

# Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XXIII Number 7, July 2015

## UPCOMING EVENTS

PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE NOT HAVING THURSDAY MONTHLY MEETINGS FOR JULY AND AUGUST. Meetings will resume on September 24.

**Tuesday, August 11, 7:30 PM.** Letter writing meeting at Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. In the summer we meet outdoors at the "Rath al Fresco," on the lawn behind the building. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty.

**Sunday, August 16, 6:30 PM.** Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read the novel "A Treacherous Paradise" by Henning Mankell.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello everyone,  
{Kathy is on vacation. She'll be back to write next month's column.}

**Save the Date.** The Amnesty West Regional Conference will be held the weekend of **Nov. 20** in Los Angeles at the Sheraton Hotel near LAX. What with one thing and another, it's been two years since any Group 22 members attended an AIUSA conference, so we're eagerly looking forward to this one. We'll post more details when they are available.

**New case, new case coordinator.** Our group has begun the process of adopting a new Prisoner of Conscience. Alexi will be our new Case File Coordinator. She is in contact with the AIUSA Individuals At Risk program, which is responsible for assigning cases to Local Groups who wish to make long-term commitments.

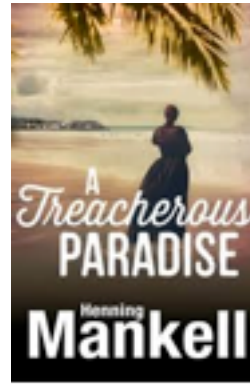
Best wishes to group members Ido and Niki, who are settling into their new home in Portland, Oregon. We miss you!

Cheers, Joyce and Stevi

## RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

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



**Next Rights Readers meeting:**

**Sunday, August 16, 6:30 PM**

**Vroman's Bookstore  
695 E. Colorado,  
Pasadena**

**A Treacherous Paradise  
By Henning Mankell**

## BOOK REVIEW

[The New York Times Sunday Book Review]  
By WILLIAM BOYD  
JULY 19, 2013

We forget, in these postcolonial times, that until comparatively recently the world was replete with empires. I was born in a corner of the British Empire, in West Africa, in a colony known as the Gold Coast, and the Africa of those days (the early 1950s) was divided among several empires: British, French, Belgian, Spanish and Portuguese (the Germans having been expelled in World War I and their colonies appropriated).

The Portuguese had been there longest, since the 15th century, and their colonies — Mozambique, Angola and Guinea — were surprisingly integrated compared with others. The Portuguese had abolished slavery by the end of the 19th century, the death penalty had been rescinded (apart from cases of treason), and intermarriage between the settler class and the local Africans was tolerated, thereby earning the Portuguese colonies a louche reputation for decadence and immorality, particularly from the point of view of the British. A chapter of my second novel, "An Ice-Cream War," was set in Portuguese East Africa (as Mozambique was then known) during World War I, and as I did my research this attitude of prurient revulsion on the part of its British colonial neighbors was particularly striking.

Henning Mankell's fascinating new novel, "A Treacherous Paradise," is largely set in Mozambique during the early years of the 20th century. But the story starts in Sweden. A young girl, Hanna Renstrom, is sent away from her isolated rural home because her family, confronting a famine, can no longer feed all its members. Assisted by a fur-wearing, sleigh-driving businessman, Hanna secures a place as a

cook on a Swedish steamship bound for Australia, hauling a cargo of timber. On the first leg of the journey she marries the third mate, who promptly dies of fever off the coast of Africa. Eyeing the shoreline and the Portuguese city of Lourenço Marques as the steamer takes on supplies, Hanna, a very young widow, only 18, spontaneously decides to jump ship and make a new life on the African continent. Now her adventures really begin.

Mankell, as it happens, divides his time between Sweden and Mozambique and has great familiarity with both countries. His juxtaposition of the two — cold north versus hot south, Swedish temperament combining with African license — gives the novel its unusual flavor. It often reads like a fable or a folk tale, as this young Swedish girl encounters the cruel realities of African colonial life. Having fled her ship, she checks in to a hotel, only to discover that it's Lourenço Marques's most prestigious brothel. After just a few weeks the brothel keeper, a man called Vaz, asks her to marry him, which she does. Then he also dies, and Hanna finds herself running the business in his place — with considerable aplomb and success.

The brothel, called O Paraiso ("The Paradise," giving the novel's title one of its nuances), is a curious, surreal place. Vaz's pet chimpanzee, Carlos, who wears clothes and serves refreshments to clients from a tray, becomes attached to Hanna and is a constant presence. Hanna also develops strong relationships with her "girls" and some of her clients, and the narrative reflects the bizarre, anecdotal, meandering nature of the brothel keeper's life.

Increasingly wealthy and becoming a person of some local stature and influence, Hanna discovers that paradise can be treacherous. One young black woman who has killed her white brute of a husband is found dead, hideously mutilated, in her jail cell, despite Hanna's efforts to save her. With her strange paradise well and truly besmirched, Hanna finds some comfort in the arms of the victim's brother. Soon she leaves Lourenço Marques and travels north to Beira, Portuguese East Africa's second city, and there, in the Africa Hotel, she hides the diary she's been keeping and disappears. She is never heard of again until, almost a hundred years later, her diary is discovered.

In an afterword, Mankell explains the origins of the novel: in fact there was a Swedish woman who ran a brothel in Lourenço Marques at the beginning of the 20th century, a woman who

dutifully paid her taxes (hence the documentary evidence of her existence) but about whom nothing more is known. From this starting point, Mankell has constructed his fantastical narrative.

He has, on the whole, been well served by his translator, Laurie Thompson, who renders Mankell's Swedish into a simple and enchanting English: "Somebody called Elin ought to be slim and delicately formed, with hands like milk and fair hair hanging down over her back. But . . . Elin Renstrom . . . was powerfully built with lank reddish-brown hair, a large nose and teeth that were not quite regular. They gave the impression of wanting to jump out of her mouth and run away. Elin Renstrom was certainly not a beautiful woman. And she knew it."

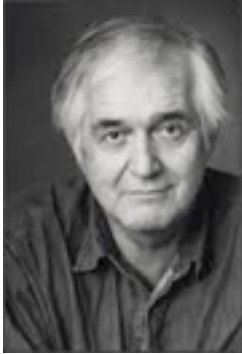
Occasionally there's a slip into colloquial anachronism (did Swedish people say "O.K." in 1905?), and there are instances of other lapses and clichés: "He wasn't messing her about"; "If the bottom line was that there was no way in which she could help the imprisoned woman. . . ." But over all, the novel's tone — reminiscent of Latin American magic realism, transplanted to Africa — makes it work. Carlos the chimp might have come out of a García Márquez novel, and the richly colored details of brothel life could be from a sprawling Jorge Amado tale.

The translator's task is always a fraught and personal one: fidelity to the original or fidelity to a linguistic fluency in the new language? For the reader who isn't familiar with Swedish, and who, upon opening "A Treacherous Paradise," is unable to make comparisons between the languages, the latter inclination is, I believe, always preferable. Translated novels must read well, above all, without sacrificing accuracy. We need literature in translation: it's a great boon to our various cultures, as the sensuous, beguiling tapestry of "A Treacherous Paradise" makes abundantly clear.

#### **AUTHOR BIO**

Henning Mankell was born in Stockholm 1948. When he was two years old the family moved to Sveg where the father worked as a court judge. The family lived in the court house in Sveg and young Henning much enjoyed listening to the grown-ups discussions on crime and punishment. At age 16 Henning Mankell dropped out of school in order to work as a merchant seaman for two years before settling in Paris. After a year and a half in the French

capital, Henning returned to Sweden and got a job as a stagehand in a Stockholm theatre.



*"Although my father passed away before my first novel was published I knew he believed in me and was confident that I would have success as a writer."*

In 1973, Mankell released his debut novel, *Bergsprängaren* (The Rock Blast). In the same year, he went to Africa for the first time. Ever since he has divided his time between Africa and Sweden and since 1986 he is the artistic leader of Teatro Avenida in Maputo, Mozambique.

In 1991, the first novel in the Wallander series, *Faceless killers*, was published. Since, Henning Mankell has written nine more novels in the series, including the novel *Before the Frost*, about Kurt Wallander's daughter Linda. Next to the Wallander novels, Mankell has also written more than twenty novels and a dozen children's and youth books. In addition, he is also one of Sweden's most frequently performed dramatists.

In 2013 Henning Mankell participated in World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. He is currently working on a new novel. Henning Mankell's latest novel, *A Treacherous Paradise*, was published in Sweden in August 2011 and will be translated into English in 2013.

## SECURITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

by Robert Adams

AIUSA released the following press release on July 1, 2015:

### **UK surveillance Tribunal reveals the government spied on Amnesty International**

In a shocking revelation, the UK's Investigatory Powers Tribunal (IPT) today notified Amnesty International that UK government agencies had spied on the organization by intercepting, accessing and storing its communications. In an email sent today, the Tribunal informed Amnesty International its 22 June ruling had mistakenly identified one of two NGOs which it found had been subjected to unlawful surveillance by the UK government. Today's communication makes clear that it was actually

Amnesty International Ltd, and not the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) that was spied on in addition to the Legal Resources Centre in South Africa. The NGOs were among 10 organizations that launched a legal challenge against suspected unlawful mass surveillance of their work by the UK's spy agencies.

"After 18 months of litigation and all the denials and subterfuge that entailed, we now have confirmation that we were in fact subjected to UK government mass surveillance. It's outrageous that what has been often presented as being the domain of despotic rulers has been occurring on British soil, by the British government," said Salil Shetty, Amnesty International's Secretary General.

"How can we be expected to carry out our crucial work around the world if human rights defenders and victims of abuses can now credibly believe their confidential correspondence with us is likely to end up in the hands of governments? The revelation that the UK government has been spying on Amnesty International highlights the gross inadequacies in the UK's surveillance legislation. If they hadn't stored our communications for longer than they were allowed to, we would never even have known. What's worse, this would have been considered perfectly lawful."

Today's IPT email made no mention of when or why Amnesty International was spied on, or what was done with the information obtained.

This shows the urgent need for significant legal reform, including proper pre-judicial authorization and meaningful oversight of the use of surveillance powers by the UK security services, and an independent inquiry into how and why a UK intelligence agency has been spying on human rights organizations. It also underlines Amnesty International's call for an end to mass communications surveillance by governments.

Earlier this year Amnesty International launched #UnfollowMe, a global campaign against indiscriminate mass surveillance, to challenge governments that want to invade privacy and restrict freedoms on an industrial scale. The organization has also initiated legal challenges against the targeted mass surveillance practices of both the US and UK governments.

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

### Glenn Ford: October 22, 1949 - June 29, 2015

After spending almost 30 years on death row for a murder he did not commit, Glenn Ford was released only to find a new executioner awaited him: cancer. As he died, people who cared about him were near and he listened to a song he loved.

According to Sr Helen Prejean, Mr. Ford requested any remembrances be donations made in his name to Resurrection After Exoneration, the organization that provided him housing and support after his release from prison. (<http://www.r-a-e.org/home>)

### Midazolam gets the A-OK Nod from the Supremes - 5 to 4

The end of June saw the Supremes singing joyous songs of the Affordable Care Act and Marriage Equality, but not so much for rendering Midazolam ineffective in anesthetizing people strapped to a gurney, ready for the next two drugs in the three-drug protocol for lethal injection.

The ruling was 5-4 with Justice Samuel Alito writing for the majority:

"First, the prisoners failed to identify a known and available alternative method of execution that entails a lesser risk of pain, a requirement of all Eighth Amendment method-of execution claims. ... Second, the District Court did not commit clear error when it found that the prisoners failed to establish that Oklahoma's use of a massive dose of midazolam in its execution protocol entails a substantial risk of severe pain."

The silver lining in this cloud of State-sanctioned murder would be Justices Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg who used this ruling as an opportunity to say the court should consider whether the death penalty itself is constitutional. Justice Breyer wants someone to bring a case that would allow the Court to reconsider capital punishment for the first time since 1977, and he wrote, "I believe it highly likely that the death penalty violates the Eighth Amendment." To which Justice Antonin Scalia responded that Justice Breyer's arguments were full of "internal contradictions" and "gobbledy-

gook." I am sure the latter is a well-respected judicial term with which I am not familiar.

Following the Supreme Court's decision, Steven W. Hawkins, executive director of AIUSA, posted

"This decision does not change the fact that regardless of the method of execution, the death penalty is broken beyond repair. The death penalty is the ultimate violation of human rights. The Court's decision today will not resolve the death penalty's fundamental flaws, including the risk of executing a wrongfully convicted person. The only discussion should be how to put an end to this cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment once and for all."

In a very real way, this decision impacts the lives of the remaining three people who were plaintiffs in this case - Richard Glossip, John Grant, and Benjamin Cole. The Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals made haste to set their execution dates.

Richard Glossip - September 16

Benjamin Cole - October 7

John Grant - October 28



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### 90 Million Strong Campaign

In a 1997 survey, 78% of our brothers and sisters favored the death penalty with only 18% opposed. In a new Pew Research Center survey, that number dropped to 56% with 38% opposed it. So, what can we do?

One option is the 90 Million Strong Campaign. To get involved with this, the organizers have a few suggestions: sign-up; speak out; stay informed; spread the message. For more

information (and maybe to sign up!), go to <http://www.ncadp.org/page/s/90-million-strong-campaign>

### Stays of Execution

July

15	Alva Campbell	OH
15	Warren K. Henness	OH
16	Clifton Williams	TX

August

18	David Miller	TN
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### Execution

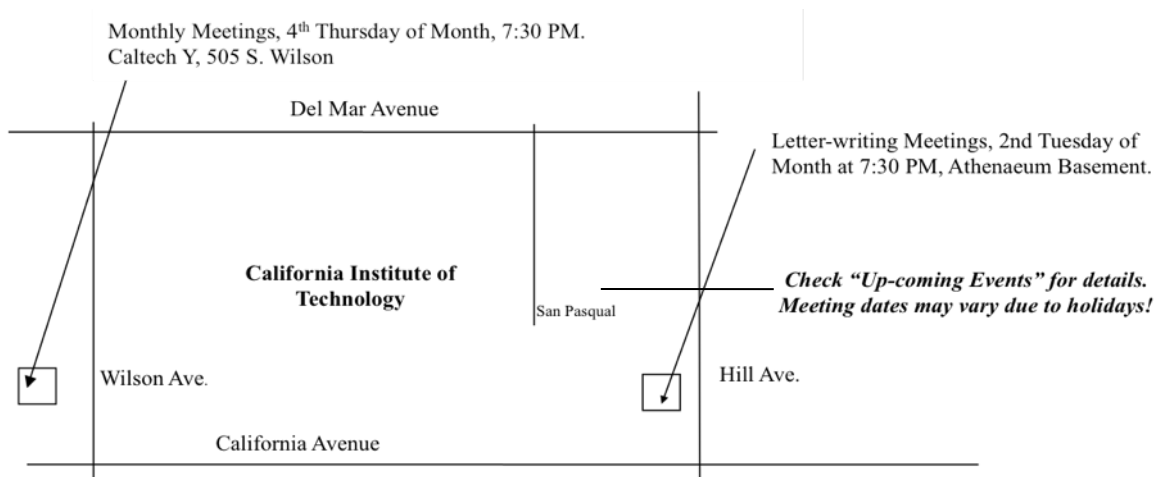
July

14	David Zink	MO
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Lethal Injection 1-drug (pentobarbital)

<b>GROUP 22 MONTHLY LETTER COUNT</b>	
UAs	25
Total	25
To add your letters to the total contact <a href="mailto:aigp22@caltech.edu">aigp22@caltech.edu</a>	





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 C1-128  
 Pasadena, CA 91125  
[www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/](http://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.