

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 22, 7:30 PM. *Monthly Meeting* 414 S. Holliston, Caltech Y Lounge. Help us plan future actions for Tibet, Iraq, the Patriot Act, and more.

Tuesday, May 27 Film: *DAM/AGE*. UCLA Royce Hall 7:00 Part of Amnesty International Film Festival (see below). FREE. This screening only, RSVP to 310/825-2101 Featuring a post-screening discussion with Arundhati Roy. *Dam/age* traces writer Roy's bold and controversial campaign against the Narmada dam project in India.

May 27 – June 1. Amnesty International Film Festival. Directors Guild of America, 7920 Sunset Blvd. 310-815-0450 For complete information and film descriptions, see <http://www.amnestyusa.org/filmfest> Ticket Sales: General Admission: \$8, West Hollywood Residents \$6, Amnesty Int'l Members \$6, LAUSD Students Free! Other Students (W/ Valid Id) \$4. For advance ticket sales (recommended), call 310-815-0450.

Wednesday, May 28. Amnesty International Film Festival Opening Night Event: *The Killing Fields*. DGA Theater 1 7:30pm. A special archive presentation of Roland Joffé's Academy Award Winning film. A stunning historical drama based on actual events, though nearly 20 years old, is just as relevant—if not more so—today. *The opening night event is free, by invitation only. A limited number of seats are available to the general public, also free of charge. Advance reservations required.* RSVP To: 310-815-0450 or aiusala@aiusa.org A program featuring special guests precedes the screening.

Tuesday, June 10, 7:30 PM. *Letter-writing Meeting* at the Athenaeum. Corner of California & Hill in the basement recreation area. This informal gathering is a great for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

Sunday, June 10, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we discuss *The Pickup*, Nadine Gordimer. (More info below.)

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hope all is well with you and you are enjoying the lovely spring weather.

On April 30th, Group 22 member Joyce Wolf and myself went to the Claremont Colleges to see a documentary on Tibet called "Tibet-Cry of the Snow Lion". It was produced by Victoria Mudd and reviews the history of Tibet from the Chinese takeover to the present. I learned that our government was training the Tibetans to revolt against the Chinese occupiers in the 60s and early 70s, up until Nixon went to China! The scenery is breathtaking - the film was shot in Tibet and Dharmasala, India. I would highly recommend this film.

Speaking of films, the Amnesty Int'l Film Festival is coming up - May 27 to June 1 in West Hollywood. I saw a flyer this weekend, and several of the documentaries look really good. For info, go to www.amnestyusa.org/filmfest.

I attended the Imagine: Freedom from Discrimination conference this past weekend at UCLA. It was organized by the Bunche Fellow in the Regional Office, Christina Vargas. There were a lot of students there, and some local group members. The focus was on immigrant rights issues, women's issues and the death penalty. We attended workshops on the rights of immigrants and asylum seekers post Sept 11, racial profiling and hate crimes. Amnesty has come out against the Patriot Act and other post Sept 11 laws and executive orders that infringe on civil liberties and human rights. Group 22 may be working on this issue in conjunction with other groups such as the ACLU to persuade the Pasadena City Council to pass a resolution against the Patriot Act as many other cities have done. More on this later!

At the Imagine conference, we also heard a report on the AI Iraq delegation from Eric Sears, from the Washington, DC Amnesty office. The lack of security and basic services such as potable water, reliable electricity and humanitarian aid are still major concerns. AI is documenting human rights abuses that occurred in the past, such as the mass grave that was discovered recently, and abuses against civilians that occurred during this recent war. Go to www.amnesty.org for more info. In "Iraq: Ensuring Justice for human rights abuses", AI calls for the establishment of a UN commission to address justice in Iraq, in consultation with Iraqis. There is also a bulletin titled "Responsibilities of Occupying Powers" and many others, including a 10 point plan for the rebuilding of Iraq. For those of you who are interested in health, as I am (I am a public health and

school nurse), go to the World Health Organization's website, www.who.int or the CDC at www.cdc.gov for updates on the cholera outbreak in Basra and other aspects of the health crisis in Iraq.

Lastly, don't miss the book discussion this Sunday 5/18, 6:30 pm, at Vromans. The book is titled "The Aquariums of Pyongyang: 10 years in the North Korean Gulag" by Kang Chol Hwan. Usually fiction is easier for me to read, but this was a fascinating glimpse into a very different world and a harrowing tale of one family's experience that I could not put down.

Kathy

aigp22@caltech.edu

LETTER COUNT	
USA: Torture Urgent Action	6
Total:	25
	31
Want to add your letters to the total? Get in touch with lwkamp@cs.com	

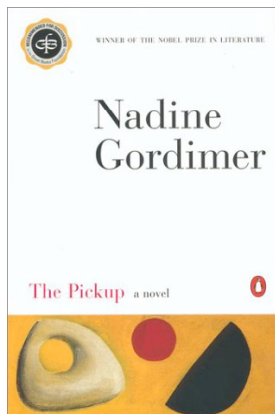
RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

Vroman's Bookstore

695 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena

Sunday, June 15, 6:30 PM



The Pickup

by Nadine Gordimer

When Julie Summers's car breaks down on a sleazy street in a South African city, a young Arab mechanic named Abdu comes to her aid. Their attraction to one another is fueled by different motives. Julie is in rebellion against her wealthy background and her father; Abdu, an illegal immigrant, is desperate to avoid deportation to his impoverished country. In the course of their relationship, there are unpredictable consequences, and overwhelming emotions will overturn each one's notion of the other. Set in the new South Africa and in an Arab village in the desert, *The Pickup* is "a gripping tale of contemporary anguish and unexpected desire... opens the Arab world to unusually nuanced perception" -Edward Said.

CHILDREN'S NETWORK

Detention of Children at Guantánamo Bay

"I would say, despite their age, these are very, very dangerous people they may be juveniles, but they're not on a Little League team anywhere. They're on a major league team, and it's a terrorist team. And they're in Guantánamo for a very good reason ? for our safety, for your safety."

-- General Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at a Pentagon briefing on April 25, 2003

BACKGROUND The US government has recently acknowledged that at least three children between the ages of 13 and 15 are among the more than 650 foreign nationals being held at Guantánamo Bay. Until this was revealed in the media, Amnesty International had been unaware of these detentions. It knew only of 16-year-old Canadian national, Omar Khadr, who was transferred in late 2002 from Afghanistan to the Guantánamo Naval Base. Along with all the other detainees, he and the other children remain without access to legal counsel or his family, or to the courts.

As with the other detainees, US officials have shown a disturbing lack of respect for international law and standards, including the presumption of innocence, in relation to the children. At a Department of Defense press briefing on 25 April 2003, responding to journalists' questions about the children, General Richard Myers stated: "despite their age, these are very, very dangerous people." Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld suggested that "we care what the rest of the world thinks" and that "we try to conduct ourselves according to our values and generally accepted values in the world." However, he too, suggested that the children were guilty of criminal acts, and criticized "the constant refrain of 'the juveniles,' as though there's hundreds of children in there ? these are not children There are plenty of people who have been killed by people who were still in their teens."

In acknowledgment of the vulnerability and special needs of children, international standards provide that children (the definition of a child, according to most international legal standards, is anyone under the age of 18) should be detained only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. When in detention, children must be fully protected according to their general and special needs and the best interests of the child must always be the primary consideration (article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child).

The Guantánamo detainees, children and adults alike, have had no access to lawyers or relatives and have been denied their right to challenge the lawfulness of their detention in a court of law. Reports

indicate that the child detainees may be subjected to interrogation. Article 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action."

The US signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1995, but has not ratified it yet. However, under international law, it is still obliged not to do anything to defeat the object and purpose of the treaty pending its decision on whether to ratify. In December 2002 the US government ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which provides, among other things, that governments should assist in the demobilization and rehabilitation of former child soldiers.

AI has continued to raise its concerns about the conditions under which detainees are being held at Guantánamo Bay, and about the effects of prolonged indefinite detention in conditions of isolation on the physical and mental well being of the detainees. There have been as many as 25 suicide attempts among the detainees, heightening such concern. The authorities have indicated that the children have been taken out of isolation, and are being treated according to their young age.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. Please send a letter to President Bush, with copies to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Powell.

- Express concern that children under the age of 18 are being held without charge or trial and in indefinite detention at Guantánamo Bay.
- Emphasize the universally recognized principle that all official actions concerning children must have as a primary consideration the best interests of the child.
- Suggest that detaining children in a remote naval base without access to lawyers, their families, or the courts cannot be in the best interests of the child.
- Express concern that senior US officials have once again failed to respect the presumption of innocence with regard to those detained at Guantánamo Bay.
- Point out that international law requires that the incarceration of children be used as a last resort and for the minimum time possible.

- Urge that all children ? anyone under the age of 18 ? being held at Guantánamo Bay be granted immediate access to lawyers and their families, and that their treatment be fully in accordance with international law and standards that require that the general and special needs of children be fully recognized and met.
- Urge that any detained child be promptly charged and tried within a reasonable time, or released.
- Note the United States' international obligation to assist in the demobilization and rehabilitation of former child soldiers.
- Cite Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's assertion that the US "cares what the rest of the world thinks," and note that the US is continuing to cause its reputation great damage abroad by the violations of international law in relation to the more than 600 foreign national detained at the naval base.

WHERE TO SEND YOUR LETTERS

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

SEND COPIES TO:

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
United States Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

The Honorable Colin Powell
Office of the Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE *Ngawang Pekar, Tibetan Monk*

As world attention continues to focus on Iraq, Group 22's prisoner of conscience, Ngawang Pekar (naw-wan pee-kar), no doubt remains unaware of life outside of his harsh confinement in Drapchi Prison. Pekar, a Tibetan Buddhist monk, has been imprisoned since 1989 after being arrested by Chinese authorities for participating in a peaceful demonstration in the city of Lhasa in support of Tibetan independence.

Perhaps of most importance this month is news that Tibet's Party Secretary, Guo Jinlong, is being replaced by another Chinese leader, Yang Chuantang, formerly his deputy, according to Radio Free Asia - a move that has been rumoured for several months. Guo Jinlong has served in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) since autumn 2000, when he took over from the hardliner Chen Kuiyuan - a relatively short period of time to serve as Tibet's most senior leader. Chen held

the post for nearly eight years while China's new Party Secretary and President Hu Jintao was Party Secretary of the TAR from 1988 to 1992-3.

The reasons for the handover, which have not yet been officially announced, are not clear. The appointment of regional Party Secretaries is carried out by the Party's Central Committee in Beijing in a highly secretive process. Since the establishment of the regional Chinese Communist Party in Tibet in 1965, no Tibetans have been appointed to this most senior post in the region.

Although it is not quite clear yet exactly when Yang Chuantang is to assume his new position, we ask that you write to Yang to congratulate him and bring Ngawang Pekar to his attention. Below is a sample letter you can either copy or use as a guide in composing your own letter (which is highly recommended):

Dear Secretary,

I would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Tibet's Party Secretary and trust that you will fulfill your responsibilities with wisdom and honor. With that in mind, I wish to bring to your attention a prisoner being held in Tibet Autonomous Region Prison No. 1. The prisoner's name is NGAWANG PEKAR (layname: Paljor).

Ngawang Pekar, a Tibetan monk, was arrested in 1989 for participating in a peaceful demonstration in the city of Lasashi and sentenced to 8 years in prison. Subsequently, his sentence was increased by an additional 6 years. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience and I am concerned that he has been imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of his universally recognized right to freedom of expression. I am further deeply concerned about reports that he has been beaten and denied access to medical care since his arrest.

Especially in light of the fact that he has now completed his 14-year sentence, I respectfully urge you to request that Ngawang Pekar's case be reviewed and that he be immediately and unconditionally released in accordance with the international laws to which China is signatory. I further request that he be allowed access to independent non-governmental agencies so that his current state of well being may be determined and made known.

I thank you for your attention to this important matter and would greatly appreciate any further information that your office may be able to provide.

Sincerely,

Address your letter to:

YANG Chuantang Shuji
Zhonggong Xizang Zizhiqu Weiyuanhui
Lasashi, Xizang Zizhiqu
People's Republic of China

Overseas postage for a normal letter is 80 cents, 70 cents for an aerogram. Should you receive a reply, please notify Group 22.

DEATH PENALTY

Appeal to Virginia on behalf of Mentally Ill Inmate

Percy Walton, 24, black, is scheduled to be executed in Virginia on 28 May 2003. He was sentenced to death in 1997 for the murders of an elderly white couple, Elizabeth Hendrick, aged 81, and Jesse Hendrick, aged 80, and a 33-year-old black man, Archie Moore, in Danville in November 1996.

Percy Walton was 18 years and one month old at the time of the crime. There is evidence that he has suffered from schizophrenia, a serious mental illness, from the age of 16.

Percy Walton's mental health had deteriorated during his mid-teens. Having been clean, neat, polite, popular and well-behaved until then, he began to display dramatic changes in behavior. He stopped bathing, began to have difficulties controlling his emotions at home and school. He skipped school, stopped playing sports, became withdrawn, and began talking to himself. He laughed at inappropriate times, displayed irrational thought processes and between 1996 and 1997 his IQ dropped from 90 to 77.

After his arrest in November 1996, Percy Walton displayed signs of possible mental illness. In telephone calls to his family, he insisted that his mother was his sister, and referred to his father as his brother, his grandfather as his father and his grandmother as his mother. He said he had discovered that he had two brothers, when he has none. He told his mother he was the Queen Bee, and his grandmother that he was Superman. He told relatives that he was Jesus Christ, and that he was a millionaire. He insisted that he would come back to life as soon as he was executed, and that he would retrieve and bring back alive his grandfather who had recently died.

In pre-trial custody, his lawyer noted Walton's unusual behavior. In February 1997, for example, Percy Walton claimed to be Percy Gunn (Walton's father) and also the "King of Hearts". During a subsequent meeting, Walton told his lawyer that if he closed his eyes he could not be seen. He remained convinced that he would be released on bail despite his lawyer stating that this would not happen. Walton demanded a speedy trial at which his innocence

would be proven. By July, however, he was saying that he wanted to plead guilty because the "[electric] chair is for killers". In a 1999 affidavit, the trial lawyer recalled how Percy Walton "did not meaningfully assist us in preparing a defense. Often times it was extremely difficult to communicate with Mr Walton, and there were occasions when we could not tell whether he understood what we were saying to him. Other times it was clear from Mr Walton's questions and responses to my questions that Mr Walton understood little of what I was telling him". The lawyer recalled that "we were unable to convince Mr Walton that he would not come back to life" if he was executed.

In July, a court-appointed psychologist wrote that Walton's articulation of his thoughts was incomprehensible. He recommended that Walton be placed in a secure psychiatric hospital on the grounds that he was a danger to himself and others. The trial court rejected this. In a 2001 affidavit, the psychologist wrote that the symptoms that Walton displayed in July 1997 were "consistent with forms of schizophrenia", but that he had not been able to make such a diagnosis without further evaluation. He stated that it was and remains his opinion that at that time Percy Walton was not competent to stand trial. However, he was not called to testify to that effect after the court ordered a psychiatrist at the state hospital to conduct an assessment. This psychiatrist determined that Walton was competent.

In September 1997 Percy Walton told his lawyer that he wanted to plead not guilty and have a jury trial because he was innocent. Days later, he reverted to admitting guilt again. At end of that month, asked whether he would plead guilty or not guilty, he refused to speak, but responded by writing the word "chair" on a piece of paper. He told his attorneys that he wanted to be executed in order "to come back to life so he could be with his honeys". In court in October 1997, Percy Walton pleaded guilty to the murders and the judge accepted the plea.

The proceedings then moved into a sentencing phase. During the hearing, Percy Walton laughed, smiled and waved to family members. He even laughed during the "victim impact" testimony of one of the Hendrick's granddaughters. After a recess on the second day of the hearing, Percy Walton refused to come back into the courtroom because he had been "disrespected". He was sprayed with mace and brought back into the courtroom in shackles. Percy Walton's state-appointed lawyer chose not to offer a mental health defense against the death penalty, and instead offered evidence that his client was a young man

who was usually polite, quiet and respectful, and who had taken responsibility for the three murders. The judge passed three death sentences against Walton.

In 1999, a psychiatrist, a neuropsychologist and a neurologist assessed Percy Walton's mental health for his appeals. In their opinion, he suffers from severe chronic schizophrenia and was probably suffering from this mental illness at the time of the crime.

In repeated resolutions, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has called on all retentionist countries not to impose or carry out the death penalty against anyone with any form of mental disorder. Since the USA resumed executions in 1977, it has put more than 850 men and women to death. Virginia is ranked second in the number of executions carried out, having killed 88 prisoners. In 1999, Virginia's then Governor, James Gilmore, commuted the death sentence of Calvin Swann on grounds of his schizophrenia from which he had suffered since his late teens.

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

- expressing sympathy for the relatives of Elizabeth and Jesse Hendrick and of Archie Moore, explaining that you are not seeking to minimize the suffering their deaths will have caused;
- opposing the execution of Percy Levar Walton;
- expressing concern at evidence that he was suffering from serious mental illness at the time of the crime and the trial, and that the sentencing judge was not presented with any mental health evidence in mitigation;
- noting that post-conviction expert assessment has diagnosed him as suffering from schizophrenia;
- pointing to the repeated resolutions at the UN Commission on Human Rights against the use of the death penalty against people suffering from mental illness, praising Governor James Gilmore's decision to
- commute the death sentence of Calvin Swann because of the prisoner's schizophrenia;
- calling for clemency for Percy Walton in the interest of decency and the reputation of Virginia.

APPEALS TO:

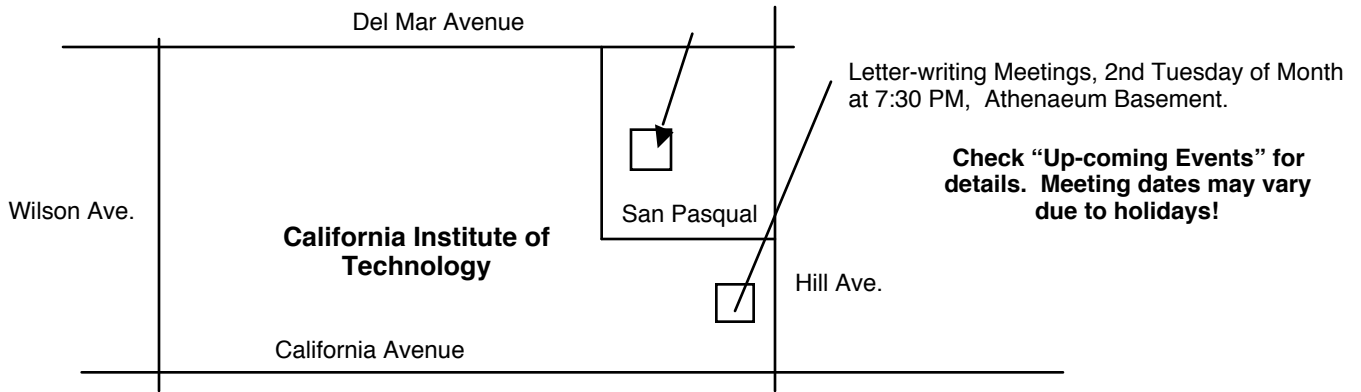
Governor Mark R. Warner
State Capitol, 3rd Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Email via website:

www.governor.state.va.us/Contact/email_form.html

EDITOR'S LAST WORD:

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

Monthly Meetings, 4th Thursday of Month, 7:30 PM,
Caltech Y Lounge, 414 S. Holliston.



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
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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.