

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, January 26, 7:30-9:00 PM. Monthly Meeting. We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena. (This is just south of the corner with San Pasqual. Signs will be posted.) We will be planning our activities for the coming months. Please join us! Refreshments provided.

Tuesday, February 14, 7:30-9:00 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, February 19, 6:30 PM. Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group. This month we read "Three Minutes in Poland" by Glenn Kurtz.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone

Wow—that's all I can say after Rob and I participated in the Women's March this past Saturday in DTLA (as it is called now by the "hipsters" who reside there, Down Town LA).

Several Group 22 members came and marched, along with 750,000 others. Very high energy which hopefully will translate into effective activism. See photos of Group 22 members near the end of the newsletter.

Con Cariño, Kathy

'Three Minutes in Poland' by Glenn Kurtz.
Review by Julia M. Klein, in Chicago Tribune.



How did 3 minutes of film shot in 1938 reunite Holocaust survivors?

In the summer of 1938, David Kurtz, an American businessman on a six-week European vacation with his wife and friends, made a home movie that captured three minutes of life in his birthplace, the Polish town of Nasielsk.

In Germany, Hitler's anti-Semitic noose was tightening, and the dictator's bellicosity toward Czechoslovakia dominated newspaper headlines. But Kurtz could not have imagined that four years later most of Nasielsk's substantial Jewish population, about 3,000 people, would be murdered, or that his silent film would provide rare evidence of their pre-war existence.

More than 70 years later, David's grandson, Glenn Kurtz, would discover the 16 mm film moldering in a sealed metal can. Kurtz had the original film restored and donated it to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. And he set about learning everything he could about its contents.

"Three Minutes in Poland: Discovering a Lost World in a 1938 Family Film" — along with the remarkable four-year quest it documents — is an act of reverence, as well as a feat of archival reconstruction. Kurtz's patience, energy and appetite for detail seem boundless, and they gradually bring a community — a microcosm of Polish Jewry, with all its political and religious factions and class divisions — (almost) to life.

The many names and relationships that Kurtz unearths may be hard for readers to keep straight, but their repetition, each time with more detail or lush context, takes on the quality of an incantation. The book accumulates elegiac power.



Next Rights Readers Meeting
Sunday, Feb. 19
6:30 PM

Vroman's Bookstore
695 E Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena

Three Minutes In Poland
by Glenn Kurtz

One model for Kurtz's endeavor, which he references, is Daniel Mendelsohn's 2006 masterpiece, "The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million," which traces the fate of six relatives who died in the Holocaust. Kurtz, too, sees his subject as a metonym, a part that stands for the whole. The film, he writes, serves as "a memorial to (the town's) lost Jewish community and to the entire annihilated culture of East European Judaism." He is deeply aware of the limits of his enterprise: "No film, no memorial, and no recollection could restore, retrieve, recover, or revive this world," he writes somberly.

The Kurtz film itself is non-narrative, a series of panoramic views and seemingly unrelated scenes. It shows dozens of adults, schoolchildren, the town synagogue, building facades, the interior of a home, and what appears to be a restaurant. Residents respond enthusiastically to the presence of the Americans and their camera, vying to be part of the picture.

But recovering even a handful of identities and stories from these visual clues and archival research is daunting. At first, Kurtz — relying on his family's oral history — is mistaken about which town his grandfather has filmed. Later, stymied, he sets the project aside.

Then he gets a lucky break. A friend sends the granddaughter of a Nasielsk survivor a link to the Kurtz film, available through the Holocaust museum's archives. She somehow recognizes her grandfather, Maurice Chandler, as a boy of 13. Now 86, but with a prodigious memory, he turns out to be the Rosetta stone that unlocks the film's secrets. With his help, Kurtz is able to locate a half-dozen or so other Nasielsk survivors — all who remain of the 100 or so Jews from the town still alive in 1945. (Most, though not all, had survived by fleeing east to Soviet-controlled territory.)

Seeking anyone who might have memories to share, Kurtz travels to Canada, England, Israel and, of course, Poland. He pores through lists (many containing "obscurities or errors"), assembles documents and photos, conducts interviews. He realizes when he talks to survivors that "unspeakable absences lay coiled inside every memory I evoked."

In the end, he prides himself on having helped reunite this fragmentary community. He has spurred phone calls and meetings, and shown people in their 80s and 90s portraits of relatives they haven't seen since the war — has been "like a switchboard operator, connecting long-

distance messages from one end of the Nasielsk Diaspora to another."

"Three Minutes in Poland" describes with horrifying precision the ordeals that preceded the murders of most of Nasielsk's Jewish community. But equally compelling pages document how Chandler, with guile, luck and some Polish help, escaped the Warsaw ghetto, took on a non-Jewish Polish identity and managed to survive.

When his brother's friend Leslie Glodek, who ended up in England, wrote to Nasielsk after the war to see if anyone was still left, Chandler responded: "We are splinters of a bygone whole, torn-off arms with no prospects for the future."

But that was not quite true. Remembering an old address, Chandler contacted a distant relative in Nashville, Tenn. The man had died by then, but the postman gave the letter to the man's nephew, who helped Chandler emigrate.

In America, Chandler prospered, started a family and created a warm new world. Even so, he tells Kurtz, he never stopped missing his murdered mother.

Julia M. Klein is a reporter and critic in Philadelphia and a contributing editor at Columbia Journalism Review.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/books/ct-prj-three-minutes-in-poland-glenn-kurtz-20141113-story.html>

About the Author



Glenn Kurtz, a 2016 Guggenheim Foundation Fellow, is the author of *Three Minutes in Poland: Discovering a Lost World in a 1938 Family Film* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2014), which was selected as a "Best Book of 2014" by *The New Yorker*, *The Boston Globe*, and National Public Radio. *The Wall Street*

Journal praised it as "captivating," and *The Los Angeles Times* described *Three Minutes in Poland* as "breathtaking."

Glenn's first book, *Practicing: A Musician's Return to Music* (Knopf, 2007; Vintage Books, 2008), was hailed by the *New York Times* as "a

thoughtful and fluid meditation" and by *Newsday* as "the book of a lifetime." *Practicing* was featured on NPR's "Weekend Edition" with Scott Simon, "To the Best of our Knowledge," WNYC's "Leonard Lopate Show," and elsewhere. An Italian edition appeared in 2010, and a Chinese edition is forthcoming. He is a graduate of the New England Conservatory-Tufts University double degree program and holds a PhD from Stanford University in German studies and comparative literature.

His writing has been published in *The New York Times*, *Salon*, *Southwest Review*, *ZYZZYVA*, and elsewhere. He has taught at Stanford University, California College of the Arts, and New York University.

He lives in New York City.

Security with Human Rights

By Robert Adams

Priority Security with Human Rights Cases

The Security with Human Rights campaign fights for individuals who have been tortured or unlawfully detained, and also works to uphold the rights of victims of armed groups.

Currently, one of the seven individuals Amnesty is campaigning for is **Obaidullah**:

Obaidullah: Waiting in Limbo

Obaidullah was captured from his home in Afghanistan during a night raid by U.S. Special Forces in July 2002. The raid was conducted on a tip from an unknown source. For more than 13 years, he has been incarcerated without trial some 8,000 miles from his home and family in Afghanistan. His daughter, born two days before he was taken into custody, is now 11 years old. He has never touched or held her, only recently making his first contact with her, over videophone from the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay.

Obaidullah was taken first to the prison at Bagram, where he was held until October 2002. During that time, he describes brutal treatment. The guards chained his arms above his head for extended periods of time, and often forced him to defecate on himself by refusing him a toilet. A guard slammed him into a door, resulting in a

broken and bloody nose. He says he received no medical treatment for this incident. He was once bound by the arms and legs and slammed to the ground feet first, feeling as if his heel had been broken. He was subjected to sleep deprivation and to multiple beatings. He was forced to carry and clean the barrel-like containers that were used as detainee toilets and to clean a hall, sometimes using only a toothbrush. Interrogators told him that if he did not cooperate with them, "these kinds of punishments would continue for my whole life." He was threatened with sexual abuse during interrogations.

In October 2002, he was transferred to Guantánamo, where he has been ever since. In 2013, after more than a decade in Guantánamo, he participated in a hunger strike for several months. Since the day he was picked up, the U.S. government has justified Obaidullah's detention based on a flawed legal framework in what it then called the "global war on terror," pursuant to which the U.S. considers that it can hold Obaidullah and other detainees until the U.S. determines hostilities to have ended.

For further information on Obaidullah's case, and the other individuals Amnesty is currently campaigning for, please visit amnestyusa.org.

Note: On August 15, 2016, Obaidullah, along with fourteen other men, was transferred by the US from Guantanamo to the United Arab Emirates, and that same day Amnesty International USA issued a press release welcoming the news. On August 17, a member of Obaidullah's family relayed to the Associated Press that one of Obaidullah's lawyers had informed them that after living in the UAE for six months to a year, he would be free to leave.

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

Ronald Smith

Let's say it's 1994 or 1995 and you're on a jury and you and your fellow jurors reject the death penalty in favor of life in prison without parole. Let's say you are a justice and you and three of your fellow justices vote to grant stay for an execution so that the case can be reviewed just hours before the execution. Now let's also say the man on trial is 23 years old, an Army reservist with severe alcohol dependency who

confesses to murdering a convenience store clerk and who expresses sincere remorse. Furthermore, let's say this Army reservist is poor and the only lawyer available for his post-conviction appeal is a volunteer counsel who suffers from drug and alcohol dependency and who is arrested, loses his ability to practice law, and commits suicide. Let's think for a moment about what will happen to the man who has been tried for murder in this situation.

This man, Ronald Smith, lived in Alabama. When his jury ruled that yes, he was guilty and yes, they rejected the death penalty, an elected judge overruled the jury and sentenced Mr Smith to death. Alabama is the only state in which a judge can do this.

Alabama has a one-year limitation period within which the petition for post-conviction appeals can be brought before the court, and yes, Mr. Smith's lawyer abandoned him, allowing the judge's decision to override the jury's life verdict to stand.

December 7, 2016, just after 5:00 PM the Court temporarily halts Mr. Smith's execution set for 6 PM to consider a stay that would allow for a motion for reconsideration to be filed. Four justices are required for a grant to review the case, but five justices are required for a stay of execution so that review can be able to go forward. Four justices vote yes while that one more justice needed for the stay votes no. The execution is now scheduled for 9:45 PM.

What happens beginning at 9:45 PM? Well, at 10:34 after Mr. Smith receives the first drug, he begins struggling for breath. He heaves, he coughs, and he clenches his left fist. This continues to 10:37 when the first 'consciousness check' is performed. At 10:47 PM when the second 'consciousness check' is performed, his right arm and hand move. At 11:05, Mr. Smith is declared dead.

Was justice served? We just celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday. In his sermon "Loving Your Enemies," Dr. King preached a philosophy that had no room for capital retribution: "Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction."

Rest in peace and power Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ronald Smith.

Dylann Roof

Dylann Roof, the man who murdered nine people June 17, 2015, at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, has been sentenced to death. Both Amnesty International USA and Sister Helen Prejean issued statements after this verdict was announced. They are as follows:

Amnesty International USA

January 4, 2017

Executing Dylann Roof Will Not Bring Justice

In response to the announcement that Dylann Roof was sentenced to death after being convicted in the killing of nine people at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Margaret Huang, executive director of Amnesty International USA issued the following statement:

"We have seen over the course of Dylann Roof's trial and sentencing the horrific suffering he inflicted and the disgusting racial animus that motivated his actions. However, sentencing him to death is not justice. The death penalty is an ineffective punishment that strips all individuals of their human rights, and has itself embodied racism in the criminal justice system. It will not heal the deep racial wounds that continue to wreak violence in our nation."

For more than two decades, death sentences and executions have steadily declined in the United States because the punishment is costly, ineffective, and unjust. 2015 saw the fewest executions of any year since the reinstatement of capital punishment in 1976. Today's sentence is a step in the wrong direction, away from human rights and true justice.

Amnesty International USA opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. As of today, 140 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. The U.S. was one of only nine countries in the world that carried out executions each year between 2009 and 2013.

Sister Helen Prejean

January 10 at 4:02pm

A federal jury in Charleston, South Carolina, sentenced Dylann Roof to death for the murder of nine African American churchgoers. This is the first time a jury has delivered a death sentence in a federal hate crime case. Dylann Roof's racist attitudes and abhorrent actions have no place in the world, but executing him will not bring the victims back and will not erase the stain of racism

from our social fabric. Killing another human being, whether it is an individual or government doing the killing, is wrong. Death does not foster justice or peace. Martin Luther King Jr, whose birthday falls on Sunday, preached this truth. It is up to all of us to foster a more just world, both in the institutions we encounter and in our own personal lives.

Recent Exonerations

Charles Palmer State: IL Date of Exoneration: 11/23/2016

In 2000, Charles Palmer was sentenced to life in prison without parole for the murder of an attorney in Decatur, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2016 by DNA testing that excluded him as the killer.

Michael Amick State: MO Date of Exoneration: 12/1/2016

In 2011, Michael Amick was sentenced to life in prison for arson and the murder of his wife’s grandmother in Myrtle, Missouri. He was acquitted at a retrial in December 2016 after presenting evidence negating any financial motive for the crime.

Joseph Dick, Jr. State: VA Date of Exoneration: 12/15/2016

Joseph Dick, Jr. was one of four U.S. Navy sailors (known as the Norfolk Four) convicted of a 1997 rape and murder in Norfolk, Virginia. He was exonerated in 2016 after the real killer confessed.

Daniel Williams State: VA Date of Exoneration: 12/15/2016

Daniel Williams was one of four U.S. Navy sailors (known as the Norfolk Four) convicted of a 1997 rape and murder in Norfolk, Virginia. He was exonerated in 2016 after the real killer confessed.

Robert Davis State: VA Date of Exoneration: 12/16/2016

In 2004, Robert Davis pled guilty to murdering a woman and her toddler son in Crozet, Virginia. In 2016, Davis was pardoned by Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliff after his two co-defendants admitted that they lied about his participation in the crimes.

Stays of executions

January

- 11 Anthony Kirkland OH
- 12 Ronald Phillips OH
(Stayed/Rescheduled)
- 12 James Hanna OH
(Reprieve granted)

- 19 Clark Richard Elmore WA
(Reprieve granted)

Executions

December 2016

- 6 William Sallie GA
Lethal Injection 1-drug (Pentobarbital)
- 8 Ronald Bert Smith Jr AL
Lethal Injection 3-drug (midazolam)

WRITE FOR RIGHTS 2016
By Joyce Wolf

We met on Dec. 10 from 11 to 4. What a great event! Thanks to Trevor for suggesting the Dog Haus in Old Town Pasadena and to Stevi for making the arrangements with Dog Haus.

The 12 Amnesty Cases:

- Letters to Officials 98
- Solidarity Cards 63
- Total 161

- Postcards for Narges (our POC) 14
- Solidarity cards to Narges 4

Cards to Ye Jinyue 11
(Ye Jinyue is an imprisoned Falun Gong practitioner with friends in San Gabriel.)

We received \$26 in cash donations for postage, plus a very generous check from Laura and Ted — many thanks!

We had 23 attendees, some of whom stayed nearly the entire afternoon. Paul, Stevi, Trevor, Jamil, Candy, Gail, Paula, Wen, Kathy and Robert, Alexi and sons Lucas and James, Laura and Ted, Vinnie, Wenny, Ming, Jamie, Lilian, Sibyl, and Carla — thank you all for helping to make the world a better place, one letter at a time.

GROUP 22 JANUARY LETTER COUNT

- Urgent Actions 22
- POC (postcards) 3

To add your letters to our total contact aigp22@caltech.edu

Some Group 22 Members at Women's March in Los Angeles, January 21, 2017



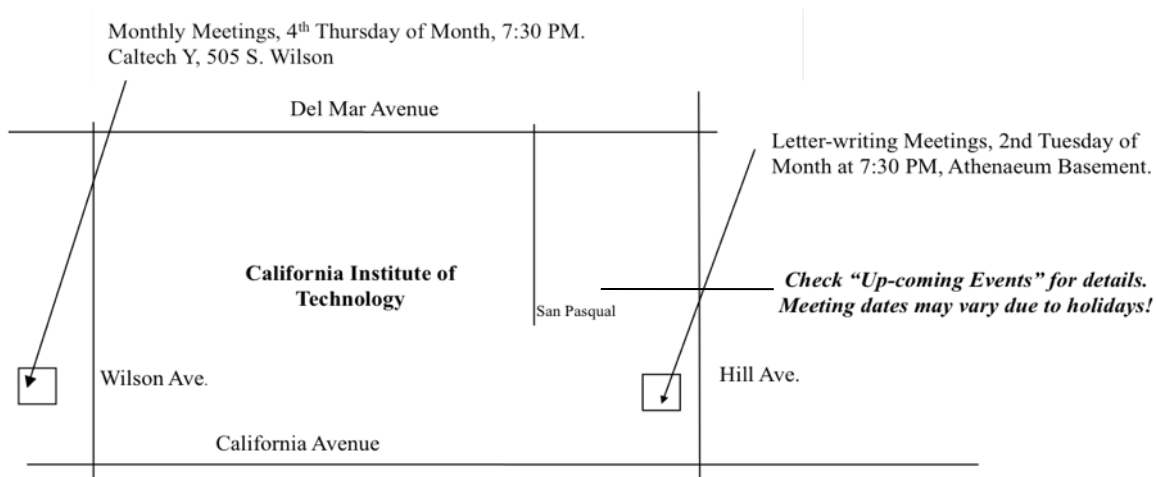
Clockwise from upper right: Stevi (And you thought I was a Nasty Woman Before? Buckle Up, Buttercup); Joyce (Health Care Is A Human Right); Alexi, Tracy, Kathy and Robert holding Amnesty banner.



Kathy and Robert



Greg, Paula, and friend.



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.