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Chick Parsons

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and economic development. That political force must then be used behind the Filipino entrepreneurs to secure their dominant role, considering capital constraints and the now highly competitive environment within which the younger generation of Filipino businessmen must operate.

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CHICK PARSONS: AMERICA'S MASTER SPY IN THE PHILIPPINES.
By Carlos Quirino. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1984. vii, 168 pages, appendices, illustrations.

This is not a biography, but a brief summary in acceptable journalese — of which Carlos Quirino has shown himself a master — of the underground activities of Charles A. Parsons to prepare for the liberation of the Philippines from Japanese rule. An American by birth, who obtained Philippine citizenship by naturalization, Parsons suddenly became Panamanian consul shortly after the Japanese war began. This gave him diplomatic immunity and saved him from the sufferings other foreign nationals experienced during the war. Eventually shipped back to the United States, he was immediately chosen to serve as an undercover agent in the Philippines for the American war effort. He was, strictly speaking, not really “chosen,” since he *talked himself into* the job when he suggested that the best choice would be a man who was “really familiar with the country. . . lived there a good number of years [twenty in his case], a man who knows some of the local dialects and who could pass himself off as one of the natives” (p. 19). By early 1943, Parsons was in Australia, a member of the Philippine intelligence corps.

Espionage is seldom a solitary job. It is a cooperative undertaking, and the more the individuals involved, the greater the risks. A missed connection, a slip of the tongue, an unguarded gesture could lead to disaster. It is to Parsons' credit that he forged into a single, cohesive operation the disparate and, in a few cases, proud and sensitive guerilla units scattered all over the islands. Singly these individual units inflicted some harm on the enemy, but coordination of their movements was essential for victory.

This was Parsons' mission in the Philippines. He unified the Philippine underground, not only among themselves, but also with the advancing American forces.

One hundred and nineteen pages of narrative cannot include every aspect of this story, and scholars or historians will find nothing new in the book. It is, however, a good introduction to an aspect of the war not easily known by

the general reader. For this reason, factual accuracy is to be expected, not just in the "cataloguing" of incidents, but more importantly in their interpretation or narration. This, of course, is the prerogative of every writer, to describe his hero as he sees him. And to Carlos Quirino, Charles A. Parsons was the master spy who did his duty heartily and wholly "without a single regret" (p. 119).

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A VOYAGE TO THE PHILIPPINES. By J. de Man. Translated by E. Aguilar Cruz. Manila: National Historical Institute, 1984. xii, 116 pages, illustrations.

Travel books tell more of the author than the places reached. Not everything can be seen or understood within the limited time of a passing visit, and impressions are necessarily one-sided and superficial.

J. de Man's *Recollection of a Voyage to the Philippines* is no exception. Written in answer to requests from his friends, he makes no claims that his is a "proper book," although he hopes he can entertain his readers with it.

There are twenty-four brief chapters, with the section on the Philippines beginning only with chapter 8. The first seven relate the trip from France, with stops at Aden, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Singapore, and Hongkong.

The opening pages set the tone of the book. Emphasis is on the novel or the bizarre. With ill-concealed disdain for things non-European, the author betrays a gullibility bordering on the naive. It is, therefore, not surprising that he exaggerates and makes some egregious errors.

The most obvious is his description of a volcanic eruption in 1871 (pages 57 to 58). Two eruptions occurred this year, one of Mayon volcano, the other in Camiguin Island, whose capital is not Cotta-Bato, as the author wrongly says. A Jesuit missionary happened to sail by the island a few days after the first explosions in Camiguin Island. A new crater had opened and dark clouds towered over the island, and people, some with only their clothes on their back, frantically sailed away to safety in their tiny bancas. But, although silenced by the awesome power of nature, his description is much more subdued and less sensationalized than J. de Man's, but truer! Is the tourist's story, perhaps what Freudians call a case of someone with subconscious desires of being a hero? A chapter titled "One Night with Cannibals" is not a report of the author's experience, but his translation of an account published in the *Diario de Manila*. Why this was included in a book supposedly of one's personal experiences, is not clear. Or is it precisely to underline the mystery