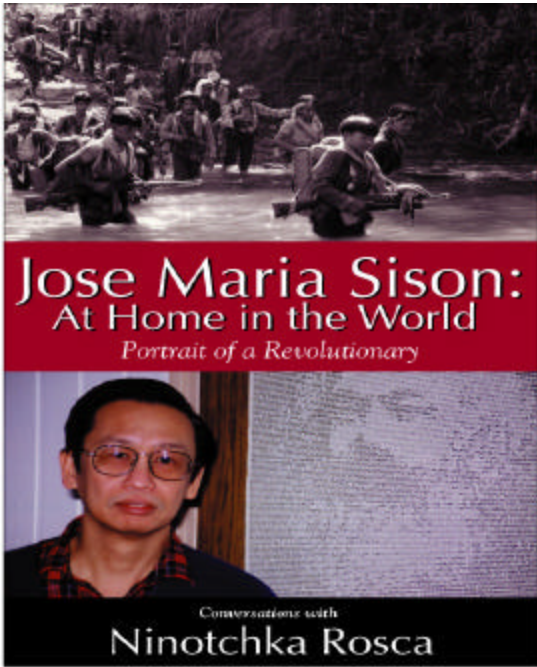


JOSE MARIA SISON: AT HOME IN THE WORLD

Portrait of a Revolutionary

Conversations with Ninotchka Rosca

George W. Bush and his Administration have labeled Jose Maria Sison as a “terrorist”. Former United States Attorney-General Ramsey Clark has stated, “Those of us who are working to stop the unbridled aggression against the world that has been unleashed by the Bush White House should make every effort to defend Prof. Jose Maria Sison, and to support the Filipino people as they struggle to defend sovereignty and build peace.”



Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has joined with George W. Bush in designating Sison as a “terrorist”. But her own Vice President, Teofisto Guingona, has staunchly insisted, despite great political differences with Sison, that he is a true Filipino patriot. And the Majority Leader of the Philippine Senate, Loren Legarda, arguably the most popular woman politician in the Philippines today, has stated, “...no one can doubt the integrity of their patriotism or the depth of their commitment to help bring about a more just and more human society. I look to the day Joma [Sison] and the others can finally come home to our collective embrace.”

The co-author of this book is Ninotchka Rosca, winner of a number of national and international literary awards, including the American Book Award. In her biographical sketch of Sison which serves as this book’s introduction, Ms. Rosca states:

By giving up a life of comfort, by electing to go underground, by involving himself not only in leading but also immersing himself in revolutionary armed struggle, Prof. Sison hammered home the ideal of praxis: as you say life should be lived, so should your own life be lived.

His life and work exemplified the unity of theory and practice. Armchair or cappuccino political theorists have not been held in any kind of respect in the Philippines ever since.

By his life as well, Prof. Sison made vivid the truth that even as circumstances forged a person, so could a person forge circumstances. Among a people brainwashed into fatalism, one of whose constant phrases was bahala na (it’s up to god), this lesson was profound.

These unique characteristics would evolve and become the hallmarks of Philippine militancy. The organizations he led – from the KM to the CPP to the NPA – summed up these virtues in succinct phrases (serve the people; dare to struggle, etc...) and spread them throughout the archipelago. Such clarity of purpose and clarity of action enabled the people to weather decades of the Marcoses as well as demoralization over succeeding Philippine regimes. They helped the revolutionary movement weather four decades of repression and suppression.

In May 2001, when I signed the contract to do this book with Ms. Rosca and Professor Sison, I was quite excited for Open Hand Publishing, LLC as well as our readers. Open Hand would have the opportunity to present a thought-provoking political biography/autobiography. The U.S. reader, in particular, would get a rare glimpse into the life, the motivation and the thinking of a revolutionary leader of a significant national liberation struggle aimed at achieving freedom from the “embrace” of our own United States government.

The horrific events of September 11th and their aftermath have no doubt prolonged the process of producing this book. For our part, Open Hand’s Board of Directors revisited the question of whether to go forward with the project in the face of the curtailment of civil liberties in the USA and the “terrorist” designation of Jose Maria Sison abroad. We at Open Hand Publishing, LLC concluded that the issue of “free speech”, which involves the need for the people to be armed with knowledge, makes this book even more significant for the future of humanity than the original conception. We have attempted to accurately present the authors’ ideas.

Finally, it is our hope that this book presents authentic information with which the reader can make an intelligent determination about whether Jose Maria Sison is the “terrorist” that the Bush Administration has designated or the “liberation fighter” that the authors clearly believe him to be.

Richard A. Koritz
Open Hand Publishing, LLC
April 2004

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