

Europeans in the Philippines

I had written about the Americans who came to the Philippines, stayed and made a significant impact in the country's life with their contributions to business, industry, education, entertainment and sometimes behind the scenes politics. There are others who came to the Philippines from European countries. They too, made a sizeable impact, especially in education. I am not including the Spanish families and clergy who came as colonizers. This essay is not meant to be comprehensive, but is a sampling:

George Lucas Adamson, a chemist by training, was the founder of what became Adamson University. Born in Greece, George started the school in 1932, as the Adamson School of Industrial Chemistry. At first, it was a family affair. George was joined by his wife, two Adamson cousins from Greece, and a cousin-in-law, to administer the school. Adamson's school began as a training school for chemists. Thirty two years after the founding, the Adamson family turned the school over to the Vincentians, or Congregation of the Mission. George stayed with the university for a few years after the Vincentians took over. Since then the university has been headed by Vincentian priests. From its beginning of a few dozen students and a handful of Greek teachers, the university has grown to an enrollment of 22,000.

Belgian Priests and Nuns:

Christianity or specifically Catholicism, was brought to the Philippines by the Spanish. But even into the 20th century, there were pockets of indigenous groups of Filipinos who had not been reached by the Spanish friars. To use a phrase I first heard in the southern U.S., they were "unchurched." Into this gap came the Belgian missionary priests and nuns. The first Belgian priests were assigned to the Mountain Provinces in the Cordilleras of northern Luzon, site of the World Heritage Banaue rice terraces and home to the Apayao, Bontoc, Ifugao and Kalinga tribes. Led by a Superior, 7 priests and a brother, the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM), arrived in late 1907. Baguio, the largest city in the mountain provinces, became the location of Saint Louis University, founded by CICM, with a present enrollment of 35,000 across several campuses. CICM also built the Baguio Cathedral, which dominates the skyline as you enter the city.

The first Belgian nuns came in 1910, led by Rev. Mother Marie Louise de Meester, founder of the Immaculati Cordis Mariae (ICM) or Immaculate Heart of Mary. Like CICM, the sisters started out in northern Luzon. ICM concentrated on education, founding a string of schools named after Saint Teresa of Avila. Saint Theresa's of Quezon City dates back to Mother De Meesters founding of Saint Theresa's of Manila in 1915.

The Belgians made another contribution, constructing what became the Basilica Minore of San Sebastian, now a landmark in the heart of old Manila. It is located only a 20 min. walk from our house and I remember going to Mass there occasionally. Designed by a Spanish architect, the all steel prefabricated church was constructed in Binche, Belgium and shipped to Manila in sections. Belgian engineers assembled the structure, completing the job in 1891. President Ferdinand Marcos declared it a National Historical Landmark in 1973. There is a Facebook page called Manila Nostalgia, of which I am an avid follower. Hardly a week passes by before an old

Europeans in the Philippines

picture or mention of San Sebastian church is posted.

Giancarlo Bossi was an Italian priest belonging to the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME), who served in Mindanao. He was toiling anonymously when he was kidnapped in the province of Zamboanga by the Muslim group known as *Abu Sayyaf*. The Abus basically kidnap for ransom. Years earlier, this same renegade band went into the resort island of Dos Palmas near Puerto Princesa, Palawan, kidnapping a score of people, including an American missionary couple. (Gracia Burnham, whose husband Steve did not survive their eventual rescue, wrote about their year long ordeal in her book "In the Presence of my Enemies.") Fr. Bossi was held for five weeks and released. Fr. Bossi was lucky. Prior to his kidnapping, three other Italian priests belonging to PIME had been murdered in Mindanao over the years. Bossi's Italian superiors wouldn't allow him to return to Mindanao, so he continued his missionary calling in other Philippine provinces. Ill health compelled him to return to Italy, where he passed away in 2012. He had spent 32 years as a missionary in the Philippines. Undeterred, PIME continues its mission in the Philippines.

Henry Byrne was born in Edenderry, Ireland, less than 40 miles west of Dublin. He was the Emeritus Bishop of Iba, Zambales, first appointed as Prelate of Iba in 1956. He was the Bishop in 1983 when failing health compelled him to retire. He passed away only days later. With frequent visits to their country home in Iba, and my mother's support of the diocese, Bishop Byrne became a friend of my parents. When Bishop Byrne heard that my father had passed away in 1979, he came from Iba to preside at my dad's Requiem Mass in Manila. I had visited my ailing father less than a month before, so I didn't return for his funeral. But my sister Tita told me later that Bishop Byrne delivered a beautiful eulogy, but unfortunately his words are lost. How I wish someone had taken notes or recorded Bishop Byrne's eulogy.

Bishop Byrne was ordained in the Missionary Society of St. Columban. A few Sundays ago, our parish of St. John Neumann had a visiting priest from Uganda celebrate Mass. Our guest priest was a Comboni missionary, now working in the Comboni Provincial house in Cincinnati. Perhaps the missionary world has come full circle.

Robert McCulloch Dick was the founder of the weekly newsmagazine Philippines Free Press. It was truly the only nationwide publication for half a century, a combination of news, opinion and small town chit chat, with humor thrown in. I remember that the last page, before the inside back cover, was always devoted to a cartoon and an accompanying joke. The PFP had political reporters and opinion writers who were fearless. Born in Scotland, Dick came to the Philippines at about the same time as the Americans at the turn of the 20th century. He founded the PFP in 1908 and lived to see his beloved publication celebrate its 50th anniversary. The term "Juan de la Cruz," representing the Filipino everyman, was coined by Dick. He received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism in 1958. The only time the PFP was shut down was during the Japanese occupation when Dick was imprisoned at Fort Santiago. Perhaps befitting the Scottish reputation for frugality, Dick was a simple man, never married, and lived in a nondescript house. His magazine and his employees were his family. The magazine never took sides in the

Europeans in the Philippines

Byzantine world of Filipino politics. For their reporting, the PFP was the object of libel suits and death threats, but their integrity never wavered. Now over 100 years old, the Philippines Free Press lives on.

German nuns:

There are two women's colleges in Manila which were founded by German nuns. The first is Holy Ghost College, only ten minutes from our house, started by the Missionary Sisters, Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS). Someone must have decided, decades later, that the use of "ghost" conjured other images, so the name was changed to College of the Holy Spirit Manila. My sister Charito obtained all of her schooling, grade school to college, from CHSM. Most of the administrators during Charito's time at the school were German nuns and the non-religious faculty were women. There were a handful of American nuns, and a growing number of Filipina nuns. The chaplains belonged to the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). The German born saint, Arnold Janssen, founded both SVD and SSpS. Upon retirement, the German nuns returned either to the Motherhouse in Steyl, Holland or their hometowns. By the time Charito graduated, the school's Directress was a Filipina.

The other college is St. Scholastica College Manila, founded by five German nuns belonging to Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing. (So you don't have to look it up, Tutzing is in Bavaria, Germany.) SSCM is where my older sister Tita (now 93) went. So Tita and I were both inculcated in the Benedictine motto of *Ora et Labora*.

Having been founded more than 100 years ago, these two institutions have educated at least four generations of Filipinas. The late Philippine President Corazon Aquino graduated from St. Scholastica. The SSCM website names the German nun founders but CHSM only provides their post vow names. Much has changed in those 100 years, CHSM is now co-ed and headed by a lay administrator. There are male professors. But the students still have to wear uniforms.

Separately, I am issuing the recollections of my sister Charito, about her Holy Ghost College years.

Abram van Heyningen Hartendorp was born in the Netherlands, coming to the Philippines in 1917. He became an editorial writer at the Manila Times newspaper, before starting his own publication, the Philippine Magazine. He became a close associate of the American ethnographer H. Otley Beyer. Interned at the University of Santo Tomas camp during the occupation, he surreptitiously kept a diary which was published as "The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines." The book is the lengthiest and most thorough account of the suffering of Americans interned during the occupation, the details of which were used during the trial of the Japanese military occupation commander Yamashita. It is just incredible how Hartendorp was able to write his lengthy account without being detected by the Japanese. Unfortunately, he was not able to revive his Philippine Magazine after the war and spent the rest of his life as the editor of the American Chamber of Commerce publication.

Europeans in the Philippines

Leopold Kauffmann Kahn was born in Alsace, France in 1870 and came to the Philippines in 1909 to work with the Levy Brothers. Kahn and the Levys founded "*La Estrella del Norte*" (Star of the North), a jewelry store that expanded into a popular general merchandise store along the Escolta. La Estrella del Norte was Manila's Tiffany. Kahn was President and General Manager, La Estrella del Norte, Levy Hermanos, Inc.; General Manager, Estrella Auto Palace (Chrysler products); Director, Metropolitan Theater, Inc., Bank of the Philippine Islands and Philippine Trust Co. In their time, these businesses were among the blue chip companies of Manila. In fact the latter banks are still around today, BPI being the oldest bank in the country. Kahn was President, Chambre de Commerce Francaise Aux Iles Philippines, decorated by Governor Pasquier of French Indo-China as the most notable Frenchman in the Philippine Islands. Although Jewish, Kahn was awarded the Knight of the Order of Pius IX by the Archbishop of Manila. He married a Filipina, later marrying his sister-in-law after his first wife passed away. Having had eleven children, Leopold's many descendants continue to live in the Philippines.

Hans Menzi was born in the Philippines of Swiss parents. He was always referred to as General, for his exploits in WWII. However, I could find no references to his military or guerilla record. But he carried the General title and was referred to as "senior military aide" to Ferdinand Marcos in official documents. His parent's businesses were largely destroyed during the war but he built a business empire from what remained. In the 1950's, he bought one of the leading metropolitan newspapers, the Manila Daily Bulletin, from its American founder. Along with the newspaper was a publishing conglomerate which included popular magazines. His other businesses were in paper and agriculture. Menzi had large landholdings in the island of Basilan, more than 2,000 acres, devoted to rubber and palm oil. He could have rested on his laurels but he became an ally of the putative dictator Ferdinand Marcos, starting in the pre-martial law days. This association continued to haunt Menzi long after his death. Never having married, with no heirs, his assets were seized by the government after the fall of Marcos. The assets were later sold and turned over to the treasury. It was an inglorious end to the Menzi empire, not befitting of a man who was once a business and social titan of the Manila scene.

European expatriates to the Philippines aren't as numerous as those from Spain or the United States. But as can be surmised from the short list above, they did come and made their contribution.

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