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committee for a Revolutionary Communist Party in Australia

RECONSTITUTE THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA ON THE BASIS OF MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM!

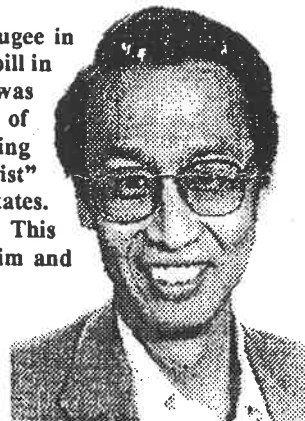
The US wants to close the dragnet around Sison

The Netherlands has closed his bank account and taken away his housing.
What's next: extradition?



Bert De Belder, Solidaire, Workers' Party of Belgium

With a single stroke, Jose Maria (Joma) Sison, a Philippine political refugee in the Netherlands, is penniless and homeless. When he wanted to pay his bill in the Albert Hein supermarket or for his dentist, he noted that his bank account was blocked. On the 12 September, he got a letter from the municipal government of Utrecht. It was a shock: the letter announced that his social benefits, including housing, had been stopped. These are all consequences of the latest "anti-terrorist" measures of the Dutch government, issued on the request of the United States. Rumors have it that the US may soon demand for the extradition of Sison. This combines with an international smear campaign in the mass media against him and against the entire Philippine revolutionary movement.



Phase 1: Demonising the target

On August 20, the Dutch TV's news programme *2Vandaag* ("TV2 Today") brought an interview with Jose Maria Sison, as the US had just placed the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) – of which Sison is the founding chairman – and the New People's Army (NPA) on its list of "terrorist organisations", and the Netherlands had just blocked Sison's bank account. The opening remark of journalist Jan Peters Lohper: "Your hands are stained with blood"! While the voice-over told the audience about the NPA, images were shown of men in military uniform spraying bullets on a poor farmer's hut, and of dangerous looking, heavily armed and hooded men. A stark manipulation, as anybody who knows the Philippines could immediately tell that these were images of the government's Armed Forces of the Philippines and the paramilitary CAFGU's!

Next you see the cover of Amnesty International's *Report 2002*. *2Vandaag* goes on to show a 'quote', complete with quotation marks, as if the NPA would have a hit list of 345 people to be executed. A check on AI's website and with the Asia Department of AI's London headquarters learned that this 'quote' was a pure fabrication!

Last month, a picture made the tour of the world's newspapers. It showed a girl in Manila, holding a poster saying "Two faces of terror: Osama Bin Laden and Jose Maria Sison". The Belgian conservative paper *La Libre Belgique*, for one, published the picture prominently¹. The message is clear: Sison equals Bin Laden, so it's

open season against him, no holds barred.

On September 16, the Manila weekly

Newsbreak carried a long article against the CPP, the NPA and Sison.² The magazine uses the words of certain 'dissidents' who have turned their back on the revolutionary movement to suggest that the United States could ask for Sison's extradition. Because "the CPP-NPA has repeatedly threatened Americans with harm" and "the NPA has kidnapped foreigners". The article concludes: "Nothing precludes [the Netherlands] from extraditing him to the US - should the Americans ask for him."

Phase 2: Tightening the noose

On August 13, the Dutch government issued the 'Sanctions ruling terrorism 2002 III'³, directed at the New People's Army/Communist Party of the Philippines and at Jose Maria Sison. The objective: to make Sison's life financially and materially unbearable.

"All means belonging to [Sison] will be frozen. It is prohibited to undertake financial services for or in favor of [him]", according to Article 2. A couple of days later, Sison's personal bank account is already frozen.

Jose Maria Sison has been an asylum seeker in the Netherlands for quite some time. As a result of the Ruling on the Reception of Asylum Seekers, he gets a monthly allowance for personal expenses, a social benefit for housing and a health insurance. But in a letter dated September 10, the municipal government of

Utrecht ended all this abruptly, in application of the 'Sanctions ruling terrorism 2002 III'.

"That means that you shall no longer receive an allowance for personal expenses and you are no longer insured against illness and the financial consequences of legal liability", the letter explains dryly, and "you may therefore no longer make use of the apartment on Rooseveltlaan 778". That's where Joma Sison is living with his wife Julie and his son Jasm. "We still have no solution for the accommodation of the members of your family", the letter continues. In the meantime, "we allow them to stay in the house that we had made available to you". So Joma is being expelled from his home, while his wife and son can continue to live there, but only as an exceptional and temporary 'goodwill' measure!

With the same generosity, the municipal government of Utrecht suggests that Sison can challenge this decision before the minister of Finance on humanitarian grounds, as provided for in the 'Sanctions ruling terrorism 2002 III'. Joma says on this matter: "Of course, there is the hypocritical provision that I can get these on 'humanitarian grounds' if I beg for mercy. If I were to 'beg' for the basic necessities of life on 'humanitarian grounds' under the terms of the 'Sanctions ruling terrorism 2002 III', will I not be moving into the trap of accepting the unjust premises and terms of the said 'sanctions ruling'? Are not the Dutch authorities violating my rights as a recognized political refugee by trying to deprive me of the basic necessities of life, humiliating and degrading me by compelling me to beg for these?"

Phase 3: Mounting a case

The (very limited) protection that Sison enjoys in the Netherlands as a political refugee may be blown away completely if and when the United States would demand his extradition. Currently, there is no criminal case against him in the US, on the basis of which extradition would become a possibility. But things may change. Coincidentally, the murder of US colonel James 'Nick' Rowe has been rekindled lately.

On April 21, 1989 – yes, more than 13 years ago! – an urban guerrilla squad of the NPA shot Rowe in Manila. The man, a decorated Vietnam veteran, was the chief of the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) in Manila. This group trained the Philippine armed forces in counterinsurgency and worked with the CIA on a strategy to infiltrate the CPP and the NPA. Rowe appears to have been the *control officer* of those infiltrators.⁴

Rowe is the highest US military officer to have been killed in the Philippines, a feat that the United States can hardly stomach. With each negotiation on the release of political prisoners in the Philippines, the US embassy intervenes to demand that the suspected perpetrators of the Rowe killing, Donato Contingente en Juanito Itaas, would certainly not be set free. The Rowe case may become the pretext for the US to demand the extradition of Sison – although it remains a mystery how a jobless professor and asylum seeker in the

Netherlands could ever be held accountable for that act. But of course, the ultimate objective of the US is to finish a man who continues to play an important role as chief political consultant to the National Democratic Front of the Philippines – the alliance of the Philippine revolutionary organisations – and as the 'great old man' of the revolutionary movement. Indeed, the US has a deep disgust for any struggle for liberation, for this means, according to Joma Sison, "the liberation of their imperialist exploitation".

The Netherlands as a US puppet

On August 9, the US State Department designated the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army as "foreign terrorist organisations" and implored other governments to do the same. On August 12, the US Treasury Department listed the CPP, the NPA and Jose Maria Sison as "terrorists" whose assets must be frozen. On August 13 already, the Dutch authorities issued the 'Sanctions ruling terrorism 2002 III'⁵. The Dutch government claims "the necessity to take prompt measures" as a reason not to wait for "conclusions that will follow at the European level". But by acting so fast, the governmental ruling contained several factual errors. On August 23, the government already had to publish corrections regarding the place and date of birth of Sison!⁶

In the 'Sanctions ruling terrorism 2002 III' not a single word of motivation can be found. Why to list the NPA, the CPP and Sison as "terrorists"? Why freeze their assets? No single reason is being given. Or is it just because the US has asked so? In an explanation to the ruling the Dutch Foreign Minister de Hoop Scheffer admits as much: Europe has to work "in close collaboration with the United States", and the names referred to for the freezing of assets "are also on an 'executive order' issued by US president Bush on August 12, 2002". Apparently, this suffices as a reason...

Philippine Senator Loren Legarda praises Jose Maria Sison

"For more than three decades now, Jose Maria Sison and a very special breed of Filipinos have pursued an extraordinary course that has shaped post-war Philippine politics and society in a fundamental way. One may not necessarily agree with their alternative vision of Philippine society, but no one can doubt the integrity of their patriotism or the depth of their commitment to help bring about a more just and a more humane society."⁷ □

1. August 17, p.9

2. http://www.inq7.net/nwsbrk/2002/sep/05/nbk_5-1.htm

3. Staatscourant nr. 153, August 13

4. James Neilson, in U.S. Veteran News and Report

5. Staatscourant nr. 153, August 13

6. Staatscourant nr. 161, August 23

7. August 25, 2002 Gathering of 'Friends of Prof. Jose Maria Sison et al', Executive House, UP Diliman, Metro Manila, Philippines

Hands off Iraq!

Defend Iraq, Defeat Imperialism

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