



# EMERGENCY BULLETIN 56

## International Emergency Committee To Defend The Life of Dr Abimael Guzman

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October 95

### INTERVIEW WITH REV. YASUTAKE

*Rev. Michael S. Yasutake is a 74 year old priest at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Evanston, Illinois USA. He is Director of the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project organised in support of the rights of over 100 political and religious prisoners in the United States. He is also Chairman of the US-Japan Committee for Racial Justice. Father Yasutake describes himself as having been "a human rights and civil rights activist for 45 years". He has been an active supporter of the IEC, and has been concerned that most religious leaders and religious newspapers in the US have condemned the People's War in Peru while remaining silent about the crimes of the Fujimori regime. Rev Yasutake was a member of the 6th IEC delegation to Peru in July 1995. While in Peru Rev Yasutake was especially interested in meeting with priests and religious activists in Peru who shared his commitment to social justice. Following are excerpts of an interview with Rev Yasutake following a meeting with such a person.*

"The priest I met with explained that the Peruvian government conscripted poor kids and trained them to kill, just like they do in so many places around the world. Then they command them to go into peasant villages where the government thinks there is a lot of opposition, or where the people might be getting organised against them. The military goes in and kills the villagers on a massive scale - regardless of who they are. They don't just go in to find certain people and arrest them - they kill villagers indiscriminately. This went on long before the Fujimori government and still goes on today. The priest said that he works with soldiers - sometimes officers - who have been trained to kill and who have carried out massacres, but then at some point they just can't live with what they did and can't do it anymore. It bothers them so much they can't do it any more and leave the military - they just leave. But it keeps bothering them so they talk to a priest. They can't go to the media. So it is the priests and religious people who are in a position to hear the stories. In this way the stories get out. The priest I spoke with has talked to many of these soldiers about what they did. Of course by this time these soldiers - many of them officers - are being hunted by the government. So the priests have to protect them too. But the priests hear a lot of stories. The priest told us about the massacre at XXXX. Human rights groups have forced the government to admit that soldiers killed some people here. The government says only a few people were killed. But the priest said he has talked with soldiers about what happened - and he says maybe a hundred people were killed there, and that massacres like this happen a lot. He told about how the soldiers said they falsified reports.

"This priest talked about people who are given outrageous sentences for doing almost nothing. For example, he told about a young man who was caught in an exchange of fire between the military and someone else. The young man was wounded badly. He wasn't firing but he was put into a police car and taken to the station, where he was detained for four hours. But he was strong and didn't die and they finally took him to the hospital. One of the doctors who was attending was a friend of the Sendero Luminoso and he made sure he got an operation and the bullet was taken out. When he got well he was interrogated by the police and he wouldn't say anything. He called a lawyer but the lawyer didn't contact him. Then in a trial that only lasted 15 minutes he was sentenced to life in prison

just because he was caught on an exchange of gunfire and wouldn't identify members of Sendero Luminoso. The priest told stories like this.

"But I was really interested in hearing about people from the military who couldn't live with what they did. This is what happened with a lot of soldiers in Vietnam too. They couldn't live with what they did so they had to leave it. When these guys - and some of these guys are officers - go into hiding to get away from the government and talk to someone like this priest - you know they've come to a time when they can't even feel like they're human if they keep killing like they are told to do. And then the church has a role. Unfortunately, they don't always play this role, but the church should not just certify what the government does. Too often they do this in the USA. The church's role is very critical. Whether we like it or not the church is part of the society and we are part of society. We are all influenced by the church. Just think of what would happen if all of the churches came out against the death penalty in the USA. So many poor people are being executed. They would have an influence. The church is judgmental and passes judgments. It isn't neutral. This is one of the things about the church. The church should be against oppression. That isn't what usually happens in Chicago and it probably isn't what happens in Lima. But this priest wasn't just certifying what the government does. This guy was really talking to us about what the government does. He was really telling us what he had heard and what he knows, and after he had talked I got the impression that the government kills lots of people and then blames Sendero Luminoso for doing the killing.

"Finally I asked this guy about whether he thought the people's war against the government was over and right away he said that he was sure it wasn't. He didn't even hesitate. Since he answered so quickly I asked him whether he thought that the war should be over, and just as fast he said NO. He didn't think the poor people would get justice from the government. I was surprised - a religious leader saying this! A lot of these religious leaders in the US should hear what religious leaders like this - who work every day with the poor and the working people of Peru - have to say."

### **September 1995:**

- People from dozens of countries demand an end to the isolation of Dr Guzman!
- Dr Guzman's 24 September speech is heard round the world - AGAIN!
- The Peruvian regime is put on notice that their murderous actions are becoming more and more exposed, and that tens of thousands of people are united in their determination to defend Dr Guzman and other political prisoners in Peru!

The international campaign has once again succeeded in shining an international spotlight on the crimes of the Fujimori regime and the barbarous treatment of Dr Guzman. Actions were held in the streets, petitions and letters were sent to the Peruvian regime, public meetings were held, bookstalls distributed materials on Peru in many languages, the IEC leaflet and Dr Guzman's speech were disseminated, posted, and published in many countries, and other ways were found to intensify the pressure against the regime. Following are reports on some of the activities.

**Punjab, India:** Activists worked day and night to create a 3½ foot by 8 foot calendar type poster to display a translation of the IEC leaflet, Dr Guzman's speech, and a big picture of Dr Guzman for use during the September events in the area. On 12 September a meeting was held in the village of Sailabrah in the Rampura Phil Town area, where the campaign has carried out activities for the past three years. The meeting was attended by about 100 peasants, workers, and activists. The Convener emphasised the positive way that people around the globe have worked together to defend the life of Dr Guzman, and the necessity that they now concentrate their energy on breaking the isolation. Peasant leaders from the area spoke in support of the demand to break the isolation, about the international campaign, and about the People's War in Peru. One peasant leader spoke specifically about the economic and political situation in Peru, focusing on imperialist exploitation, and its similarities with the New Economic Policy being implemented in India and what it will mean for India's peoples.

**GERMANY: Hamburg:** 11,500 IEC leaflets (10,000 in German and 1,500 in Turkish) were distributed between 12-24 September, and 720 people signed a petition to end the isolation. Enlarged leaflets appeared on walls throughout the city. Bookstalls were set up at train stations and shopping centers. Activists went out early in the morning to talk with students going to school and were at the train stations making speeches when people returned from work. In the evening they went to Turkish and German snack-bars where they spoke with customers about the international campaign, challenged them to support it, and specifically explained the need for financial support for the campaign. They often received permission to deliver loud speeches in the restaurants, and reported that when they did so the response was especially positive. One very successful action was the IEC's participation in a big street party/concert on 16 September, where a huge banner with a picture of Dr Guzman fluttered over the street, another even larger banner was on the wall behind an IEC bookstall, and a special tent was set up to show videos. On 24 September the IEC video, "You Must Tell the World" was shown to an audience of Kurdish, Turkish, Albanian and German people.

**Frieberg:** 30 people took part in an IEC action at the Central Asylum Refugee Camp where 78 Pakistani, Indian, African, Iraqi, Kurdish, and Arab people signed the IEC Call.

**Köln:** 5,000 leaflets in German and Turkish were distributed. Enlarged posters decorated the walls of the city. A public meeting was held in front of the Dom (the main Cathedral situated in the city center) on 23 September, where speeches in German and Turkish called on the people to take action to end the isolation and which exposed the repressive nature of the Fujimori regime. Hundreds of people listened; many signed petitions to end the isolation and donated money to continue the campaign. Four similar public meetings were held in other crowded places in the city. There were similar actions in Berlin, Bielefeld, and Duisburg.

**TURKEY:** The full text of the IEC leaflet, including Dr Guzman's 24 Sept speech appeared in *Özgür Politika* newspaper, and an article on the isolation of Dr Guzman appeared in *Evrensel* newspaper. A press declaration protesting the isolation of Dr Guzman was also made by Professor Haluk Gerger, who was a member of the 5th IEC delegation to Peru and who is now imprisoned in Haymana Prison in Ankara, Turkey for expressing his support for the struggle of the Kurdish people. Prof. Gerger's declaration appeared in *Evrensel* and *Özgür Politika*. Both newspapers are distributed in Turkey and throughout Europe.

The petition demanding the end of the isolation of Dr Guzman and denouncing the torture and persecution of other political prisoners in Peru was signed by 899 people living in Turkey. The IEC Call, the IEC Campaign pamphlets and other material were distributed to people living in the Gazi, Alibeyköy, Kadiköy and Ümraniye neighborhoods in Istanbul, where 150 people signed the IEC's "Demand to End the Isolation".

**SWEDEN:** 18,000 leaflets were distributed - mainly by going door-to-door in the neighborhoods of **Malmö** and **Lund** where immigrants and poorer workers live. Two demonstrations were held on central plazas in Lund, and another was held in Malmö, where leaflets in the Swedish language were distributed and bookstalls, banners, and spoken agitation introduced passers-by to the battle to defend Dr Guzman, his 24 September speech, and the People's War in Peru.

**NEPAL:** On 12 September a colourful procession of IEC supporters marched through the streets of Kathmandu carrying banners and shouting slogans against the US-Fujimori regime, demanding an end to the isolation of Dr Guzman, and supporting the People's War. The procession also delivered two protest letters: one to the Secretary General of the United Nations through the UN's Representative in Kathmandu, and the other to President Fujimori, through the US Embassy in Kathmandu (with a special copy for the President Clinton). Following are excerpts from the letters:

To the UN:

"[Dr Guzman] is the most famous and important political prisoner in the world today... The whole world is also shocked by the apathetic attitude of the UN-related and other mainstream human right organisations toward the case of Dr Guzman. We, therefore, strongly protest the apathetic attitude of UN-related human rights organisations towards the case of Dr Guzman."

To Fujimori:

[Dr Guzman's] prison conditions are said to be so inhuman and outrageous that you yourself were quoted in a Brazilian newspaper...saying nobody could survive there for more than a few years. This is against all forms of civilised behaviour and accepted international human rights standards for political prisoners and deserves to be condemned by all the world over.,,

[Dr Guzman's] life is too precious for the Peruvian people and the world proletariat as to allow a hired butcher of US imperialism and Peruvian reaction like you to play with. We therefore vehemently protest the imprisonment and total isolation of Dr Guzman and demand that his doctors, lawyers, relatives, human rights activists, media representatives, and others be allowed to see him, and that his basic human rights as a prisoner of war be ensured and his safety of life be guaranteed."

**UK:** Enlarged IEC leaflets in English, Spanish and Farsi were posted at train stations and on walls throughout London. On 24 September an IEC supporter dressed in a striped prison uniform delivered Dr Guzman's speech to a large group of curious onlookers at Speakers Corner in Hyde Park (a place where agitators of all sorts traditionally give speeches each Sunday). Two men countered the speech by shouting out the usual media lies and slanders, which provoked a lively debate about the real truth of what is happening in Peru.

Over the past three years several thousand stenciled portraits of Dr Guzman accompanied by Farsi and English slogans in defence of his life and supporting the people's war have appeared all over London. The extent of this ongoing graffiti campaign is such that according to a radio reporter "its the talk of London" and "no one living in or visiting London would fail to notice" and it has in the past also prompted a major article in the Times newspaper, provided an angel for an interview/programme on GLR - a mainstream radio station - about the IEC campaign and the situation in Peru, and was pictorially reported in the Peruvian weekly *Caretas*.

**US:** The IEC leaflet, with Dr Guzman's speech on the back, was sent to hundreds of supporters living in all regions of the country to urge them to take up the September activities in their areas. It was taken out by the thousands to neighborhoods and college campuses in the New York City and San Francisco areas. Arrangements were made to show the videos in university classrooms. Banners were hung and the leaflet was enlarged and posted throughout both cities. Many shop-keepers in San Francisco's Latino district displayed the poster in their store windows. A California radio producer aired a lively 90 minute interview with Peter Erlinder, a member of Dr Guzman's legal team who had recently participated in the 6th delegation to Peru, and a San Francisco activist. The San Francisco chapter also organised a successful fundraising dinner at a Mexican restaurant.

**AUSTRALIA:** The IEC leaflet was hand-distributed in Melbourne and poster-sized copies were posted in the area. The leaflet and EB 55 were also sent to students newspapers, organisations and other supporters in the states of Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

**GREECE:** Two major articles written by Dr Stefanos Papageorgiou, one of the members of the 6th IEC delegation to Peru, were featured in *PRIN* newspaper. One, entitled "End the Isolation of Dr Guzman!" appeared on 30 July, and another entitled "The Country of the Incas is Under State Terrorism; Thousands of Political Prisoners are Being Killed Slowly in Peru!" appeared on 3 September.

On 18 and 20 September two formal requests were submitted to the Council of Ministers of the European Parliament. The requests submitted by A. Alavanos (MEP) of the SINASPRISMOS of Left and Progress Party and V. Efremidis (MEP) of the Communist Party of Greece, ask the council whether it intends to take the proper diplomatic and political actions against the Peruvian government in order to end the isolation of Dr Guzman and guarantee the basic rights of political prisoners in Peru. The petitioners are both current members of the European Parliament.

**FRANCE :** Supporters from IEC France, reconstituted Sol Peru Committee, Ateliers Franco- Peruvian, Paris Commune Base, and the International Resistance Front Against Imperialism, Racism and Fascism held two actions - one at a street market and another at a subway station. Several thousand IEC leaflets and Dr Guzman's speech were distributed.

Originally one of the actions had been called at the Esplanade for the Rights of Man, where the police prevented the protesters from distributing the IEC leaflet demanding the end of Dr Guzman's isolation, stating that the famous square was for "human rights" and not for "freedom of expression"!

**DENMARK:** On 10 Sept a message was read on Kurdish *Radio Hawar* calling on Kurdish people to take up the battle to end the isolation of Dr Guzman. By 12 Sept IEC posters had appeared on the walls of Copenhagen.

On 12 Sept a group of IEC supporters dressed in striped prison uniforms and carrying a large "End the Isolation" banner assembled at a central city square. After distributing leaflets in English and in Danish, the group proceeded to march to the Peruvian Embassy. The Copenhagen Police Department had been put on full alert; police in riot gear and armed with gas guns stood in tight rows inside the Embassy gates. The road was blocked and more riot police stood at the ready. Armed Police aimed at the demonstrators from the rooftop. When the demonstrators reached the Embassy gates they delivered a short speech demanding an end to the isolation of Dr Guzman and then continued their march back to the main street, while by-standers ridiculed the Peruvian Embassy and the Copenhagen Police for their incredible show of force. No doubt the Embassy officials and the Copenhagen Police remember the 1986 occupation of the Peruvian Embassy to protest the massacre of more than 300 political prisoners at El Fronton and Luriganchu prisons, and feared a repeat of that kind of action.

**SPAIN:** Hundreds of large posters decorated the cities of **Santander** and **Torrelavega** in Cantabria, along with colourful graffiti slogans. A major campaign to distribute the IEC leaflet, along with EB 55, to all of the trade unions and progressive organisations in Cantabria was also carried out.

The video "People of the Shining Path", followed by a discussion about the People's War in Peru was shown on the local TV station in the town of **Carbilliño**. An IEC activist participated in the discussion and was also able to introduce the viewers to the international campaign. This is the first time the campaign has received such coverage in the province of Ourense.

IEC activists and friends of the campaign distributed thousands of leaflets in the cities of **Monforte**, **Vigo** and **Santiago** in Galicia. All three cities were also decorated with banners and posters. About twenty prominent writers attending a Congress of Writers in the Galegan Language signed a petition to end the isolation of Dr Guzman.

On 27 September two youth from Galicia who have worked closely with the international campaign were detained by the political police. The Anti-Terrorism Law was used to hold them incommunicado for 48 hours, but no specific reason was given for their detention and they were released without charge. One of the youth is the lead singer with the radical rock group "En pl de Guerra", which supports the People's War in Peru and burns the US flag at the opening of their act. The IEC Coordinating Committee energetically denounces this threat against youth who take such a conscious stand with the oppressed people of the world, and who dare to rebel against and expose the oppressors.

#### New Signatories to the IEC Call

78 people at the Central Asylum Refugee Camp in Frieberg, Germany

260 people from Turkey who live in Berlin, Germany

90 people from Bielefeld, Germany

Yasar Kemal (Turkey) - Ex political prisoner, Ex member of parliament, Renowned writer

DHKC-London Information Bureau

Ian Carr and Karen Tweed (UK) - folk music group