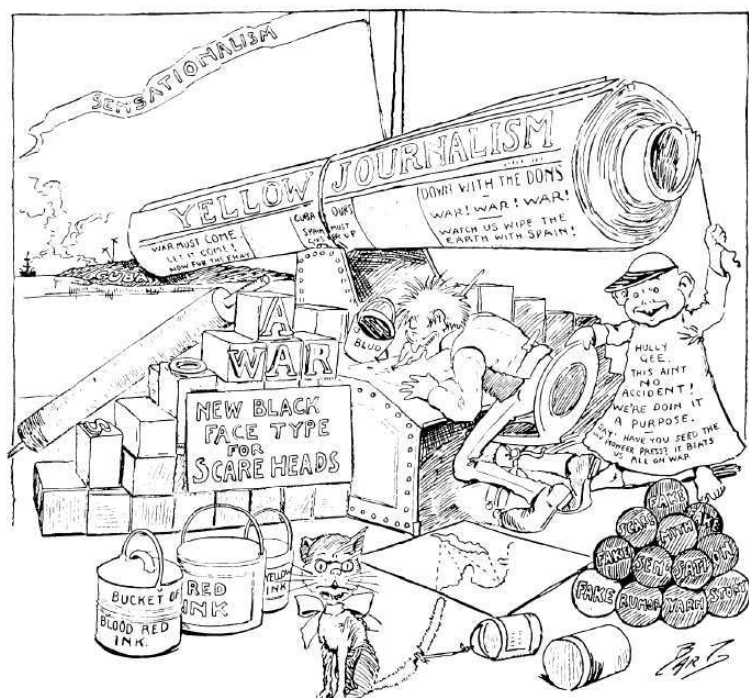
and with the sinking on February 15 of the battleship "Maine" in Havana harbor.

The debate over Cuba was enlivened for Minnesotans by the fact that two of the state's citizens were involved at the national level in the question of war or peace. Cushman K. Davis, Minnesota's senior senator and chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee, was a powerful force behind the stern policy toward Spain. Although in public he followed the hesitant administration line through the early months of 1898, counseling moderation until late in February, he maintained that the United States must not try to evade its destiny. That destiny, as he saw it, clearly called for an increased role in world affairs. By the beginning of April Davis had abandoned hope of settlement with Spain and was calling for armed intervention in Cuba.³

Another influential Minnesotan was associated with a major peace effort in the month of April, 1898. As negotiations with Spain neared collapse, Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul journeyed to Washington at the request of Pope Leo XIII to intercede with President William McKinley. The president was sympathetic but declared himself powerless to change the course of events unless some dramatic concession were made by Spain. Attempts to secure an armistice between Spain and the Cuban rebels through the Pope's influence with the Spanish government were too late. There is good evidence that Spain was in fact willing to accede to American demands and grant autonomy or even independence to Cuba. McKinley received a report to this effect from the American ambassador in Madrid on April 9 and added it as a footnote to the war message he delivered the next day to a Congress determined upon war.⁴

³ *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 23, 1898; Margaret Leech, *In the Days of McKinley*, 175, 179, 187 (New York, 1959); *Congressional Record*, 55 Congress, 2 session, p. 3773.

⁴ James H. Moynihan, *The Life of Archbishop John Ireland*, 162-168 (New York, 1953); Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*, 396 (Ithaca, New York, 1963).



The warmongering of the "yellow press" as caricatured in the Minneapolis Journal

REFLECTING these two prominent extremes, public opinion in Minnesota formed a wide spectrum, ranging from the demand for immediate intervention in Cuba to an absolute refusal to go to war. Those who favored overt help were numerous and vocal, including both Republicans and Democrats. They invariably expressed humanitarian concern over the great sufferings of the Cuban people. Very little of the outright jingoism that was stimulated in the East by the activities of the Cuban junta and the sensationalism of the Hearst press was present in Minnesota. But many in the state felt that the McKinley administration was lagging far behind popular opinion.

As early as February 21, 1898, the *Duluth Evening Herald* (a Democratic paper) urged the government to intervene at once to compel Spain to grant complete independence to the Cuban rebels. A month later the *St. Paul Daily Pioneer Press* (Republican) reported on a Senate speech by Redfield

Proctor of Vermont, who angrily described Spanish cruelty in Cuba. The paper went on to insist that the plan for Cuban autonomy adopted by the Spanish government the previous October was a farce and that war would continue mercilessly until the United States moved directly or indirectly "by moral aid and sympathy" to stop it.⁵ An editorialist in the *St. Cloud Daily Journal-Press* (Republican) of March 22 saw no moral justification for a policy of watching passively while patriots were butchered in Cuba. "This government should not only stand for the liberty of Cuba," the writer argued, "but should fight for it if necessary." Senator Knute Nelson argued vehemently that Spanish rule had been inhuman, that the Republic of Cuba was trustworthy and competent, with a better organized administration and a bigger army than the American colonies possessed during the Revolution. Therefore it should be recognized at whatever cost: "To ignore [Máximo] Gómez and the Cuban Republic seems to me to be cold, icy heartlessness, unworthy

⁵ *Daily Pioneer Press* (St. Paul), March 19, 1898.

a great nation and a great people.”⁶ The majority of the citizens of Minneapolis thought war was inevitable and were anxious to have it, according to one news story late in March. War was, the paper presumed, the chief subject of conversation, and everything pertaining to it was eagerly read and discussed.⁷

Another large segment of the population was more cautious, less eager for war, yet concerned about helping the struggling Cubans. The *Minneapolis Tribune*, perhaps the state’s most influential paper, warned repeatedly against excessive enthusiasm, recalled the horrors of past wars, and noted that the development of new weapons promised to make future wars even more ghastly. It continually criticized the chauvinism of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. Rather than intervention or recognition of belligerency, the *Tribune*, like Senator Nelson, favored recognition of Cuban independence, although its editor admitted that such a policy would probably bring war.⁸

People of more conservative opinion hesi-

tated to support any move that meant war and generally endorsed the actions of President McKinley. The *Mankato Daily Free Press*, a solidly conservative Republican paper, suspected that some of those who yelled loudest for war would be less anxious to fight should hostilities actually begin.⁹ It spoke for a group who thought going to war with a foreign power a radical step, alien to American tradition, and one to be taken only with the utmost caution.

THE MINNESOTA business community included many people who were even less disposed to war than McKinley and were somewhat disappointed when the president seemed to be swayed by the prevailing war fever. Early in April the board of trade in Minneapolis passed a resolution requesting

⁶ Nelson, *Affairs in Cuba*, 8 (Washington, 1898). Copy in the Knute Nelson Papers. This and all manuscript collections cited hereafter are in the Minnesota Historical Society.

⁷ *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 27, 1898.

⁸ *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 11, 27, 1898.

⁹ *Mankato Daily Free Press*, February 18, 1898.



THEY KEEP STEP.

The cartoons here and elsewhere in this article are from the pen of Charles E. Bartholomew, the famous “Bart” of the *Minneapolis Journal*.

the administration to use every honorable means to prevent armed conflict with Spain. A prominent Minneapolis milling executive, William H. Dunwoody, informed a friend after the commencement of hostilities that "all of our business people were very much opposed to war" and that they had hoped McKinley would settle the matter through diplomacy. Some months later the *Northwestern Miller*, an influential milling industry magazine published in Minnesota by William C. Edgar, recalled that the war was brought on by "a mischevous [sic] league of ignorant politicians and sensational newspapers of the baser sort." The writer then quoted an antiwar article which cited as the work of "ignorant politicians" the exuberant claims made by Knute Nelson for the Cuban Republic. Although it is difficult to assess

business opinion as a whole, there is some evidence that a majority of Minnesota's businessmen agreed with James J. Hill, who felt that the Cuban venture was unattractive and unprofitable and that the country would save itself a good deal of trouble by minding its own business.¹⁰

Radical agrarian groups like the Populists were much more outspoken and, for the most part, equally unenthusiastic at the prospect of war. *Farm, Stock and Home*, the bimonthly journal of Sidney M. Owen, one of Minnesota's leading Populists, blasted the press (without specific reference to Minnesota newspapers) for conduct described as idiotic, sensationalistic, and criminal. Owen felt that avenues of peace were not being adequately explored and that the whole affair was being mishandled.¹¹

Populist thought on the Cuban situation was, however, ambiguous, and it often seemed to depend on which side the writer thought the hated "money power" stood. Conflicting views found their way into *The*

¹⁰ Dunwoody to Thomas C. Jenkins, May 27, 1898, William H. Dunwoody Papers; *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 6, 1898; *Northwestern Miller*, 46:384 (September 2, 1898); Joseph G. Pyle, *The Life of James J. Hill*, 2:77 (New York, 1917).

¹¹ *Farm, Stock and Home*, 14:130 (March 15, 1898); 14:162 (April 15, 1898).



IF THIS IS INTERVENTION LET U. S. INTERVENE.

Representative, the Twin City publication of the famous Populist, Ignatius Donnelly. Donnelly himself was confident that the majority of American people favored active help to Cuba—war if necessary—but were thwarted by moneyed interests which made profits in Spanish bonds. “It is a crying shame,” he said in the issue of April 20, “that we can only lessen the grip of the money-power . . . by the murder of tens of thousands of innocent producers.” Scarcely a month earlier Donnelly’s associate editor, E. A. Twitchell, had written a classic denunciation of war for business class interests: “The air is full of war and rumors of war and the daily press at the instigation of the money power rubs the ears of the hungry populace to prepare them for the coming fray. . . . If Populists are ever called up to use bullets in defense of human liberty they will spare their ammunition and their bullets will be placed in the right hearts. It will be a slaughter, not of the innocents, but of way up and high handed criminals.”¹²

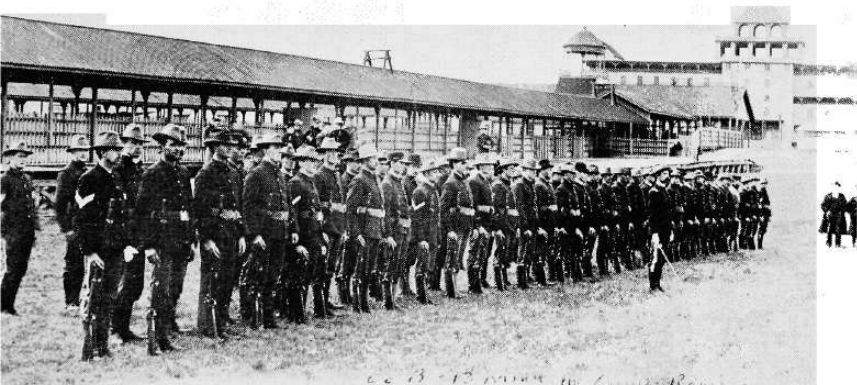
WAR WAS formally declared on April 25, and such rumblings ceased abruptly. It was time to uphold the flag. In an editorial uncontradicted by his associate editor, Donnelly admitted that “war is a cruel abomination,” but paid tribute to the slogan: “Our

country—may she always be right; YET RIGHT OR WRONG, OUR COUNTRY.” Americans should be sure that the war did not enrich the moneyed interests, Donnelly advised, but, “when foreign cannon are thundering against our ships there is no time for criticism of our leaders.” Owen agreed that the time for discussion of the situation’s causes and possible blunders had passed: “Every man, every influence, all effort and sympathy should be united in the determination to prosecute the war to a successful and speedy end.”¹³

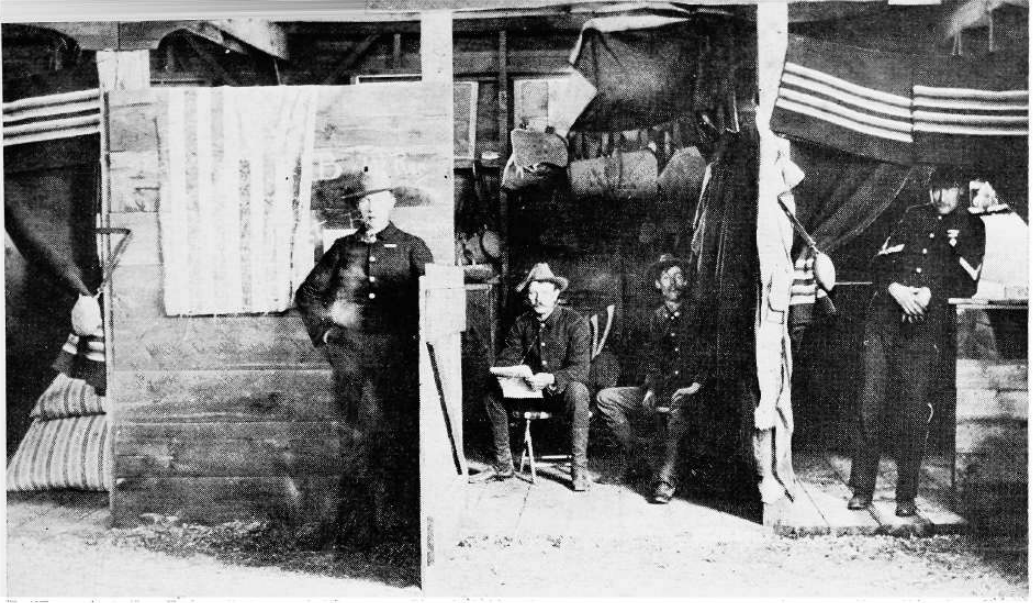
Business leaders, too, felt compelled to support the nation. The *Northwestern Miller*, whose editorial writer believed the war due to jingoism, also agreed to set aside prewar differences, and, “as loyal sons of a most excellent and indulgent mother, . . . hope and believe that the arms of our country will triumph and . . . add lustre to the history of the United States.” James J. Hill now blamed the Spanish for destroying the “Maine,” and declared that Americans should without hesitation support the government in whatever course its officials might decide to follow. The *Minneapolis Tribune* had hoped for peace, though not

¹² *The Representative*, March 2, April 13, 20, 1898.

¹³ *The Representative*, May 11, 1898; *Farm, Stock and Home*, 14:178 (May 1, 1898).



Members of the Thirteenth Minnesota Regiment drilling at Camp Ramsey



Converted stables at the fairground which housed the state's volunteers

with the obstinacy of some other dissidents. It also assured its readers that now was the time to come unequivocally to the aid of the country: "We must win victory over the enemy first, and settle with those who are responsible for the war afterwards."¹⁴ Even the hesitant *Mankato Free Press* fell into step on April 22, crying: "Now let the eagle scream!"

Religious loyalty also yielded before the sentiment that was sweeping the country. The sympathy for Catholic Spain which had in part prompted Ireland's peace mission interfered not at all with the archbishop's flaming Americanism once the die had been cast. "Of course," he wrote to a fellow churchman, "now I am for war—for the Stars and Stripes."¹⁵ In a sermon in St. Paul on May 1 he told his listeners: "Citizens are to presume—this is the clear rule of Catholic theology—that the country is right unless it were as clear as noonday that it were wrong. . . . America has spoken: all must accept the mandate, and all must feel obliged in obedience to God who has constituted civil society, to aid the country in the prosecution of this war." Ireland went

even further, calling the Cuban crusade a just and holy one, and comparing it to the wars waged by Christians against Mohammedans.¹⁶

The following October, after hostilities had ceased, Ireland further explained his views about war to a peace jubilee audience in Chicago. "War is dreadful, but war is necessary," he declared. "Even though the heavens fall, justice and righteousness must prevail. War is no longer a repudiation of peace; it is the sole assurance of peace—of the only peace that a self-respecting people may covet, peace with honor. A just and necessary war is holy." Through the tinted glasses of Americanism, Ireland saw his nation in a perfect Christian role: "No gain for themselves did the people of America covet; theirs was the highborn ambition to save and aid a suffering people—that and nothing more."¹⁷

Public response to the "holy crusade" was not confined to editorials and speeches. War fervor abounded throughout the state. Newspapers were extremely sensitive to patriotic incidents, in part because these interested readers, and also, quite probably, because news writers shared in the intensified patriotic feeling. On the day hostilities began, April 22, the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* told of a little girl with a yellow braid who played "Red, White, and Blue" on a piano in the city armory. The child played

¹⁴ *Northwestern Miller*, 45:667 (April 29, 1898); Pyle, James J. Hill, 2:77; *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 6, 1898.

¹⁵ Quoted in Moynihan, *Life of Ireland*, 169.

¹⁶ *Pioneer Press*, May 2, 1898.

¹⁷ Quoted in John Ireland, *The Church and Modern Society*, 2:72, 76 (St. Paul, 1904).



*The Thirteenth
Regiment marching
down Minneapolis'
Washington
Avenue on its
departure for the
Philippines*

unostentatiously in a corner while a large audience of men silently gathered around her, attracted by the song. The girl's fingers seemed to speak the words of the grand old anthem, the story said, and when she had finished there was a moment of silence. Then the hundreds of bystanders could contain themselves no longer and broke loose with a roar of applause "that almost lifted the roof" from the armory. "And Spain," the writer continued, "talks of teaching the 'Pig' Yankees a lesson!"

GOVERNOR DAVID M. CLOUGH, who had been hounded by anxious volunteers even before the war, was now besieged. When a New York newspaper wondered how many men Minnesota could furnish, Clough replied that he would estimate about 341,762 soldiers, or the entire state vote in the 1896 election—a boast which the *Pioneer Press* repeated under the headline "One Gun for Every Ballot." The secretary of war called for troops on April 23, with a request for three regiments of infantry from Minnesota. The state's three National Guard regiments were mustered in within two weeks.¹⁸

The mobilization occasioned patriotic

demonstrations throughout the state. In Duluth a fervid crowd of five thousand jammed the city armory when news was received of the war declaration. There, under the prodding of fiery speeches from the mayor and civic leaders, the citizens made such a display of patriotism that no stretch of the imagination was required, according to the *Duluth Evening Herald*, to hear "the flapping of the wings of the glorious old bird of freedom as it roused itself from its sleep to vindicate the principles of justice and humanity it represents." One participant insisted that enough patriotic men could be found in St. Louis County alone to take Cuba in birch-bark canoes.¹⁹ Other people were less jubilant but equally dedicated. The departure of troops from St. Cloud was the occasion for the following verse printed in the *Journal-Press* on May 5:

The day was dark and dismal,
The sky wore a leaden hue,

¹⁸ Franklin F. Holbrook, *Minnesota in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection*, 14, 16, 22 (St. Paul, 1923); *Pioneer Press*, April 23, 1898.

¹⁹ *Duluth Evening Herald*, April 22, 1898.

And the heavens wept in sympathy
 O'er the boys who donned the blue;
 As a gallant band of laddies
 Assembled in the rain;
 A gallant band of patriots,
 Avengers of the Maine.

Before leaving the state, the troops drilled at the fairground in St. Paul and were accorded what has been described as a "continuous ovation." Citizens flocked to the camp—dubbed "Camp Ramsey"—as to a circus, and newspapers described every movement of the troops. The regiments departed on May 16. Two—the Twelfth and Fourteenth Minnesota Volunteers—left for Georgia and stayed there throughout the war. The Thirteenth Regiment went to San Francisco and eventually saw action in the Philippine uprising of the next year. Another regiment was formed in July and sent to Georgia, making a total of 5,350 state men in the infantry, somewhat below the governor's prediction.²⁰

The immediate military successes of the war served to reinforce the popular excitement aroused at the outbreak and intensified as the mobilization of state troops progressed. The victory at Manila, which came while the soldiers were still in St. Paul, received the wildest acclaim. The sudden and complete destruction of the Spanish fleet in the Philippines meant that the country had administered almost a knockout blow. Newspapers used their largest type sizes for headlines. Citizens in practically every city and town celebrated spontaneously, as in Montevideo, which was "wild with enthusiasm all day," and Brainerd, where a spontaneous rally "beat anything ever seen." Even Donnelly, the old Populist, was moved to call the victory "one of the most striking events" in all of

human history.²¹ Much of the same enthusiasm prevailed on July 4 after the naval victory at Santiago and to a lesser degree at various times throughout the war months. Minnesotans who did a minimal amount of reading must have become familiar with American battleships, with important American naval heroes of the past, and with the names of George Dewey and Winfield S. Schley. The exploits of these two, they were informed, ranked with anything Lord Nelson had ever attempted.

The activities of the state's fighting men were closely followed at home, and correspondence, camp reports, and company pictures were everyday features of many newspapers. People in Minnesota seemed tremendously concerned that their soldiers make a good showing, that they act in "brave," "manly," and "honorable" fashion. There was reflected here, perhaps, a doubt about the ability of the American soldier in combat, and possibly a suspicion that Americans were not, like Europeans, a "fighting race." Cushman Davis sought to relieve this fear by assuring state citizens that Europeans could no longer look down upon Americans, since Manila and Santiago had proved to the world "with what majesty the American soldier fights." The *Minneapolis Tribune* agreed that the war had shown Americans to be formidable fighters and further affirmed that although Minnesotans saw very little action they deserved great praise because they were standing by ready to risk their lives. The *Tribune* confidently labeled pictures of Minnesota companies with such adjectives as "gallant," "brave," and "stalwart," despite the fact that most of them never left the country.²²

If there were no state heroes—no Deweys or Schleys—they could be created, although sometimes it required imagination. One such hero was Emil G. H. Hoppe, a small, underage boy from Morgan, who heard strains of martial music which stirred the flames of patriotism within him. Unfortunately, before he had a chance to volunteer for duty, he missed a tree he was

²⁰ Holbrook, *Minnesota in the Spanish-American War*, 19–31.

²¹ *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 3, 1898; *The Representative*, May 11, 1898.

²² Davis, *An Address by Cushman K. Davis at St. Paul, Minnesota, July 27, 1898*, 19 (copy in the library of the Minnesota Historical Society); *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 26, July 17, 1898.

attempting to chop and sent the ax into his instep. When he had recovered somewhat he limped to the recruiting agent who told him to forget the army, but later, miraculously recovered, he got himself accepted and was last heard of serving in Jacksonville, Florida.²³

PATRIOTIC SENTIMENT seems to have met with little resistance from foreign nationality groups in Minnesota. Foreign-born men were numerous among those who volunteered for duty in the army. Many were Scandinavians, and many Germans. Adjutant General Hermann E. Muehlberg often received requests for commissions addressed to "Freund Muehlberg."²⁴

The American navy included substantial numbers of immigrants, and when foreign nations suggested that these "mercenaries" would be an ineffective fighting force, immigrants in Minnesota were greatly offended. The editor of *Northland Magazine*, a Minnesota monthly aimed at English-speaking Scandinavians, responded with typical force. "This is a slur upon the American navy," he wrote, "which will be quickly resented when the time comes by men of the same blood as the hundred odd Irish and Scandinavian-born sailors who went to death unshrived when the Main [*sic*] was destroyed by Spanish treachery. . . . It is the glory and distinction of America that its foster sons love her as well as the native born." The next month this writer could offer the victory at Manila as proof of the falsity of the "mercenary" charge.²⁵

Farm, Stock and Home, which had numerous Scandinavian readers, was equally pleased that men of different nationalities had fought and won at Manila as Americans. "We have no nationalities," it boasted, "even though memories of the fatherland are still cherished tenderly, but we are one people, and single hearted in devotion to the country and its flag." Franco-American citizens met in May to endorse the American government's humanitarian war effort and to assert their loyalty to their country

of adoption and their willingness to fight for it. In an annual nationality celebration in Minneapolis, Norwegian Americans sang the Norwegian national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," and "America."²⁶

People in Minnesota refused to see the war as the effort of one state or section of the country alone. Henry A. Castle, a St. Paul newspaperman and prominent Republican, told an audience in Chattanooga, Tennessee, that the gray had returned to the blue, that the unswerving loyalty of every class and section of the country had welded Americans together into an eternally united people. Another Minnesotan, Leonard A. Rosing — unlike Castle, a Democrat and an immigrant — had much the same message for a Fourth of July audience in Minnesota: "this war has had a great national benefit in teaching the people that we are now one great and united people, that sectionalism is forever dead — for in answer to the call 'To Arms' the response came equally from Alabama and Minnesota, from Virginia and California, and today the old flag waves in every hamlet in all the broad Union, carrying the same message and teaching the same lesson." "The grey disappeared into the blue," Cushman Davis recalled a year later, "like the last lingering cloud of a departed storm into the azure of a sunlit sky." The *Minneapolis Tribune* thought that the war had done more to bring all sections of the nation together and create the new feeling of brotherhood than had been accomplished in thirty years of peace.²⁷

²³ *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 17, 1898.

²⁴ Holbrook, *Minnesota in the Spanish-American War*, 11.

²⁵ *Northland Magazine*, 1:108 (May, 1898); 1:146 (June, 1898).

²⁶ *Farm, Stock and Home*, 14:194 (May 15, 1898); *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 18, 23, 1898.

²⁷ Castle, "Synopsis of Address at Chattanooga, Tennessee," May 30, 1898, Henry A. Castle Papers; Rosing, "Fourth of July Oration," 1898, Leonard A. Rosing Papers; Davis, "Notes of a Speech at Lyceum Theater, Minneapolis," September 7, 1898, Cushman K. Davis Papers; *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 18, 1898.

AS PEOPLE in Minnesota attempted to define the wave of public emotion evoked by the war, many looked toward heavenly authority. "There seems to be an inexorable decree of Divine Providence," noted Castle, "that each advance step in freedom, in national development, in Christian civilization, shall be won by the sword and paid for in the blood of heroes." Was it God who had decreed the war and unified the nation to accomplish his purpose? Probably without fully realizing it, Castle presented another alternative: "We have so permeated [the country] with our spirit of patriotism that it has become imbued and dominated by an aggressive, progressive, defiant, triumphant Americanism. Wherever we look we see it. In the halls of legislation, in the cabinets of our rulers and in the camps of the new soldiers that are going forward on a holy crusade to stand by that flag we fought to preserve and which we love so well."²⁸ This aggressive Americanism was a sentiment shared to some degree by virtually all Minnesota people. It had united such diverse personalities as Donnelly, Hill, Davis, and Ireland behind the same war; it had inspired enthusiasm among citizens and fighting men alike and had stimulated unified state support for the war against Spain. It was, in a word, nationalism.

First God and then country, but sometimes the distinction blurred as people accepted Ireland's vision of the holy crusade. Castle firmly believed that the gathering American hosts were undertaking a holier crusade than any led by Richard the Lion-Hearted—a crusade of "valiant service to the rights of man." In Mankato General James H. Baker, addressing a Memorial Day audience, agreed fully: "Not since Peter, the hermit, preached his memorable

crusade against the profanation and indignities heaped upon the sepulchre of Christ, has there been a war so utterly without selfishness. It is waged solely for liberty and humanity." While these men spoke, victory was already in sight, and Americans found the Philippine Islands within their reach. As the scriptures had promised, the liberal soul was made fat; the generosity of the United States toward Cuba was being rewarded. Certainly this was proof that God favored the cause.²⁹

If the country claimed the authority of God in a holy war, who was to argue? Usually not the clergymen. As preachers of one religion, they felt competent to speak for the other, especially since both faiths claimed the same God. Ireland had already promulgated as Catholic doctrine obedience to national authority and support of the holy war. The Independence Day sermons of Protestant ministers in St. Paul exuded a nationalism no less positive. Next to God comes country, said an Episcopal minister, and a colleague at the First Christian Church told his congregation that God delights in American greatness, that war is terrible but God overrules it for good. A Presbyterian minister agreed that God held the reins of the nation's effort against Spain and His goal, not the devil's, would be reached. And a Congregational minister announced that American liberty is a gospel of applied Christianity.³⁰ At least one Jewish rabbi subscribed to a non-Christian but equally religious type of nationalism. Jacob Aronsohn of the Sons of Jacob Congregation in St. Paul compared the United States and Spain to David and Goliath and committed himself to David and the cause of God and humanity. Although the country faced an old warrior, he said, "we will prove now as we have before that right will conquer all. 'For the battle is the Lord's and he will deliver them into our hands.'"³¹

In this context national holidays could, of course, be elevated to the level of religious events. The *Minneapolis Tribune* tolerated the exuberant excesses of Fourth of

²⁸ Castle, "Address at National Cemetery at Chattanooga, Tennessee," May 30, 1898, Castle Papers.

²⁹ Castle, "Synopsis of Chattanooga Address," May 30, 1898, Castle Papers; *Mankato Free Press*, May 31, 1898; *Pioneer Press*, June 19, 1898.

³⁰ *Pioneer Press*, July 4, 1898.

³¹ *Pioneer Press*, May 30, 1898.

July celebrations, but the paper's editorial writer preferred a grander and gentler type of observance, one more "earnest and reverential." The war had taught the great lesson that both "life and property must be laid down upon the altar of patriotism when duty calls for the sacrifice."³²

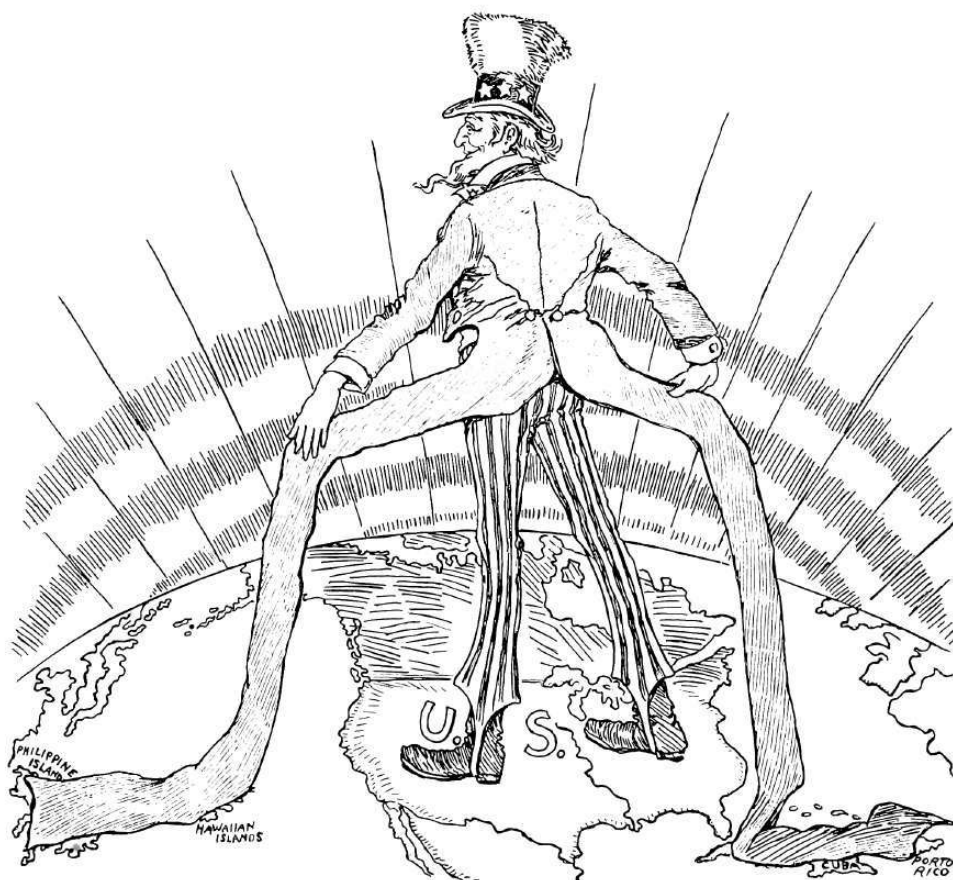
Thus nationalism could be a religion with altar, duty, sacrifice, gospel, holy war, and national god. In 1898 it was a youthful, aggressive nationalism, newly discovered after half a century of preoccupation with internal development and internal problems. Its atmosphere was circuslike, but the wartime exuberance was short-lived. Dissent appeared quickly when the nation's new role as a world power became apparent, and searching questions were asked as the war ended and the problem of what to do with the Philippine Islands arose. But though people questioned the nature of

their nationalism they seldom doubted their American allegiance.

In Minnesota farmers still felt oppressed, state businessmen feared the spreading power of the trusts, and political battles once more became heated. But the existence of a fiercely nationalistic spirit had been demonstrated, and though the intensity of feeling assumed a lower peacetime level, nationalism was to reach even greater heights in the twentieth century. Twenty years after the war with Spain, hysteria aroused by another crusade swept the nation and for a short time in 1918 virtually did away with civil liberties in Minnesota. American nationalism had shown itself, for good or bad, to be an enduring reality.

³² *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 4, 1898.

THE CARTOONS appeared on February 23, March 9 and 22, April 4, and December 3, 1898.



UNCLE SAM—DID ANYONE SAY HE WISHED TO TREAD ON THE TAILS OF MY COAT?



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