

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XIX Number 3, March 2011

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, March 24, 7:30 PM. Monthly Meeting. Caltech Y is located off 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 Sudan, the 'War on Terror', death penalty and more.

Tuesday April 12, 7:30 PM. Letter writing meeting at Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

Sunday, April 17, 6:30 PM. Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "Red April" by Santiago Roncagliolo.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone

It was a beautiful day today, chilly but sunny with lots of fluffy clouds...let's see if rain comes tomorrow...

Lucas, Stevi, and Joyce attended the AGM in San Francisco this past weekend. We missed them at the book group and are looking forward to hearing about the convention.

Some of you have expressed an interest in attending a workshop at All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena this coming Sunday and Monday, March 27 and 28. Speakers are Father Greg Boyle, Reza Aslan, and James Carroll. To register (there is a 20.00 fee), go to this website: www.allsaints-pas.org or call Norma Sigmund at 626-583-2734.

With all the ruckus lately going on in Wisconsin and other states regarding collective bargaining rights of public employees, you may be interested to know that AI supports workers rights to organize and form unions. Article 23 part 4 of the UDHR states: "everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests." For more, see www.udhr.org.

If you'd like to come out and support worker's rights, there is a rally this Saturday March 26 in downtown LA that starts at 10 am at the Convention Center and ends at Pershing Square at 12:30pm. Go to <http://utla.net/326rally> for more information. Rob and I will be joining the

group from LAUSD Nursing Services, who will be meeting in front of Staples Center at 10am. Come join us! Hope to see some of you there!

Con cariño,
Kathy

RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

Keep up with Rights Readers at
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>



Next Rights Readers meeting:

Sunday, April 17, 6:30 PM

Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado Boulevard
In Pasadena

About the Author



Santiago Roncagliolo is the youngest winner of the Alfaguara Prize, awarded to him in 2006 for *Red April*. He was born in Lima, Peru, and currently lives in Barcelona. Edith Grossman is the award-winning translator of such masterworks as Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and Garcia Marquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

SYNOPSIS & REVIEWS

Publisher Comments:

A chilling, internationally acclaimed political thriller, *Red April* is a grand achievement in contemporary Latin American fiction, written by the youngest winner ever of the Alfaguara Prize--one of the most prestigious in the Spanish-

speaking world—and translated from the Spanish by one of our most celebrated literary translators, Edith Grossman. It evokes Holy Week during a cruel, bloody, and terrifying time in Peru's history, shocking for its corrosive mix of assassination, bribery, intrigue, torture, and enforced disappearance—a war between grim, ideologically driven terrorism and morally bankrupt government counterinsurgency. Mother-haunted, wife-abandoned, literature-loving, quietly eccentric Felix Chacaltana Saldívar is a hapless, by-the-book, unambitious prosecutor living in Lima. Until now he has lived a life in which nothing exceptionally good or bad has ever happened to him. But, inexplicably, he has been put in charge of a bizarre and horrible murder investigation. As it unfolds by propulsive twists and turns—full of paradoxes and surprises—Saldívar is compelled to confront what happens to a man and a society when death becomes the only certainty in life.

Stunning for its self-assured and nimble clarity of style—reminiscent of classic noir fiction—the inexorable momentum of its plot, and the moral complexity of its concerns, *Red April* is at once riveting and profound, informed as it is by deft artistry in the shaping of conflict between competing venalities. As the *New York Times* declares, “Lima is once again one of Latin America's brightest literary scenes.”

Review:

“Roncagliolo's stunning debut, about the brutality of Peruvian society under the Fujimori regime, merits comparison to the work of J.M. Coetzee. In 2000, associate district prosecutor Felix Chacaltana Saldívar, who's returned to the province of Ayacucho from Lima, clashes with his superiors after the discovery of a charred and mutilated corpse. Rigidly adhering to bureaucratic procedure, Saldívar demands that an official police report on the crime be filed, despite the active resistance of the police and the local military commander. The prosecutor's refusal to abort his inquiry threatens the official line that the Shining Path terrorists are a thing of the past. Eventually, he's reassigned to help monitor elections, only to encounter more corruption. Within the frame of a puzzling whodunit, Roncagliolo crafts an unsparing view of life controlled by a repressive and paranoid government. A mother fixation, social awkwardness and a desire to impress others lend complexity to the protagonist.” *Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)* (Copyright Reed Business Information, Inc.)

Synopsis:

Reminiscent of Roberto Bolaño's "The Savage Detectives" comes this chilling, internationally acclaimed political thriller by one of Latin America's most important young writers, witnessing what happens to both the individual and society when death becomes the only certainty in life.

Remarkable for the self-assured clarity of its style, the inexorable momentum of its exposition, and the complexity of its concerns, *Red April* works brilliantly on the deepest historical, social, and psychological levels. It is an electrifying novel.

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

By Cheri Dellelo

Equality Now's 100 Steps to Equality

For the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, March 8, 2011, Equality Now launched the *100 Steps to Equality* campaign. They have compiled facts and concrete action steps, however small, that we can each take to reach towards equality and a better world for women and girls. Whether it is putting pressure on government officials, contacting your local news agency, making a donation, or simply learning more about an issue and sharing it with friends, please take a minute to look at this list and take action on at least a few of these issues. (Many actions only take a minute of your time.) The issues include bride kidnapping/abduction and forced marriage, certain governments' failures to set a minimum age for marriage, “honor killings,” female genital mutilation, rape, and sex trafficking, among others.

Take action here:

<http://www.equalitynow.org/100steps.html>

AI Mother's Day Events

Every 90 seconds, another woman dies from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. This Mother's Day, join the Demand Dignity campaign in fighting this human rights crisis! In the two weeks leading up to Mother's Day—April 23 to May 8—AI members around the country will be holding Mother's Day card writing events, in-district lobby visits, and more. Together, we can pressure decision-makers in the United States and around the world to protect the

right to maternal health. You can help by joining one of these events or by hosting your own.

Get involved! Email AI at demanddignity@aiusa.org with your name, city, and state to get more information, to request materials, and to register your event!

Canada Takes a Stand on Forced Marriages

Newcomers referring to Canada's citizenship study guide will find changes including a section that emphasizes that forced marriage is not tolerated in the country, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney announced Monday. Kenney said that the guide touches on Canadians' common values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and equality of men and women.

The Child Marriage Prevention Act

A few weeks ago, the House took up the International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act of 2010. The bill would ensure that child marriage is recognized as a human rights violation and calls for the development of comprehensive strategies to prevent such marriages around the world. The legislation seemed likely to garner strong bipartisan support in Congress, and in the Senate, it did. However, the bill was voted down in the House by Republicans who argued the bill is too costly and could lead to increased abortions. In the meantime, the prevalence of child marriage remains alarmingly high worldwide. As CARE, a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty and supporting the child marriage prevention bill notes, "More than 60 million girls ages 17 and younger—many as young as 10—are forced into marriage in developing countries. Many of these girls are married to men more than twice their age. Not only does this unacceptable practice thwart a girl's education, it endangers her health and often locks her into a life of poverty." If this decision disappoints you as it does me, please consider contacting your local representative.

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

The ongoing situation in Japan is dire. My heart is filled with sorrow as I send off my tiny donation to Doctors Without Borders.

Governor Quinn Signs Bill

First, the good news. On March 9, 2011, Governor Pat Quinn signed the bill passed by the Illinois State legislature to abolish their death penalty. He said that after meeting with people on both sides of the issue, including families of murder victims and people who had been on death row and exonerated, he concluded "our system of imposing the death penalty is inherently flawed. The evidence presented to me by former prosecutors and judges with decades of experience in the criminal justice system has convinced me that it is impossible to devise a system that is consistent, that is free of discrimination on the basis of race, geography or economic circumstance, and that always gets it right."

Governor Quinn not only abolished the death penalty in Illinois but also commuted the sentences of the 15 men presently on death row. Governor Quinn said, "I felt once the decision was made to sign the law abolishing the death penalty, it should be abolished for all. I do believe the evil-doers should be punished severely in prison without parole ... but without the death penalty."

Illinois is the sixteenth state to abolish the death penalty and the fourth in four years. At the press conference during which Governor Quinn made the announcement, he looked to me to be a person who struggled with his decision. To see a portion of his press conference, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOQf15y2cFw>.

Thank you notes to Governor Quinn can be sent to
Governor Pat Quinn
Office of the Governor
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

or for an online action, go to

[http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/c.jhKPIXPCIoE/b.6606239/k.D8C6/Thank Illinois Leaders for Death Penalty Abolition/siteapps/advocacy/ActionItem.aspx?ICID=A1103001](http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/c.jhKPIXPCIoE/b.6606239/k.D8C6/Thank%20Illinois%20Leaders%20for%20Death%20Penalty%20Abolition/siteapps/advocacy/ActionItem.aspx?ICID=A1103001)

In California

As California faces the challenges of the state's deficit, a number of newspapers published editorials asking Governor Jerry Brown to abolish

the death penalty. (Pasadena Star-News http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/editorial/ci_17484129) Even as California has found the \$900,000.00 to improve the death chamber at San Quentin, the state also is planning to build a new death row that may cost California tax payers as much as \$1 billion. (Bloomberg <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-03-04/california-s-cadillac-death-row-complex-target-in-budget-talks.html>).

Perhaps as Californians we'd rather have our shared tax money spent differently, like finding those people who commit heinous crimes. According to California Crime Victims for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, 46% of all homicides from 1999 to 2008 were not solved. Money now used for the death penalty from trial to incarceration to new facilities could be put on the street in law enforcement.

Letters to Governor Brown can go to
Governor Jerry Brown
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento CA 95814

Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives

We have been busy working with the Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives. On March 3, a group of us went to see Pasadena City Councilman Chris Holden. The Coalition's approach is to meet with city council members to explain the cost of the death penalty and how that money would benefit the city. We also discuss the impact of the death penalty procedure on victims' families. Mr. Holden spent close to an hour with us. He was interested and not only offered to help us get a meeting with Mayor Bogaard but also made a call to his office and began the process for the coalition to meet with the legislative committee. One point Mr. Holden made is that to abolish the death penalty in California, the voters would have to decide through a ballot proposition. One of the reasons the Coalition is working through city councils is to demonstrate support for the abolition of the death penalty prior to initiating a proposition. For LA County, the hard part will be to secure the first city to endorse the resolution. Thus far two California City Councils, Berkeley and Albany, have signed abolition resolutions.

Sunday, March 13, Lucas and I attended the LACCDPA bimonthly meeting. We celebrated

Governor Quinn's action in Illinois; wished the interns, Pauline and Clodagh, well as they leave the ACLU and head back to the Emerald Isle; and discussed the progress the working committees are having. In addition to our meeting with Chris Holden in Pasadena, the lobbying group also met with Patrick O'Donnell, a city councilman in Long Beach. The Tabling committee has secured a space at the Little Tokyo farmers' market on Thursdays between 10 AM and 2 PM. Anyone who would be interested in helping out with that can contact James Clark at jclark@aclu-sc.org.

Troy Davis

Lucas recently emailed new information about Troy's case. He continues to fight for his life. At this point, "The Supreme Court could accept the district court's ruling outright and deny Davis' appeal, clearing the path for Georgia to set an execution date. It could punt the case to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. Or it could consider the appeal either this term, which already has a rather full docket, or put it on the docket for next term (following the summer recess)." To read the entire statement, go to <http://blog.amnestyusa.org/deathpenalty/where-is-the-troy-davis-case-now/>.

To take action in this case, go to <http://www.amnestyusa.org/death-penalty/troy-davis-finality-over-fairness/page.do?id=1011343>

Our New Abolition Coordinator

Please welcome Amnesty's new State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator, Jessica Farley. On March 5, Lucas and I went to Jessica's to meet with other opponents of the death penalty. We watched and discussed the film Interview with an Executioner. The Amnesty website says of this film: "In 'Interview with an Executioner' Amnesty International's Terry McCaffrey talks with **Parchman Penitentiary Superintendent Don Cabana** about the death penalty." To find out more about this film, go to

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/death-penalty/death-penalty-facts/interview-with-an-executioner/page.do?id=1101081>.

Welcome, Jessica. We look forward to working with you.

Execution Drugs

The drugs used in executions continue to present problems for those federal and state government agencies committed with the responsibility of executing people. The federal government has run out of a supply of sodium thiopental. U. S. Attorney General Eric Holder says this "is a serious concern." The state of Ohio executed Johnnie Baston March 10, 2011, using pentobarbital, a drug used to euthanize animals. Finding producers of drugs the US uses for executions is proving to be problematic.

Sentences Commuted to Life Without Parole
 March
 Fifteen inmates in the Illinois State Prison system

Executions
 February 22
 Timothy Adams Texas Lethal Injection

March 10
 Johnnie Baston Ohio Lethal Injection

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE
GAO ZHISHENG

By Joyce Wolf

April 20 will mark the one-year anniversary of human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng's latest enforced disappearance. You can visit Group 22's website to learn more about our adopted prisoner of conscience and take action for him.
<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22>

Soon we will have an opportunity to learn more about Gao Zhisheng's life and his thoughts on human rights in China. Our book discussion selection for July is the book that Gao wrote in 2006, *A China More Just*.

While attending Amnesty International USA's Annual General Meeting on March 19 in San Francisco, I had the privilege of talking with a Chinese filmmaker who had recently endured 55 days of secret detention in China. Hua Ze said she was kidnapped and held in various hostels and guesthouses, probably because she had received an invitation to attend the Nobel ceremonies in Oslo. She was released in December shortly after the ceremonies were concluded. Hua Ze expressed the opinion that China now tends to

deal with troublesome activists outside the official system. She kept a detailed diary of her experiences. Here are some excerpts:

"I am surprised by someone grabbing me from behind and carrying me backwards, face up. Meanwhile, a black hood descends as if from the sky. The first idea that flashed into my mind is that the black hood is so thick, and that it stinks of foot odor."

" 'Help!' I hear my cry and struggle desperately in the hope that I can hold out until people witness that I am kidnapped and to report it to the police. In this struggle, the black hood falls off . As seven to eight strongmen are stuffing me, head down and feet high, into a white minivan, I remember the last scene: I resist by hooking my feet tightly to the door frame. A kidnapper's distorted face stares down at me and says devilishly: 'If you go on resisting, you will be dead!' A moment later, I lose consciousness."

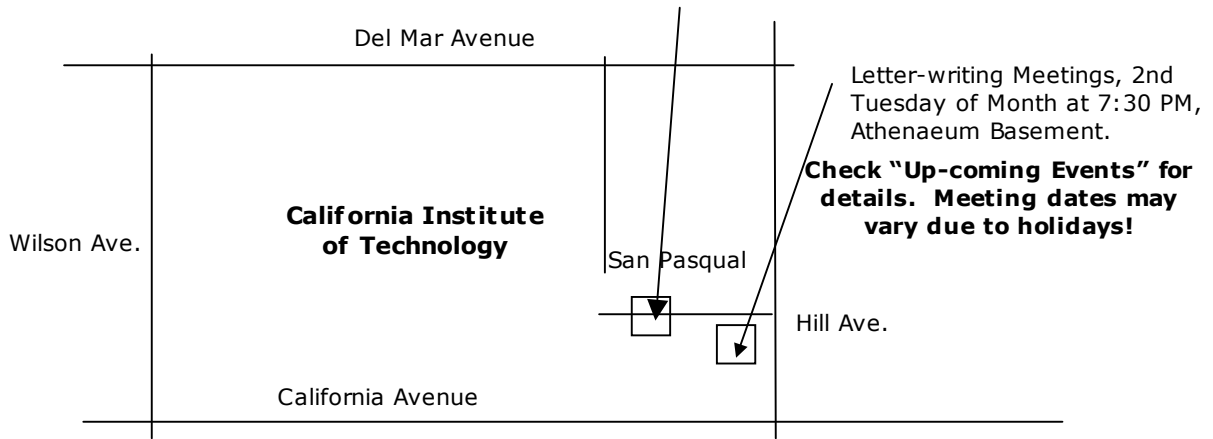
"I have a dream! I dream in the near future my friends will never be kidnapped, disappeared, or jailed. I dream they will never live in exile as a sojourner far away from home and their country."

The complete English translation of Hua Ze's journal is available at
<http://hzaze.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/the-ordeal-of-a-fragrant-soul.pdf>.

MONTHLY LETTER COUNT

Pre printed actions	10
UA's	3
POC	5
Total	18
To add your letters to the total contact lwkamp@gmail.com .	

Monthly Meetings, 4th Thursday of Month, 7:30 PM,
Caltech Y Lounge.



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.

Amnesty International Group 22
The Caltech Y
Mail Code 5-62
Pasadena, CA 91125
www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>



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.