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Laguna in American Times

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LAGUNA IN AMERICAN TIMES: COCONUTS AND REVOLUTIONARIOS. By Lewis E. Gleeck, Jr. Manila: Historical Conservation Society XXXIV, 1981. x, 155 pages.

This is an anecdotal description of the political and economic growth of the province of Laguna from 1900 to 1946, when the Philippines won political independence. Twenty-seven out of 155 pages discuss the public schools, but they are little more than a chronological summary of the small agricultural school that developed into the present University of the Philippines at Los Baños. Only a few school statistics are added, for, as Gleeck explains, the public schools "are poorly documented between 1917 and 1925. We know they suffered severely from a shortage of funds from 1922 to 1924" (p. 47). *Laguna in American Times* is, therefore, not a history as the term is understood to mean a cause-and-effect analysis which shows *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*.

This is not saying the book is useless. On the contrary, one finds here information not easily obtainable elsewhere. This is its strength and its weakness. A number of episodes tend to be trivial or, at least, they are not clearly shown to be elements that contributed to the life of the province.

One glaring omission is the demographic factor. History, after all, is the delicate balance between the human reaction and the surrounding stimuli. Where the latter is overwhelming, human society is "stunted," as in the case of the Eskimos or the Pacific islanders. A clue to the inner working of society is the ratio between the decision-makers and the followers. Social wealth and prosperity is measured, not by who enjoy material comfort, but by *how many* share it. Are not revolutions due to the disproportion and imbalance caused by the concentration of material benefits in the hands of a few at the top who enjoy the fruit of the labor of the vast majority under them?

In the brief discussion of the agricultural college at Los Baños, one of its deans states that "it is in the interest of the Filipino people that the population remain largely rural . . ." (p. 54). Uttered in 1911, it reveals an attitude later confirmed by a high U.S. government official who after the signing of the Philippine rehabilitation bill after the last war, chortled gleefully that the U.S. had just "secured our sixth best customer in world commerce." (*Friend, Between Two Empires* [1965], pp. 259-60). If there is much anti-American hostility among the Filipinos today, this is one of the roots that must be dug up to understand it more fully.

This is not Gleeck's first book. It is surprising, therefore, that there is no table of contents, no index, no bibliography. Citation of sources is limited to the footnotes. There are a few items that are mentioned which are taken for granted; e.g., the Sakdal victory of 1934. They may be known to an older generation of Filipinos, but not by all. The amazing rescue of the Los Baños concentration camp internees is a thrilling episode both to those who were

rescued and the rest who merely read about it today. But why was this included in such detail? If it needed to be made part of the story of Laguna, more research into the stories of the ex-prisoners themselves is called for. Many of these accounts are still available, although only in manuscript form (the archives of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus keeps a number of these accounts: in reading them one feels the human dimension of the painful three years when the Philippines was under Japanese rule).

This is what is missed in reading *Laguna in American Times*, namely, the flesh and blood reality that is Laguna. Juan Cailles, the first governor of the province under the American government, would be a less wooden figure if he had been described as a classmate of Artemio Ricarte at the Jesuit *Escuela Normal* in Manila. Both finished their studies in 1890, graduating with the general grade of "bueno," although in his first year, Cailles had received the higher rating of "sobre-saliente." A significant point of this essay is the link between the "revolutionary elite to the proto-industrialists to the politicians" (p. 152). That is the story of Laguna province, but as already indicated, it is not too clearly explicated. Perhaps in a later edition this can be clarified further such that useless repetition and overlapping of chapter divisions can be avoided. And certainly, a much more diligent proofreader of the text should not be too much of an expense.

Jose S. Arcilla, S.J.

THE WAINWRIGHT PAPERS. HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS OF WORLD WAR II IN THE PHILIPPINES. Edited with notes and comments by Celedonio A. Ancheta. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1980-82. 4 volumes. vii, 213; vii, 198; vii, 301; v, 212 pages; maps, plates, appendices, bibliography.

Besides offering information, the editor hopes that the publication in book form of this collection of military documents may help pave the way "for the prevention of war" (I, 189), and due honor be paid to the soldiers who in defense of their country died in Bataan. I do not presume to deny or agree that these three purposes are possible. But these four volumes — which could more conveniently be issued in just a single volume — now make some primary sources of an important episode in recent Philippine history easily available to interested parties. For this the editor is to be congratulated.

These documents are reports of the military operations undertaken during the Pacific war, 1941-42. They were prepared at the end of the war on orders from General Jonathan Wainwright, MacArthur's substitute when the latter sailed for Australia, and commanding officer when the Fil-American troops surrendered to the Japanese. Prepared in "Japanese prison camps and