

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XXVII Number 4, April 2019

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, April 25, 7:30-9:00 PM. *Monthly Meeting.* We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena.

Sunday, April 28, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* The April selection is a novel, "**The Boat Runner**" by Devin Murphy.

Tuesday, May 14, 7:30-9:00 PM. *Letter Writing meeting* at the Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. (In summer we meet outdoors at the "Rath al Fresco" on the lawn next to the building.) This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty.

Sunday, May 19, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* For May we read "**Hitler in Los Angeles: How Jews Foiled Nazi Plots in Hollywood and America**" by Steven J. Ross.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello all,

Happy Easter, Passover and spring celebrations, everyone. Spring break was this week and I have been catching up on sleep, reading, cooking (and eating - lol) and enjoying the breezy warm weather.

The Mueller report just came out and although I'm not supposed to mention politics in this column, your reaction was probably very similar to mine! We'll see what Congress does...

Veronica did another environmental fair last weekend in Pasadena after her success at the Arboretum in Arcadia. Thanks to her and everyone else who helped out. Rob and I weren't able to attend this year.

Don't miss this month's monthly meeting where our star urgent action hero Vince will talk about the Amnesty AGM (annual general meeting) he attended in Chicago.

AI USA is having a webinar on a bill restricting police use of force (AB 392) in California Sunday, April 28, from 4-5 pm Pacific Time on Zoom with Krissy Roth, Amnesty's criminal justice senior program officer. Please respond to Amy Gordon, field organizer at AGordon@aiusa.org to RSVP and be added to

Zoom. Learn more about the bill and how our group can get involved.

On Sunday, May 26, our friend Ann Lau of the Visual Artists Guild is having a luncheon at Almansor Court in Alhambra commemorating the 30th anniversary of both Tiananmen Square and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Chinese and Tibetan human rights activists will be honored. For tickets and more information, call Ann at 310-433-0697 or email alau@visual-artists-guild.org. Deadline to register is May 16.

Con cariño,
Kathy

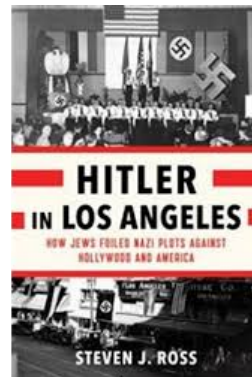
**Next Rights Readers Meeting
Sunday, April 28, 6:30 PM**

**Vroman's Bookstore (upstairs)
695 E. Colorado Blvd, Pasadena**

***The Boat Runner*
by Devin Murphy**

See review in our March newsletter at

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/news/2019/mar19.pdf>



May Rights Readers Meeting

**Sunday, May 19
6:30 PM**

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

***Hitler in Los Angeles: How
Jews Foiled Nazi Plots in
Hollywood and America***

by Steven J. Ross

REVIEW

<https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/hitler-in-los-angeles-9781620405642/>

A 2018 FINALIST FOR THE PULITZER PRIZE

The chilling, little-known story of the rise of Nazism in Los Angeles, and the Jewish leaders and spies they recruited who stopped it.

No American city was more important to the Nazis than Los Angeles, home to Hollywood, the greatest propaganda machine in the world. The Nazis plotted to kill the city's Jews and to

sabotage the nation's military installations: plans existed for hanging twenty prominent Hollywood figures such as Al Jolson, Charlie Chaplin, and Samuel Goldwyn; for driving through Boyle Heights and machine-gunning as many Jews as possible; and for blowing up defense installations and seizing munitions from National Guard armories along the Pacific Coast.

U.S. law enforcement agencies were not paying close attention--preferring to monitor Reds rather than Nazis--and only Leon Lewis and his daring ring of spies stood in the way. From 1933 until the end of World War II, attorney Leon Lewis, the man Nazis would come to call "the most dangerous Jew in Los Angeles," ran a spy operation comprised of military veterans and their wives who infiltrated every Nazi and fascist group in Los Angeles. Often rising to leadership positions, this daring ring of spies uncovered and foiled the Nazi's disturbing plans for death and destruction.

Featuring a large cast of Nazis, undercover agents, and colorful supporting players, Hitler in Los Angeles, by acclaimed historian Steven J. Ross, tells the story of Lewis's daring spy network in a time when hate groups had moved from the margins to the mainstream.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Stephen Ross was born in LeMars, Iowa, in 1948. He lived in Fremont, Nebraska, from the age of five until he left home to attend the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. After college, Stephen taught business courses at Nebraska Technical College for two years

prior to moving to Los Angeles, California, to pursue an acting career. During his eight years in Los Angeles, he not only acted, but gained extensive experience as a waiter. He moved to San Diego, California, in 1981 to attend law school at the University of San Diego, and practiced law there until retiring in 2017.

<http://www.stephenrossauthor.com/bio/>

SECURITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

By Robert Adams

AFTER OBSERVING ASYLUM HEARINGS, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS TO STOP ILLEGAL PUSHBACKS OF ASYLUM SEEKERS TO MEXICO

04/11/2019

The US government must immediately halt its illegal pushbacks of thousands of asylum seekers at the border with Mexico and instead facilitate their prompt reception and the processing of their cases under US law, said Amnesty International today during a visit to the border.

"Pushbacks violate international law, and US authorities are forcing thousands of people who are seeking asylum to wait on the Mexican side of the border for months both before and after receiving their requests for protection. The courts are playing a vital role in limiting abuses of power by US authorities, but most of those seeking asylum still lack adequate access to justice and continue to suffer wholesale violations of their rights," said Erika Guevara-Rosas, America's director at Amnesty International.

From April 8 to 10, Amnesty International monitored the hearings of 28 asylum cases in San Diego, involving 31 adults and 26 children whom US authorities had forcibly returned to Mexico under the "Remain in Mexico" policy since late January. During their hearings, over 40 percent of them proactively expressed their fears of return to Mexico.

Amnesty International identified serious shortcomings in the proceedings resulting from the "Remain in Mexico" policy, including widespread lack of access to attorneys for those forcibly returned to Mexico during their proceedings. In only one of the cases that Amnesty International monitored had the people seeking asylum successfully secured legal representation.

Amnesty International also interviewed eight adults and three children in Tijuana, whom US authorities had forcibly returned to Mexico after they requested asylum. Several of them

expressed fears that they could face harm in Mexico while waiting for their hearings. "I don't feel safe to be here. Anything can happen, because I'm Honduran. The police here are very corrupt, and they steal the money of lots of people," said Josue, a 53-year-old man from Honduras.

On April, 8 a US federal court issued a preliminary injunction barring the further implementation of "Remain in Mexico," also known as the "migrant protection protocol," under which US authorities have forcibly returned more than 1,300 asylum seekers to Mexico before the final adjudication of their asylum claims. Nonetheless, hundreds of people who are still waiting in Mexico for their court hearings in the US are stuck in legal limbo – and potentially dangerous situations.

Illegal asylum waitlist under US 'metering' policy

In addition to the "Remain in Mexico" policy, US and Mexican authorities are also forcing asylum seekers to wait for weeks or months on an illegal asylum waitlist before allowing them to request protection, which some said has put them in danger.

Manuel, a 29-year-old man from El Salvador who was forcibly returned to Mexico after requesting asylum, said Mexican police detained him and stole his money and phone the day before his number came up on the illegal waitlist, after weeks of waiting his turn in Tijuana.

The waitlist is held by a small group of asylum seekers during the day, and then by Mexican authorities at night. As of April 9, there were approximately 4,460 names on the list in Tijuana, approximately 40 to 45 percent of whom were Mexican nationals, whom neither US nor Mexican officials can legally prohibit from requesting asylum at the US border.

By forcing thousands of Mexican nationals to wait in Mexico for weeks or months before allowing them to enter the United States to request protection, the US government is violating its national asylum laws. The Mexican government is also violating Article 11 of its Constitution (guaranteeing its citizens' freedom of movement) by preventing Mexican nationals from reaching the border to present themselves

for asylum, while both countries are violating their obligations under international law.

From April 8 to 10, Amnesty International interviewed 15 asylum seekers who had been waiting on the illegal asylum waitlist for periods ranging from a few hours to several months. Cindy, a 17-year-old mother who was seven months pregnant, had been waiting in Tijuana for over two months to request asylum at the US border, after fleeing from threats and violence in her home state of Michoacán, Mexico. "I feel unsafe and afraid to stay here," she said. Soon after she fled, Cindy had had started receiving threatening phone calls from her aggressors in Michoacán.

Three transgender women from El Salvador and Honduras told Amnesty international they were afraid to wait in Tijuana before requesting asylum in the United States, because Mexican police had previously attacked and exploited them.

Pamela, a 29-year old trans woman from El Salvador, said she was "very afraid" of waiting in Tijuana. "Since I've been attacked and assaulted by the Mexican police in Mexico City, I wouldn't feel safe going to the police if I were attacked by people here in Tijuana. They say Tijuana is a very dangerous place, and I'm afraid to go walk around in the streets by myself."

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

Clifford Williams, Jr. and Hubert Myers

Forty-two years ago what were you doing? Clifford Williams and Hubert Myers were at a party in Jacksonville, Florida. In an apartment near the party, a woman was shot to death while the other woman present was not. After a two-day trial that did not include any evidence or witnesses, both Mr. Williams and Mr. Myers were found guilty. Mr. Williams was given a death sentence, Mr. Myers life without parole.

While in prison, both men maintained their innocence. They petitioned the Conviction Integrity Review unit that the state attorney created in 2017. One of the findings was that a man confessed to the murder and felt bad that

Mr. Williams and Mr. Myers were in prison for his crime. He died in 1994 (that's almost 25 years ago!). Because of this investigation, Judge Angela Cox vacated their convictions. The state dismissed the indictments. Mr. Williams is now 76 years old; Mr. Myers 61. Forty-two years in prison for a crime they did not commit and now these elderly men are looking forward to enjoying their freedom.

Charles Rhines

Charles Rhines was fired from the donut shop where he'd worked. He still had a key to the shop and decided to use the key to enter the shop to rob it. Unfortunately, while his robbery was in progress, a former co-worker arrived. In the altercation that followed, Mr. Rhines stabbed the man three times, leading to the man's death. The Rapid City, North Dakota, court system had a simple murder case to prosecute. Not quite.

As the jury deliberated Mr. Rhines' fate, questions arose about his sexuality. Mr. Rhines is gay. Should Mr. Rhines be given life without possibility of parole, would he be in the general population of a men's prison? Would he have a cellmate? Would he gather a group of young admiring men around him? The thoughts of some of the jurors were that Mr. Rhines would be where he'd want to be, in a group of men; therefore, he should not be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. He should be sentenced to death. And he was.

Using cases based on racial bias, Mr Rhines' lawyers attempted to have the US Supreme Court review his case. The Supreme Court denied the request. The jurors' statements about Mr Rhines' sexuality clearly indicated bias. In his petition to the Supreme Court, Mr. Rhines argued that "[a]nti-gay bias, if left unaddressed, risks systemic harm to the justice system and, in particular, capital jury sentencing."

While sexual orientation has not been considered by the Supremes, "researchers at UCLA School of Law's Williams Institute have found significant prejudice against gay people in the justice system. They wrote:

'In 2017, we analyzed federal data and found that LGB people were three times more likely than straight people to be held in prisons and jails. Another study found that nearly three-fifths of girls in juvenile detention facilities identify as lesbian, bisexual, or not completely straight. Both studies also found that LGB people receive more severe punishments, reflected in longer prison and jail terms, compared with straight inmates.'

Perhaps one day, Charles Rhines' name will appear in 'Recent Executions.'

Ah Yes - Texas and House Bill 896

House Bill 896 would criminalize ALL abortions, no exceptions; abortion becomes homicide and therefore, the women who have abortions would be eligible for a death sentence. According to Rep. Tony Tinderholt, who introduced the bill, this would make women more 'personally responsible'.

What could possibly be a problem here? Pro-Life = abolish abortion. Pro-Life = execute women who have abortions? This is very confusing to my secular mind.

And this sort of 'punishment' would make WOMEN more personally responsible? I hate to break it to Rep. Tinderholt, but women do not become pregnant by themselves. It takes an ejaculating man to do that.

As Gabrielle Blair, a Mormon mother of six, points out, men cause pregnancy. She notes women are able to conceive perhaps two days out of every month while men can impregnate multiple times 365 days a year. (To read more about this mom's thoughts, go to <https://www.bustle.com/p/a-mormon-mom-of-6-tweeted-about-the-burden-of-preventing-pregnancy-falling-on-women-it-should-be-required-reading-11939116>)

While I doubt even in Texas, this bill will get traction, but we do see many states imposing what could be seen as draconian anti-choice laws. I think if it's control of someone's body these people (many of whom are men) want, how about men stepping up and taking just a little of say, personal responsibility.

Recent Exonerations

Robert Yell - State: KY

- Date of Exoneration: 3/14/2019

In 2006, Robert Yell of Russellville, Kentucky, was sentenced to 52 years in prison after his son was killed and his infant daughter was badly injured in a fire that the prosecutor argued he had set. The charges were dismissed in 2019 after a re-examination of the forensic evidence showed that the state's arson investigators drew conclusions that weren't based on science.

Archie Williams - State: LA

- Date of Exoneration: 3/21/2019

In 1983, Archie Williams was sentenced to life in prison without parole for attempted murder and rape in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He was

exonerated in 2019 when a fingerprint from the scene was matched to a convicted rapist who had died in prison.

Clifford Williams, Jr. and Hubert Myers
 - State: FL - Date of Exoneration: 3/28/2019
 In 1976, Clifford Williams Jr. was sentenced to death and Hubert Nathan Myers to life in prison for a murder and attempted murder in Jacksonville, Florida. They were exonerated in 2019 after the prosecutor's Conviction Integrity Unit reinvestigated the case and determined that another man, now deceased, had been the shooter.

Recent Stays of Execution

March
 20 Russell Buklew MO
 Stay granted by the U.S. Supreme Court on March 20, 2018, pending resolution of his petition for writ of certiorari on the question of whether his medical condition makes it unconstitutionally cruel to execute him by means of lethal injection.

April
 11 Melvin Bonnell OH
 Rescheduled for February 12, 2020 by Gov. John Kasich on September 1, 2017.

11 William Montgomery OH
 Commutation granted. On March 16, the Ohio Board of Pardons voted 6-4 to recommend that Montgomery's death sentence be commuted by Ohio Governor John Kasich. Gov. Kasich commuted Montgomery's death sentence to life without parole on March 26, 2018.

Recent Executions

None since February 28, 2019 – Hooray!

GROUP 22 APRIL LETTER COUNT	
UAs	31
POC (Gao Zhisheng birthday card)	1
POC (Narges Mohammadi birthday card)	1
Total	33

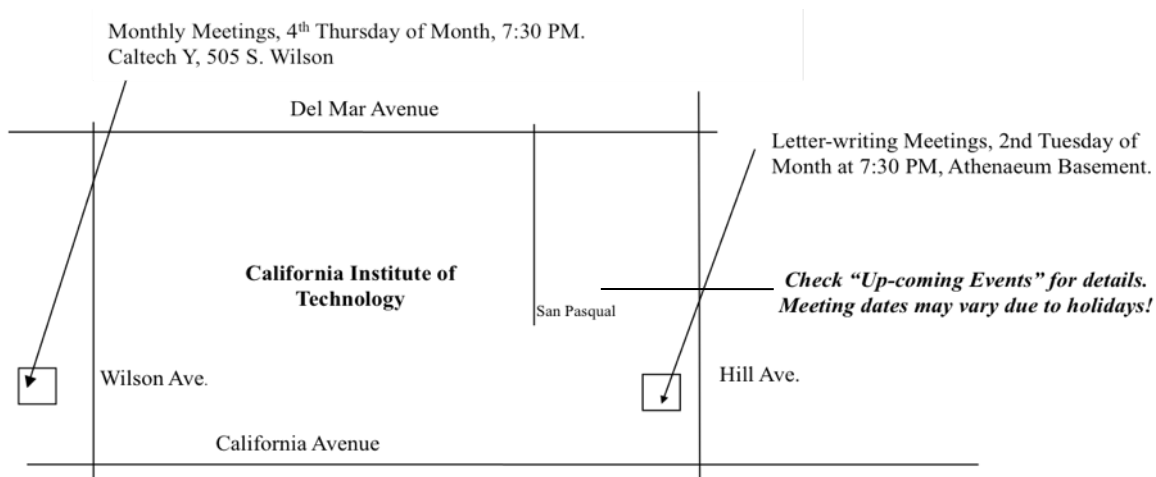
GROUP 22 PARTICIPATES IN ENVIRONMENTAL FAIRS
 By Joyce Wolf

Group 22 member Veronica Raymond arranged an Amnesty table at the Los Angeles Environmental Education Fair at the Arboretum on March 30. She provided lots of art supplies for children to make their own bookmarks, and we had two petitions for adults to sign, one based on the Urgent Action for a slain Mexican environmentalist, and the other for eight conservationists imprisoned in Iran. The event was very successful, and Veronica decided to do it all over again for the Pasadena Earth Day Festival on Saturday, April 20.



(photo by Stevi)

"Defend Those Who Defend The Earth" – nice to see this banner again! I think we created it back in 2000, when Amnesty partnered with Sierra Club in the "Just Earth" campaign. Veronica and Martha organized Group 22 participation in the Arboretum events in 2000-2006; then we did Pasadena Earth Day festivals until 2013. Huge thanks to Veronica for arranging Group 22 participation in this year's events, and special thanks to Stevi and Paula for helping at the Pasadena fair.



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://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.