

## **Power Notes: 1890s - Populism, Race & Foreign Policy**

### ***LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the Populist movement.***

- 1) Agriculture declined because technology allowed increased production and world wide competition to reduce prices. Mortgaged & tenant farms increased. In the South, the lien system (farmer mortgaged future cash crop for goods) was the rule. Staple crop farmers (cotton, grain) hurt the most.
- 2) Farmers blamed the railroads, national banks, corporations, and the tariff for their problems. They thought there was a conspiracy against them.
- 3) The Sherman Silver Purchase Act (1890) required the treasury to purchase 4 .5 million ounces of silver each month to inflate currency. Failed to stop deflation.
- 4) Populist (People's) Party formed in 1892. Advocated: a) "Subtreasury system" where government would store crops and lend farmers money; b) abolition of national banks; c) free coinage of silver; d) graduated income tax; e) reduction of tariff rates; e) direct election of senators; and f) government control of the railroads and telegraph companies.
- 5) The Populists tried to build a class alliance between South and West, blacks and whites, farmer and labor. They failed.
- 6) The Panic of 1893 enabled the Republicans to gain control of the national government until 1930.
- 7) In the election of 1896 the Democratic Party and the Populist Party "fused" and both parties nominated William Jennings Bryan as their candidate. Fusion destroyed the Populist Party when the Republican William McKinley won the election.

**Importance:** The Populist movement was the "farmers' last gasp." It was their attempt to respond to the changes being brought about by industrialization. They were not successful in their attempts, although many of their proposals later became law.

### ***LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand race relations in America after Reconstruction.***

- 1) After 1877 the federal government allowed Southern whites to control local race issues. Blacks were subjugated to second class citizenship.
- 2) Southern blacks were allowed to vote & hold minor political offices until around 1900. When the Populists appealed for black votes along class lines, Southern conservative Democrats used black votes to defeat them. Once blacks held the balance of power between conflicting groups of Southern whites they were disfranchised.
- 3) In Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) the Supreme Court sanctioned segregation.
- 4) Under the "Mississippi Plan" blacks were disfranchised through the poll tax, literacy tests, and residence requirements. About 2,500 African-Americans were lynched between 1884 and 1900.

**Importance:** The Populist movement and white racism led to institutionalized discrimination. African-Americans were disfranchised, segregated and lynched. The aftermath of these policies still effect America.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand why Booker T. Washington and his philosophy were accepted by whites during the era of segregation.**

- 1) Washington advocated that blacks accept social inequality in return for economic opportunity from whites (the so-called "Atlanta Compromise"). Washington said what whites wanted to hear, and he became the accepted spokesman for blacks.
- 2) Washington controlled Republican patronage in the South and he used it to maintain his influence.
- 3) W.E.B. Du Bois was the major opponent of Washington. He demanded that blacks be given the franchise, civic equality and the chance for an equal education and economic advancement. He helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.

**Importance:** The triumph of the "Atlanta Compromise" meant that blacks would accept second-class citizenship until the 1960s.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand why the United States went to war with Spain in 1898.**

- 1) Cuba was a Spanish colony fighting for its independence.
- 2) The "de Lome Letter" and the sinking of the U.S. warship Maine in Havana harbor increased pressure for war on president McKinley.
- 3) U.S. went to war for the following reasons: a) Panic of 1893; b) ports & markets; c) looking for "new frontiers"; d) to ensure a weak, independent Cuba; e) protect U.S. investments; and f) to spread U.S. ideology.
- 4) The Teller Amendment to the declaration of war said that the U.S. would not make Cuba a colony. After an easy victory the U.S. made Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Wake & Guam colonies, and Cuba a protectorate. The U.S. received a military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in "perpetuity."
- 5) In the Philippines an insurrection broke out that took two years to subdue. More Americans died in this conflict than the Spanish-American War.
- 6) The 1902 Platt Amendment kept Cuba under U.S. domination until Fidel Castro took power in 1959.
- 7) In Hawaii, American citizens revolted and took over the country in 1893. The islands were annexed as a war measure in 1898 so the U.S. could control Pearl Harbor.

**Importance:** With the Spanish-American War the United States became a world power.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand U.S. policy toward China prior to World War II.**

- 1) The Open Door Notes of 1899 and 1900 were successful attempts by the U.S. to insure the Western powers equal access to the China market.
- 2) The Boxer Rebellion (1900) was a failed attempt by Chinese nationalists to remove foreign domination from their country. The rebellion was put down by European, Japanese and U.S. troops.

**Importance:** The "Open Door" became the foundation of American economic policy.

***LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand how and why the U.S. acquired the Panama Canal.***

- 1) France had a contract with Columbia (which controlled Panama) to build a canal across the isthmus. The French canal company was going bankrupt and wanted to sell its rights to the U.S.
- 2) Columbia rejected a U.S. offer of \$15 million, and an annual rent for the Canal Zone. The U.S. and the French canal company encouraged Panamanians to revolt and gain their independence. In 1903 the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty with Panama granted the U.S. a 10 mile wide canal zone in perpetuity. In 1977 the U.S. agreed to return the Canal Zone to Panamanian sovereignty in 2000.

**Importance:** The Panama Canal greatly benefited American trade and security. The way the U.S. got the canal led many Latin American countries to distrust the U.S.

***LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand U.S. relations with Latin America prior to World War I.***

- 1) The "Roosevelt Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine grew out of the 1904 Dominican Republic debt crisis. In the corollary the U.S. asserted that the U.S. would intervene in the internal affairs of Latin American states (collecting debts, maintaining order, etc.), but European nations (and later the Japanese) were not welcome.
- 2) Under Dollar Diplomacy President Taft hoped that U.S. financial supervision would promote order in Latin America.
- 3) These policies led to U.S. Marines staying in Nicaragua during 1912-33; in Haiti during 1915-34, and the Dominican Republic during 1916-24.
- 4) In 1916 the U.S. bought the Virgin Islands from Denmark.
- 5) Mexico was ruled by the dictator Porfirio Diaz, 1876-1911. Francisco Madero, a Liberal, overthrew Diaz. Madero was murdered by Victoriano Huerta in 1913 and Huerta took over the government. Civil War broke out between the "Constitutionalists," led by Venustiano Carranza & Pancho Villa, and Huerta's government forces. The U.S. supported the Constitutionalists. In April 1914, the U.S. navy attacked and occupied Veracruz, and Huerta fell from power in July.
- 6) After Carranza seized power, Pancho Villa led the fight against him. In March, 1916 Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico, killing 19 Americans in an attempt to discredit Carranza. The U.S. Army invaded Mexico to chase Villa. U.S. troops finally left Mexico in January, 1917.

**Importance:** U.S. intervention in the Caribbean and Mexico allowed the U.S. to dominate the region. Led to hard feelings and distrust of the U.S. by many Latin Americans.