

# philippine studies

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**Preparation For Independence:  
American Economic Policy Toward the Philippines  
by Shirley Jenkins**

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*Philippine Studies* vol. 2, no. 4 (1954): 387–389

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### PREPARATION FOR INDEPENDENCE

**AMERICAN ECONOMIC POLICY TOWARD THE PHILIPPINES.** By Shirley Jenkins. With an Introduction by Claude A. Buss. Published under the Auspices of the American Institute of Pacific Relations. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California. 1954. Pp. viii-181.

Mr. Claude A. Buss, author of the introductory remarks, lecturer in history at Stanford University, was connected with the United States High Commissioner's office in the Philippines. The introduction as written by Mr. Buss is presented as the setting for the work of Mrs. Jenkins. Written as it were by an expert on Philippine affairs, it provides the reader with an interesting although somewhat surprising analysis of the Philippine picture. This expert was connected with the High Commissioner's office during a period when this office was in exile (1941-1944). He paints a quaint picture of the disgruntled peasant leaders before the war with some vague idea of Communism, who banded together during the war with the sole purpose of defeating the Japanese, which they eventually did, in spite of their allies. In the introduction, Professor Buss takes great pains in explaining why the Huks burned and sacked hospitals ("for medicines"), neglecting to mention the rape of the nurses, and "select private homes," ignoring the murder of inhabitants. In a puzzling attempt at misrepresentation Professor Buss contends that the Huk leaders displayed sensitivity to Moscow only in the midsummer of 1948, with a passing reference to the establishment of the Communist party 18 years before. The presentation of this matter is made in a fashion so sketchy as to give an entirely disjointed idea of the Communist movement in the Philippines. Unfortunately Professor Buss also forgot to mention that

the Communist party in the Philippines was formed on *November 7, 1930, the same day the Bolshevik revolution began*, and that in 1938 when the party reorganized, *it clearly stated that it was affiliated with the Communist internationale*. We hardly consider this a vague and flimsy connection with Moscow. Yet according to Professor Buss it was only in August, 1948 that Luis Taruc announced in Nueva Ecija that he was a member of the Communist party, completely ignoring the fact that 10 years before he was the private secretary of the vice-chairman of the Communist party.

We do not expect to prove anything with these remarks. We only attempt in our own way to point out some glaring and important facts either glossed over or ignored by Professor Buss. We hope in this way to place Professor Buss' introduction in the proper setting.

Let us now proceed to the consideration of the book as written by Mrs. Shirley Jenkins. The book in itself is well researched, written in a scholarly fashion, and utilizes materials readily available to anyone interested in studying Philippine-American economic relations. The chapter on the Philippine Trade Act contains many entertaining and interesting quotations, no doubt gathered from the Congressional Record, which throw light on the Act, particularly suited to anyone interested in giving the United States a bad name. Much of the book seems to have been written with this idea in mind. Mrs. Jenkins has ignored the fact that the United States has poured millions, or billions, of dollars into the Philippines under various forms. In ascribing chauvinistic intentions to the United States, Mrs. Jenkins has been quite unjust.

The Philippine Trade Act was not designed as a perfect instrument of economic policy, but as an aid to the Philippines in recovering its economic balance. To quote our resident commissioner then, "Since we cannot have perfection, let us have action."

That the Philippines reverted back to the old economic pre-war pattern is not less the fault of the leaders in the Philippines than those of the United States, and to create the impression that this situation was forced by the United States on the Philippines is doing violence to the integrity and sincerity of both nations.

In the conclusion of her book, Mrs. Jenkins says, "The failure of the new republic to alter the pattern of inefficient production, low incomes, and uneven distribution of wealth cannot be separated from the United States' past failure to attack these problems effectively and to foster a strong economic basis for political independence." This statement shows

rather effectively the shakiness of Mrs. Jenkins' foundation in the history of Philippine-American relations, especially of the strong nationalistic movement that effectively sought, fought and gained independence for the Philippines. A thorough study of this would, I believe, show that the pattern of economic and political independence was discussed thoroughly in the spirit of *quid pro quo*, and that the eventual result came from a meeting of minds to achieve a common purpose.

GREGORIO V. ROMULO

### HUKBALAHAP MOVEMENT

BORN OF THE PEOPLE. By Luis Taruc. International Publishers, New York. 1953. Pp. 286.

An autobiography of Luis Taruc, this book necessarily tells much about the Hukbalahap. In fact after the first few pages we learn little of the particulars of the life of Taruc, the book being dedicated solely to the history and workings of the Huk movement up to the first year of Quirino's presidency.

Taruc—or whoever prepared the book for him—has learned well the science of Communist propaganda. He exaggerates, misinterprets and twists facts to suit his convenience. His thesis: The Huk is inexorably marching to complete victory just as the present "puppet" government is marching to its doom. Proof: Because this is the spontaneous movement of the *tao* who after centuries of subjection is at last coming to his own.

There are exaggerations, understatements and out-and-out lies which anyone in the country will see through and which seem to suggest that this book was written primarily for foreign consumption. Among other things the author's condemnation of the landowning class is too sweeping, his criticism of the government machinery and processes of justice too narrow, his story of the Huk's part in the liberation of the Philippines too fantastic, his tale of American imperialism dripping with the Moscow brand of prejudice. From the start he splits the country into two parts: the Huk and the non-Huk, the former being subtly referred to always as the "people" "patriots" "peasants"; the latter the definite minority as the "collaborators" "puppets" "imperialists" who betray the "people" at every turn.