

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, March 24, 7:30 PM. *Monthly Meeting* Caltech Y has moved. Just around the corner from our old meeting place, we moved to San Pasqual between Hill and Holliston, south side. You will see two curving walls forming a gate to a path-- our building is just beyond. Help us plan future actions on Tibet, the War on Terror, death penalty, environmental justice and more.

Saturday, March 26, 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM. *4th Annual Amnesty Mini-Conference.* Cal State University-Fullerton. Continental breakfast and admission FREE! Workshops include:

Women's Campaign
Death Penalty
Refugees
War on Terror
AIDS and Human Rights
Corporate Action Network
Introduction to Amnesty
Sudan Crisis
Torture
Racial Profiling
Human Trafficking

Directions: Cal State Fullerton is located west of the Orange (57) Freeway in Fullerton. The university is bordered by Nutwood Avenue to the south, State College Boulevard to the west, Yorba Linda Boulevard to the north, and the 57 Freeway to the east. Coming from either the south or the north on the 57 Freeway, exit at Nutwood Avenue. Go west on Nutwood. Turn right at the main campus entrance at Commonwealth Avenue. Follow E. Campus Drive to Parking Lot F. The registration desk will be outside University Hall Room 252, south end of the building on the 2nd floor.

Tuesday, April 12, 7:30 PM. *Letter-writing Meeting* at the Athenaeum. Corner of California & Hill. This month commemorate Women's Day by taking action! This informal gathering is a great for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

Sunday, April 17, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we discuss Amulya Malladi's novel about the aftermath of Bhopal *A Breath of Fresh Air*. (More info below.)

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello everyone. There are a lot of interesting activities this month and next. Hope you can participate!

Amnesty members were saddened to hear of the death of the founder, Peter Berenson, at age 83, on February 27 of this year in London. Berenson started Amnesty International after reading of students in a café in Lisbon, Portugal being arrested for drinking a toast to the liberation from their country's then dictator. Since then, Amnesty has grown to 1.8 million members in over 64 countries. For more info on his interesting life, visit www.amnesty.org.uk/amnesty/history/biography.shtml. However, there is good news.

- The US Supreme Court recently outlawed the execution of minors or persons who committed crimes when they were minors.
- Staff Sergeant Camillo Mejia Castillo was released in February 2005, 3 months before the end of his sentence due to good conduct. His first level appeal against his conviction (he was imprisoned May 2004 for desertion, when he refused to return to his unit in Iraq) is due to be heard soon. Camillo thanked AI members for the thousands of letters of support he received while in prison. Group 22 members wrote on his behalf also.
- Prisoner of conscience Rebiya Kadeer has been released by Chinese authorities on medical parole and is now reportedly flying to the US, where she will be reunited with family members. She was one of the special focus cases we used for the Doo-Dah parade. She is a Uighur businesswoman who was detained while on her way to discuss human rights with visiting US Congress staff members and was sentenced in 2000 to eight years in prison for "leaking state secrets" for having sent newspaper clippings to her husband in the US. Her release comes shortly before Condoleezza Rice's scheduled visit to Beijing and follows years of intensive campaigning for her freedom by AI. More than 100 AI chapters in states throughout the Western Region adopted her case and 60,000 actions were sent from Amnesty's online action center on her behalf.

Saturday March 12, the annual Environmental Educational Fair at the LA County Botanical Garden AKA the Arboretum, was held. Group 22 had a table with actions on the Bhopal chemical disaster in India 20 years ago and other environmental actions. Children (and others) traced their hands on a petition re the Bhopal disaster. Thanks to group members Joyce and Martha who set up in the morning and

stayed all day and Paula, Lucas, and Donna who volunteered at the table. Pictures of the fair (including some preening peacocks) will be available on group 22's website soon.

This week, there is a film festival sponsored by the AI Claremont Colleges group. It starts March 24 and ends March 29. For more info, go to <http://www.oldenborg.pomona.edu>. The films are on human rights and environmental themes and are free. Afghan Massacre and Senorita Extravida are among the selections. The latter is about the murders in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico among young women maquiladora workers.

This coming weekend, there is the AI mini-conference in Fullerton. It is also free and no registration is needed. Just show up! See Up-Coming Events for details.

Hope to see you at one or more of these events in addition to our regularly scheduled meetings!

Take care,

Kathy

aigp22@caltech.edu

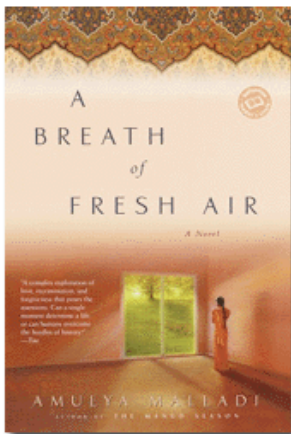
RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

Vroman's Bookstore

695 E. Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena

Sunday, April 17, 6:30 PM



A Breath of Fresh Air

by Amulya Malladi

Being in the wrong place at the wrong time can always have serious repercussions, but for Anjali, none are quite so lethal as being abandoned in Bhopal, India, the night a toxic gas explosion rocks the

city. Forgotten at the train station by her philandering, army officer husband, Anjali survives the accident, although her marriage to Prakash does not. Years later, happily remarried, Anjali still contends with the devastating effects of that fateful night, as she and her new husband helplessly watch their dying son struggle with the birth defects that resulted from Anjali's exposure to the deadly poison. When Prakash unexpectedly reenters her life, Anjali must confront her unresolved feelings surrounding her prior marriage and scandalous divorce. Unwillingly, Prakash is forced to acknowledge not only his role

in their marriage's failure, but also his culpability in the death sentence his thoughtless act rendered upon an innocent child. In this accomplished debut novel, Malladi depicts believable and well-defined characters facing tumultuous circumstances with grace and sensitivity, passion and pride.-- *Booklist*

CORPORATE ACTION NETWORK

Take Action for Survivors of Bhopal

More than 7,000 people died within a matter of days when toxic gases leaked from a chemical plant in Bhopal, India on the night of 2/3 December 1984. Over the last 20 years exposure to the toxins has resulted in the deaths of a further 15,000 people as well as chronic and debilitating illnesses for thousands of others for which treatment is largely ineffective. Call on Dow Chemical to clean up the factory site and remove the stockpiles of chemical abandoned by the company.

The disaster shocked the world and raised fundamental questions about government and corporate responsibility for industrial accidents that devastate human life and local environments. Yet 20 years later, the survivors still await just compensation, adequate medical assistance and treatment, and comprehensive economic and social rehabilitation. The plant site, has still not been cleaned up. As a result, toxic wastes continue to pollute the environment and contaminate water that surrounding communities rely on.

Despite determined efforts by survivors to secure justice, they have been denied adequate compensation and appropriate and timely medical assistance and rehabilitation. Union Carbide Corporation (UCC), then owner of the pesticide factory in Bhopal, and Dow Chemical, which merged with UCC in 2001, have publicly denied all responsibility for the leak and the resulting damage. Astonishingly, no one has been held responsible.

The Bhopal case illustrates how companies evade their human rights responsibilities and underlines the need to establish a universal human rights framework that can be applied to companies directly. Governments have the primary responsibility for protecting the human rights of communities endangered by the activities of corporations, such as those employing hazardous technology. However, as the influence and reach of companies have grown, there has been a developing consensus that they must be brought within the framework of international human rights standards. Sample letter follows:

Andrew N. Liveris
Dow Chemical Co
2030 Dow Center
Midland, MI 48674

I am very concerned about the devastating consequences to the health of the communities of Bhopal, India, posed by Union Carbide's disused pesticide factory.

For more than 30 years the Bhopal plant has been a source of environmental pollution. After the disaster in 1984, which killed thousands of people, Union Carbide abandoned the factory without decontaminating the site and left behind large amounts of toxic waste. Stockpiles of contaminants continue to pollute the water and soil, on which entire communities rely, affecting the health of those living in the area.

According to numerous reports, contaminants have been found in vegetables grown near the plant and in breast milk samples taken from women in Bhopal. Water has been found to be unfit for consumption but, in the absence of any other source, most local people continue to drink it. The company has never done anything meaningful to clean up the site.

I therefore urge you:

-- to ensure that the Bhopal factory site and its surroundings are promptly and effectively decontaminated, that the groundwater is cleaned up, and

-- that the stockpiles of toxic and hazardous substances left by the company when they abandoned the site are removed;

-- to co-operate fully with those assessing the nature and extent of the damage to health and the environment caused by improper waste disposal and contaminants at the abandoned factory site;

-- to ensure that Dow Chemicals promptly provide full reparations, restitution, compensation and rehabilitation for the continuing damage done to people's health and the environment by the ongoing contamination of the site.

Sincerely, YOUR NAME and ADDRESS

JUST EARTH

Mexican Environmentalists Targeted

Prisoner of conscience and renowned environmental activist, Felipe Arreaga, was arrested on 3 November 2004 by judicial police in town of Petetlan in Guerrero State. He faces an unfair trial for a murder committed in 1998.

Amnesty International fears that Felipe Arreaga's arrest and the issuing of arrest warrants against 14 former members of the OCESP is a reprisal against the organization for previous environmental activism. It may also be designed to deter the work of his wife, Celsa Valdovinos, who leads the

Organizacion de Mujeres Ecologistas, Women's Environmentalist Organization and that of other environmentalists in the Guerrero state.

Amnesty International believes that the investigation and criminal charges brought against Felipe Arreaga are politically motivated, due to his leading role in peaceful protests against excessive and illegal logging of forests of Guerrero State. At the end of February 2005, a key prosecution witness in the case testified in court that he had been coerced into implicating Felipe Arreaga and others in the original investigation into the murder of Abel Bautista Guillen, the son of a local cacique (local political boss).

There are many other irregularities in the proceedings which demonstrate that the case against Felipe Arreaga has been fabricated. For example the murder took place in 1998 but the only investigative steps including statements, forensics and crime scene examination, were not carried out until 2000. The case was then archived until an arrest warrant issued in 2004. In addition one of the accused allegedly identified by the two witnesses had died in 1996 and another was a child at the time of the crime. Felipe Arreaga provided three witnesses at the time of his arraignment, proving that he was incapacitated at the time of the murder, as he was receiving medical treatment for back problems in another community. In addition a key prosecution witness has failed to appear in court and his whereabouts are reportedly unknown. The prosecution case is primarily based on presenting Felipe Arreaga as a known criminal, which character witnesses have refuted. Despite this evidence, he remains in custody during a trial which may last more than a year and which could result in conviction for a crime he did not commit. He also suffers from serious back problems which have been aggravated by the conditions of his detention.

Felipe Arreaga was an active member of the OCESP from its foundation in 1997. The organization was set up to mobilise communities in the mountains of Petetlan municipality to campaign peacefully against deforestation due to illegal logging operations run by local caciques reportedly linked to senior officials in the state government. Caciques and members of the state government made repeated unfounded allegations against the OCESP, accusing them of links to criminal and armed groups.

In 1999, two OCESP members, Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera, were detained by the military and tortured to force them to confess to firearms and drugs offences. The two were convicted on the basis of fabricated evidence and were adopted as prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International. In 2001 President Fox ordered their release in the face of massive national and international pressure, but their innocence was never recognised, nor were those responsible for their torture or detention brought to

justice. Their case is before the Inter American Commission on Human Rights. Rodolfo Montiel is one of the 14 OCESP leaders against whom arrest warrants have been issued in connection with 1998 murder.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION. Fabricated criminal charges and unfair criminal procedures are frequently used in Mexico in order to deter human rights defenders, social activists and others opposing the abuses of power at a local level. Judicial police working in collaboration with caciques can result in unfounded charges and detention. Mexico's judicial system suffers from endemic flaws which routinely deny the right to fair trial and the presumption of innocence and make it extremely difficult for those accused of fabricated charges to clear their name. Those responsible for the misuse of judicial system are virtually never held to account, encouraging further abuses and impunity.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Felipe Arreaga and for his safety and that of his family to be guaranteed;
- calling for arrest warrants against 14 other members of the OCESP to be suspended, and for them, their families and witnesses to be protected;
- calling for an independent and impartial review of the investigation conducted by judicial police and prosecutors in order to bring to justice those responsible for fabricating evidence and mounting an unfounded prosecution of Felipe Arreaga;
- urging that the results are made public and that Felipe Arreaga is fully compensated for malicious prosecution and unwarranted detention;
- calling for a thorough and impartial investigation into the murder of Abel Bautista Guillen in 1998;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

State Governor (elect):
Contador Publico Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo
Gobernador Electo del Estado de Guerrero.
Horacio Nelson numero 15 Fraccionamiento Costa Azul
C.P. 39850, Acapulco
Guerrero, Mexico

Salutation: Dear Governor Elect/Senor Gobernador electo

Attorney General of Guerrero:
Lic. Jesus Ramirez Guerrero
Procurador General de Justicia del Estado de Guerrero
Carretera Nacional Mexico-Acapulco Km. 6+300
Tramo Chilpancingo- Petaquillos, Chilpancingo 39090
Guerrero, Mexico

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Senor Procurador

Minister of the Interior:
Lic. Santiago Creel
Secretario de Gobernacion, Secretaria de Gobernacion
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juarez, Delegacion Cuauhtemoc
Mexico D.F., C.P.06600, Mexico

Salutation: Dear Minister/Senor Secretario

COPIES TO:

Ambassador Carlos Alberto De Icaza Gonzalez
Embassy of Mexico
1911 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20006

LETTER COUNT

Misc Women's Day Actions	16
Sexual Violence - Central African Republic	7
Fear of Safety in Guatemala	8
Sexual Orientation/HIV issues in Colombia	15
USA (Restrictions on Health Services)	8
Total:	55

Want to add your letters to the total? Get in touch with lwkamp@sbcglobal.net

DEATH PENALTY

PA D.A. seeks execution of 70 year old woman

Prosecutors in Pennsylvania have announced their intention to seek the death penalty against Kathy MacClellan for a crime she is alleged to have committed last month. Kathy MacClellan is 70 years old: international law prohibits the imposition of the death penalty on anyone who was over 70 at the time of the crime.

Kathy MacClellan has been charged with the murder of her 84-year-old neighbor, Marguerite Eyer, who was found on 7 February in her home in the town of Easton, in Northampton County, eastern Pennsylvania. She died shortly afterwards in hospital. She had been bludgeoned about the head. The prosecution has alleged that she was robbed.

No date has yet been set for Kathy MacClellan's trial. On 12 March, the Northampton County District Attorney's Office filed notice of their intention to seek the death penalty against her. It is considered likely that questions surrounding her mental health will be an issue in the case.

The American Convention on Human Rights prohibits the use of the death penalty against anyone who was over 70 years old at the time of the crime. The USA has not ratified the Convention, but signed it in 1977. By becoming a signatory, the USA obliged itself under international law not to do anything to undermine the treaty pending its decision on whether to ratify it.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally. The death penalty is a symptom of a culture of violence, not a solution to it. This is an outdated punishment, abolished in law or practice in 118 countries. A small number of countries, including the USA, account for the vast majority of executions. In China, which accounts for the most executions each year, there is no upper age limit for application of the death penalty. For example, Wei Youde was sentenced to death in Hunan Province in 2002 for a murder committed when he was 87 years old. On appeal in 2004, Wei Youde's sentence was commuted.

Since the United States resumed executions in 1977, 944 men and 10 women have been put to death in its execution chambers. The US capital justice system is marked by arbitrariness, discrimination and error, and US authorities have frequently violated international standards in their pursuit of judicial killing of prisoners including child offenders, the mentally impaired, the inadequately represented, people whose guilt remained in doubt, and foreign nationals denied their consular rights.

In 2002, in *Atkins v. Virginia*, the US Supreme Court outlawed the execution of offenders with mental retardation. Earlier this month, in *Roper v. Simmons*, the Court did the same thing in the case of offenders who were under 18 at the time of the crime. That ruling brought the USA finally into line with a global consensus prohibiting the death penalty for the crimes of children.

Article 4.5 of the American Convention on Human Rights states: "Capital punishment shall not be imposed upon persons who, at the time the crime was committed, were under 18 years of age or over 70 years of age". The USA signed the American Convention on Human Rights on 1 June 1977. By becoming a signatory, the USA bound itself not to undermine the treaty's provisions. Under Article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1979), AA State is obliged to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of a treaty when: (a) it has signed the treaty...until it shall have made its intention clear not to become a party to the treaty...

No one who was over 70 at the time of the crime has been executed in the USA since 1977. In 1991, Ray Copeland was sentenced to death in Missouri for a crime committed when he was 71 years old. He died two years later in prison. Amnesty International is not aware of any other person being sentenced to death in the USA since 1977 who was over 70 years old at the time of the crime. In January 2002, a Texas county prosecutor announced his intention to seek the death penalty against Melvin Hale, charged with a murder committed two years earlier when he was 72 years old. In the event, a plea arrangement was reached under which Melvin Hale was sentenced to life imprisonment in return for a guilty plea.

The oldest person currently on death row in the USA is believed to be Viva Leroy Nash who is 89 years old. He was sentenced to death in Arizona in 1983 for a crime committed in 1982 when he was aged 67. The oldest person put to death in the USA since executions resumed in 1977 was James Hubbard, who was 74 years old when he was put to death in Alabama on 5 August 2004. He was under 60 at the time of the crime. Two women over 60 at the time of execution have been put to death in the USA since 1977 - Betty Lou Beets who was 62 when she was put to death in Texas in February 2000, and Lois Nadean Smith, 61 years old at the time of her execution in Oklahoma in December 2001.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible in your own words:

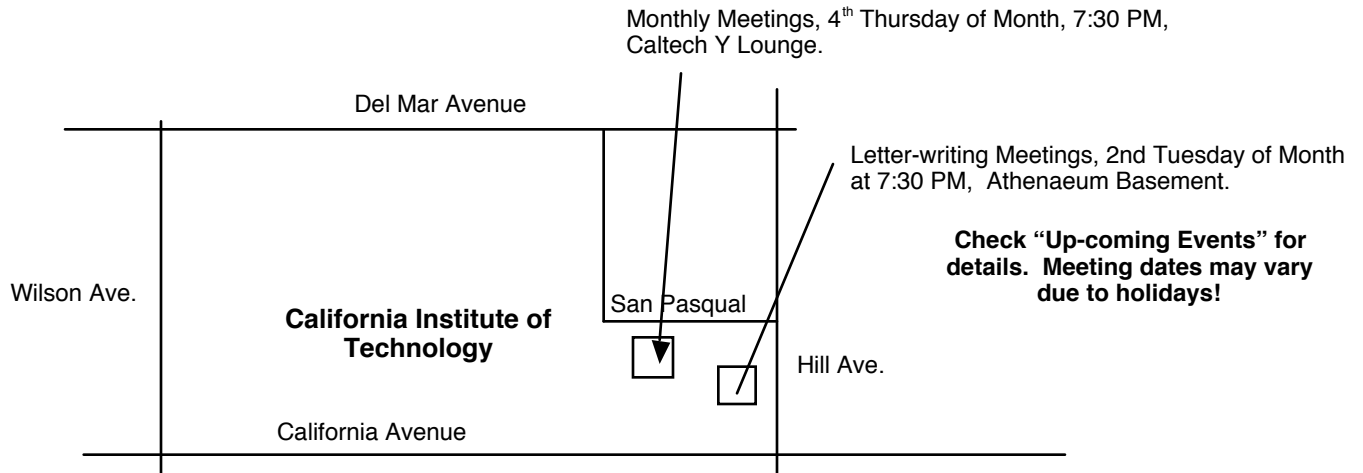
- expressing sympathy for the family and friends of Marguerite Eyer, explaining that you are not seeking to excuse the manner of her death or to minimize the suffering caused;
- explaining that you are not seeking to make any comment about the guilt or innocence of Kathy MacClellan, but simply to express concern about Northampton County's intention to seek the death penalty against her;
- pointing out that the pursuit of the death penalty against a defendant who was over 70 years old at the time of the crime violates international law;
- calling on the prosecution to drop its pursuit of the death penalty in this case.

APPEALS TO:

Paula A. Roscioli
First Deputy District Attorney
Office of the District Attorney of Northampton County
Government Center
669 Washington Street
Easton, PA 18042

EDITOR'S LAST WORD:

Read us on line: <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22>
Martha Ter Maat, 626-281-4039 / rightsreaders@yahoo.com



From the 210 exit on Lake Avenue, head south, turn left on Del Mar
 From the 110 continue on Arroyo Parkway north, turn right on California
 Street parking is generally available.

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Pasadena, CA 91115-0193



Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.