

Fraud of Dutch liberal dope policy exposed

by Christian Huth

The citizens of the Netherlands were understandably astonished when, in mid-September, a number of very unusual police procedures being used in connection with “control” of the drug traffic were made known. Testifying before a parliamentary investigating committee, representatives of the police and other parts of the legal system admitted to having procured for the population at least 400 tons of narcotics in recent years. Something like half of this went to immediate consumption, domestically or abroad, with the other half being stashed away for later. Meanwhile, because of these police procedures, undercover agents and informants are purportedly able to line their pockets, since they are presumably getting close to the highers-up behind the drug trade. In spite of this huge operation, practically no important arrests have been made.

That this story has come out, means exposing the bankruptcy of Holland’s “liberal” drug policy, according to which it is legal to purchase hashish and marijuana for personal consumption. Furthermore, the tolerant Dutch—who up to now have endured without complaint the drug subculture, with its hashish-café’s, its squalid and miserable “drug scenes,” its foreign drug tourists—are now fed up. In several cities in recent weeks, demonstrations have protested the government’s drug policy.

In Rotterdam alone, more than 5,000 people gathered in order to demonstrate. Business people of the indoor mall “Nieuwe” went on strike, shutting their shops and demonstrating in West Rotterdam with citizen groups which included heavy representation from businessmen and foreign residents, especially from Turkish groups. A Turkish store-owner emphasized that the Turks have to defend themselves from always being lumped together with the drug-dealers. One Turk, Bynjamin Cinar, reported that a drug-buy location on his street is like a supermarket. People are always coming and going, he said, buying hard drugs as well as “soft.” The police do nothing.

The store-owners are also protesting the worsening criminality the drugs engender. Frightened customers are staying away, and even in broad daylight, business has fallen off badly; cars are being broken into, and the climate of danger and degeneracy is spreading. In the last year, the drug plague has worsened dramatically. There used to be an open drug

scene at the train station where heroin addicts hung out. After this was shut down a year ago, the drug scene spread throughout all of Rotterdam. The police no longer seemed to be in control of the situation—except for the royal secret police, with their completely different methods (the methods of the wholesale drug-dealer, that is).

The Dutch are especially indignant because, despite the most recent scandal, government drug policy has not been changed. On the contrary, it gets worse and worse. It was only in the last year that Justice Minister Ernst Hirsch-Ballin and Interior Minister Ed van Thijn were forced to retreat, because it became known that in 1993 the Interregional Research Team (IRT) of North Holland/Utrecht had imported narcotics and supplied them to the population. At that time, it was said that the procedures were out of control, and the IRT was dissolved. But then, this past spring, it became known that the Rotterdam police had imported approximately 20,000 kilograms of drugs.

The Dutch newspaper *Algemeen Dagblad* has now revealed that the current minister of justice, Winnie Sorgdrager, privately told the country’s police presidents, in answer to a question on how much narcotics had been imported, “Enough to guarantee that the European market is supplied all year long with drugs.” That this statement was denied by the Ministry, should cause no surprise. There are State secrets of an extremely delicate nature at stake here. Published press reports allege that a section of the royal secret police—which means the royal house, endowed with special privileges and unconstrained by any published constitutional law—has played the principal role in this police import of drugs. And a considerable portion of the narcotics is said to have been resold outside Dutch borders.

Since these police deals are clearly not just individual aberrations, and since the “research results” obtained by these methods in no way excuse them, we can only conclude that the drug trade is the State policy of the kingdom of The Netherlands. The consequences of this State drug policy are devastating. Ordinary Dutch citizens, who have the right to demonstrate against this, must force their government to adhere to the binding civil rights charter which The Hague government has signed.

The Schengen Agreement

Besides the estimated 3-4,000 heroin addicts who live in Rotterdam alone—taking Rotterdam as one example—large numbers of junkies from all over Europe populate the Dutch drug scene. After the European Union’s Schengen Agreement ended national control of the inland borders of EU member-countries, a brisk drug tourism developed. Border cities like Arnhem or Kerkrade are visited by German consumers and merchants, but it is primarily Frenchmen who go to Rotterdam—where enraged citizens have started singling out foreign cars and demolishing them.

That hashish and marijuana can be purchased legally in

The Netherlands for personal consumption, has led to discord with all her neighbors. In fact, because of citizen outrage and uneasy foreign relations, the Dutch government wants to decrease the permissible quantity from 30 grams to five, but in practice no restriction is really enforced anyway. Commentators speak of The Hague's bluff because, in spite of politicians' strong words, the cafés that sell hard drugs remain in business.

French President Jacques Chirac has refused to completely remove the border controls, despite the Schengen Agreement. He justified his decision by citing Holland's liberal policies on narcotics and on terrorism, both of which endanger France's national interests. As far back as a workshop held June 9 in conjunction with the EU summit in Cannes, France, Chirac was already, in the presence of all the EU Heads of State, sharply criticizing Dutch narcotics policy. Sometime this fall, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and President Chirac will travel to The Hague together, to speak with current Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok concerning "European frictions"—a step Kohl initiated in order to mediate between Paris and The Hague. The libertarian drug policy of the Dutch ought to be at the very top of the list of frictions.

Since, unlike France, Germany abides by the Schengen Agreement, German Customs must agree to try to foil drug-smuggling schemes merely by using spot checks at the national borders. The regional train which runs from the Dutch town of Venlo to Germany's Mönchengladbach eight times a day is called by the Customs inspectors the "drug express." Manfred Wenzel, the head of the Mönchengladbach outpost of the Düsseldorf Customs inspection office, describes the situation this way: "In Venlo today the whole palette of soft and hard drugs is readily available. Four to five hundred customers make the trip there each day from Germany for this purpose. With this, the little town of Venlo has become a [drug] sales center equal in importance to Amsterdam and Arnhem."

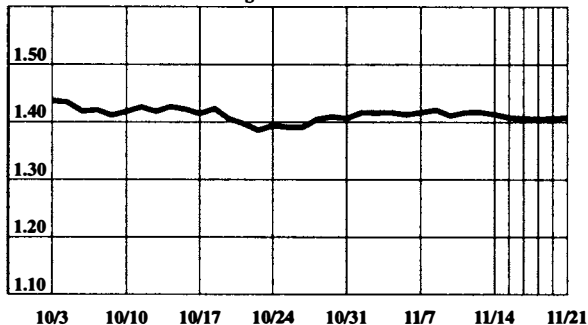
He also confirms the warnings made by critics of the border opening: "For dealers far and wide, Schengen was the opportunity of the century." In the area for which Wenzel is responsible, the number of cases against drug smugglers has doubled since 1994, with a "tendency to climb rapidly."

During 1994, control measures and house searches in the Düsseldorf region netted a total of 480.6 kilograms of hashish seized. In the first six months of this year, the figure was already 3,177.8 kg. Also seized, in addition to that, were 72.7 kg of marijuana, 11.4 kg of heroin, and 36.6 kg of cocaine. Especially dramatic is the increase in use of Ecstasy, the new designer drug of the so-called "techno-scene." Last year, law enforcement investigators found only seven pills; in the first half of 1995, some 8,370 pills were seized. Although normally the judges do not regulate less than 500 grams of hashish, and in Kleve, a German town on the Dutch border, judges ignore as much as 1,000 grams, even so, 189 arrest warrants were issued in the first six months of this year.

Currency Rates

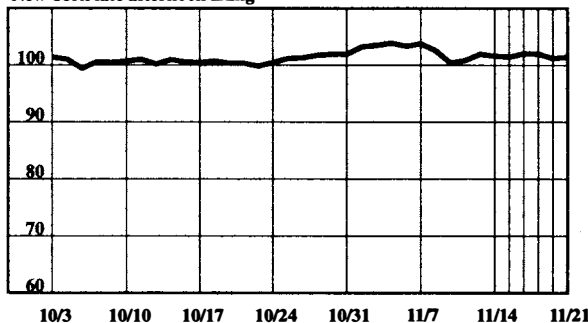
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



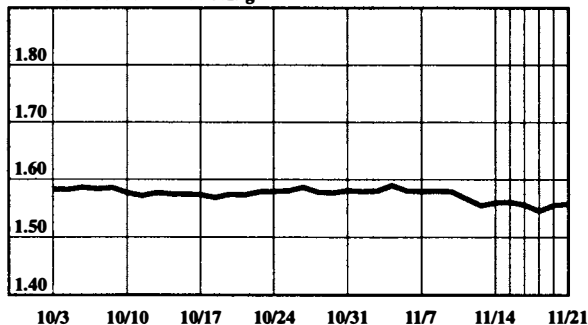
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing

