

Theresa Kaminski. *Angels of the Underground: The American Women Who Resisted the Japanese in the Philippines in World War II.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. xv + 497 pp. \$27.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-992824-8.

Reviewed by Ryan Wadle

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Resistance and captivity, much like combat, are subjects that lend themselves well to a variety of historical approaches. With her earlier book, *Prisoners in Paradise: American Women in the Wartime South Pacific* (2000), Theresa Kaminski took a more academic and analytical approach to her thematic study of captivity and gender during World War II. Yet, these topics also allow historians to embrace the drama and romance surrounding them. Kaminski has built off of the knowledge and analysis gathered in her earlier book to craft a thoughtful and engrossing history of resistance, *Angels of the Underground: The American Women Who Resisted the Japanese in the Philippines in World War II*.

The book follows four women through the Japanese occupation of the Philippines: Claire Phillips, Margaret Utinsky, Yay Panlilio, and Gladys Savary. Based in part upon memoirs that each woman authored after the war, Kaminski has conducted an impressive amount of additional archival research that adds to those accounts and allows her to interrogate each of her subjects. Furthermore, Kaminski asks fundamental questions about gender, patriotism, and the nature of service, as each of these women struggled for the survival of not only themselves and their families but their communities, too.

Each woman came to Manila by a different path, yet each possessed an adventuresome spirit that led them to reside in the commonwealth. Furthermore, all four (mostly) successfully concealed their connections to the United States in order to preserve their freedom and continue the struggle. Yay Panlilio was an American-born half-Filipina who worked in Manila as a journalist, but, after briefly and covertly transmitting intelligence information through news broadcasts after the Japanese invasion, served as a “mother” to a band of guerillas in the hills. Gladys Savary married a French engineer whose work led them to the Philippines. While there, she became a restaurateur and used her culinary skills to feed civilian internees at the Santo Tomas camp in Manila. Claire Phillips was a former entertainer and divorced single mother who, masquerading as an Italian, operated a nightclub that allowed her to collect money and information from the Japanese that then went to aid the resistance. In doing so, she sometimes worked with Margaret Utinsky, the wife of an American serviceman who, claiming to be a Lithuanian national, operated the clandestine “Miss U” network that funneled money and supplies to American POWs.

Despite the commonalities, the differences between the women are equally striking. Panlilio

and Savary appear to have been the most well adjusted of the four personalities and both made surprisingly easy transitions to the postwar world. Their stories, however, do not receive as much coverage as the closely linked narratives of Phillips and Utinsky. Phillips aided the resistance, but many of her contemporaries resented her for her close—and sometimes sexual—relationships with the Japanese. Utinsky's relief work was incredibly valuable, but she took risks that her compatriots thought unnecessary. Both Phillips and Utinsky suffered heavily at the hands of the Japanese, but this only seemed to embolden Phillips, whose attempts to seek fame and financial recompense for her work after the war led to a series of investigations by the FBI. Meanwhile, Utinsky faded into obscurity, emotionally scarred by her maltreatment in captivity. As Kaminski acknowledges, their heroism does not completely mask the fact that they were all "flawed human beings" (p. 402).

Kaminski wisely interweaves the accounts of prisoners and guerillas that makes this an easy read for nonspecialists and laypersons alike, but the book's aim for a wider audience is undercut by a pair of notable production-related flaws. While this is clearly not an operational history that should be heavily reliant upon maps, *Angels of the Underground* could have used better maps that provided a clearer geographical relationship between the myriad places discussed in Manila and the rest of central Luzon. Conversely, for such an intimate and personal narrative, it is surprising that more photographs were not included in the volume. The presence of the Japanese obviously discouraged photography during the occupation, but Kaminski references a photo of Utinsky and Phillips together in 1945 that, strangely, does not appear in the book. Neither of these seriously detracts from the otherwise gripping read, but readers will likely note their absence.

Angels of the Underground is an exciting narrative that adds to the rich body of knowledge of the Pacific war and the contest for the Philippines.

Kaminski allows readers to understand the motivations of her subjects and their subsequent actions, and is unafraid to question the veracity of their accounts. This book comes highly recommended.

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