

Shining Path launches terror to free Guzmán

by Gretchen Small

On Oct. 7, a Peruvian military court sentenced Abimael Guzmán, the mastermind of the genocidal terrorist group Shining Path, and 10 other of its leaders, to life imprisonment. The court ruled that “the terrorist Shining Path is a criminal organization that seeks by every means to destroy the Peruvian state and establish a totalitarian regime,” and imposed a \$25 billion fine, roughly equivalent to the damage which Shining Path is estimated to have done to Peru in its 12 years of war, which the government may seek to collect by seizing Shining Path’s foreign banking accounts, enriched through its participation in much of the cocaine traffic from Peru.

For years, arrested Shining Path terrorists walked out of jails, released by judges corrupted by bribery and terror. As recently as September, the terrorists had killed a judge who had dared give life sentences to two terrorists. Guzmán and his cohorts, therefore, were given top-secret, summary military trials, the identity of the judges protected by hoods and electronic voice distortion, and the verdict signed in code.

Within hours of the decision, Shining Path set off five bombs in Lima and hijacked a Navy bus with civilians aboard, to hold as hostages for prisoner exchange. Annihilation squads murdered four Air Force men and two policemen in a public market; machine-gunned a police captain as he dropped off his children in front of a packed schoolyard; held a “people’s trial” of three opponents, and forced townspeople to watch as they burned one alive, bludgeoned another to death, and shot the last.

As for the government, terrorists handed a message to the international press in Lima which warned: “We will freeze your smile. . . . Learn to suffer. Learn to die.”

Shining Path combined its bloody terrorism inside Peru with an international mobilization, seeking to generate attacks upon the Peruvian government. Western nations, including the United States and Great Britain—the German Parliament joined in by holding October hearings on alleged “human rights violations” by the Peruvian government—continue to play this Shining Path game, by withholding aid to the Peruvian government, saying that waging war on Shining Path is “undemocratic.”

Shining Path quickly established an “International Emergency Committee (IEC) to Defend the Life of Abimael Guzmán,” headquartered in London, with some 30 members from the United States, Canada, Britain, Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Mexico, Kenya, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Australia, and Nepal. In an *Emergency Bulletin*, the IEC

called it urgent “that voices from all over the world be heard to demand that the life of Dr. Abimael Guzmán be guaranteed”—before Guzmán’s speedy military trial succeeds in “stunning the people of Peru as well as supporters of Dr. Guzmán in other countries.”

Most members of the IEC are known Shining Path advocates. Among those now openly joining the Peruvian Maoists’ war, however, are longtime U.S. leftist lawyers Leonard Weinglass, William Kunstler, and Peter Erlinder, the president-elect of the National Lawyers Guild.

The IEC called for “progressive forces” around the world to initiate “vigorous, bold, and rapid” actions on behalf of Guzmán, including a “worldwide day of mass actions on Oct. 7.” What kind of “actions” this means was seen in Ecuador Oct. 1, when a Maoist group bombed a TV station in Quito, and justified it as an act “in defense of Guzmán’s life.” Leaflets found at the scene also threatened Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori when he visits Ecuador in October, and called for armed rebellion to establish “a Popular Republic of Ecuador.”

Bolivia, like Ecuador, has been designated “a zone of conflict” by Shining Path, the head of the Lima metropolitan committee, “Comrade Thomas,” threatened in an interview which Peru’s *Sí* weekly published for Shining Path in early October. “The Bolivian state, like all states, is condemned to be demolished”; this is the goal of the Maoist group, Revolutionary International Movement (RIM), of which Shining Path is a part, he said.

Guzmán’s legal game

The IEC sent a delegation of U.S., German, and French lawyers into Peru on Sept. 30. While they did not succeed in attending Guzmán’s trial, they provided Shining Path prominent press coverage inside Peru, and their findings were broadcast internationally as objective legal opinion raising “questions about the fairness” of Guzmán’s trial, the Oct. 6 *Christian Science Monitor* reported.

What the *Monitor* refused to tell its readers, however, was that this delegation was a Shining Path operation: the lawyers from France (Anne Blanchet Parodi) and Germany (Martin Heining, said to be a lawyer for the German Baader-Meinhof terrorists) are members of Shining Path’s Committee to Support the Peruvian Revolution; the delegation was hosted in Peru by Shining Path’s Association of Democratic Lawyers; and the translator was Heriberto Ocasio, a Shining Path spokesman in the United States who works with the Revolutionary Communist Party. The lawyers issued statements hailing Guzmán as “the recognized leader of millions of peasants, workers, students, intellectuals and others” in Peru, justified his advocacy of “selective assassination,” and argued that Shining Path’s war cannot “be dismissed as ‘acts of terrorism.’ ” In the words of the German lawyer, any court which introduces “the word terrorism to denounce Shining Path has lost all sense of reality”!