

# Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XXV Number 10, October 2017

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**NOTE: No Monthly Meeting Oct. 26.**

**Thursday, November 9, 7:30 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, November 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, November 19, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.*** This month we read "**Spain in our hearts: Americans in the Spanish Civil War**" by Adam Hochschild.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hola a todos!

A few things I wanted to mention: we meet in a different room for the November 19 book discussion group. Vroman's is doing something in the space upstairs where we usually meet (probably something to do with setting up the Christmas merchandise displays or maybe they're having a book signing!), so we are meeting in the Atrium. I know we met in the Atrium once before, but I can't remember where it is! Anyway, Stevi will get the key from the information desk downstairs and open up the room. Those of us who usually arrive a little late (referring to Rob and myself) can get directions from the info desk.

I'm looking forward to reading the November book selection, as we subscribe to the New Yorker magazine and I have read several articles by Hochschild.

Group 22 members Wen and Stevi tabled at the Caltech Y Community Service and Advocacy Fair on Oct. 18. See pic in this newsletter.

Ideas for our next food outing? Moroccan food was suggested at the October book discussion -- what do you all think?

Con Cariño,  
Kathy



**Next Rights Readers Meeting**

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

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

***Spain in Our Hearts:  
Americans in the  
Spanish Civil War***

**by Adam Hochschild**

## BOOK REVIEW

**'Spain in Our Hearts' tells the American story of the Spanish civil war**

By Bob Drogin, contact reporter  
March 25, 2016, Los Angeles Times

The Spanish civil war, which ran from 1936 to 1939, is most notable to historians for how it foreshadowed the horrors of World War II. Yet few distant conflicts are so burned into our culture and consciousness.

Ernest Hemingway, who covered the war, made it the setting of "For Whom the Bell Tolls," "the best goddamn book" he ever wrote. George Orwell, who fought in it, called his popular memoir "Homage to Catalonia." Pablo Picasso's "Guernica," perhaps his most famous painting, captures the agony of that city being bombed to rubble. Robert Capa's "The Falling Soldier" is iconic combat photography. Visitors to the front included singer Paul Robeson, poet [Langston Hughes](#) and film star Errol Flynn.

Less well known are the 2,800 American men and women who defied U.S. policy and risked their lives to defend Spain's democratically elected government. Avowedly leftist, these Republican fighters received antiquated weapons and other supplies from Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin.

Outnumbered and outgunned, they were defeated by Nationalist insurgents led by right wing Gen. Francisco Franco. He was reinforced by modern tanks, fighter planes and troops from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, who used Spain to test weapons and tactics that soon would devastate Europe.

Battling isolationists at home, President Franklin D. Roosevelt carefully kept America neutral. But his refusal to allow arms sales to the embattled Republicans helped seal their fate.



*Teruel, the coldest battle of the war.*  
(Tamiment Library, New York University)

The tragic story of the Americans in the doomed Lincoln Brigade -- who bore some of the toughest fighting and heaviest casualties of any unit -- comes vividly to life in Adam Hochschild's compelling "Spain in Our Hearts," a long-overdue book that explores this long-overlooked conflict.

Hochschild cautions he hasn't written a history of the war or even of the Lincoln Brigade. He instead focuses on a handful of Americans to tell the larger story of why Spain loomed so large at the time.

Mining letters, unpublished memoirs and other archives, Hochschild recounts how Americans like Bob and Marion Merriman, graduate students from Berkeley, were drawn to what they considered a utopian society and what they rightly saw as the opening round in a global battle against fascism.

Tall and taciturn, Merriman was a rare volunteer with military training and he rose to help lead the Lincolns, as they were known, in combat. Hemingway supposedly used him as a model for Robert Jordan, the American hero in his novel.

Merriman disappeared in April 1938 during a chaotic Republican retreat. Reports suggest he was captured and executed by Nationalists. He was one of about 800 Americans who died in Spain.

Like most of them, the Merrimans were communists, an ideology that lured many Americans in the turmoil of the Depression. If their politics have failed the test of time, the actions of the Lincolns — and an estimated 35,000 other foreign fighters — have endured. They went to war against Hitler while Europe's leaders sought to appease him.

"There seemed a moral clarity about the crisis in Spain," Hochschild writes. "Rapidly advancing

fascism cried out for defiance; if not here, where?"

(The last surviving Lincoln, Delmer Berg, died last month in Columbia, Calif., age 100. He remained an "unreconstructed Communist" all his life, according to his obituary.)

Many Lincolns shared idealism verging on naivete. Once they had hiked across the snowy Pyrenees from France, they often marched to war without uniforms, maps or modern weapons.

Lois Orr, who went to Republican-held Barcelona from Kentucky with her husband, Charles, in 1936, exulted in a letter home that she was "living the revolution" in a workers' paradise where "anything was possible, a new heaven and a new earth were being formed."

Yet she didn't speak Spanish, barely acknowledged the privations around her, and was given a luxurious apartment, confiscated from the German consul, that most Spaniards could never hope to attain.

The Americans came from nearly every state and all walks of life: professors and union organizers, coal miners and a former governor of Ohio. About 90 were African American. About a third came from New York. Close to half were Jewish.

For us it wasn't Franco," wrote one veteran. "It was always Hitler."

What to make of the era's Republicans? They opened all the prisons in the areas they controlled, releasing violent criminals as well as political prisoners.

Hochschild, thankfully, recounts a leader who died in the battle for Madrid after "murmuring the anarchist lament, 'Too many committees!'"

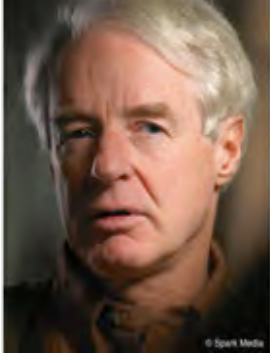
Some Americans had their passports seized when they got home or were targeted in the anti-communist witch hunts of the 1950s despite fighting honorably in World War II. Some played key roles in the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s.

The heartbreak is what lingers longest in "Spain in Our Hearts."

The title comes from Albert Camus. Men learned in Spain, the French novelist wrote sadly, that "one can be right and yet be beaten, that force can vanquish spirit, and that there are times when courage is not rewarded."

(<http://www.latimes.com/books/la-ca-jc-spain-in-our-hearts-20160327-story.html>)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Hochschild was born in New York City. As a college student, he spent a summer working on an anti-government newspaper in South Africa and subsequently worked briefly as a civil rights worker in Mississippi in 1964. Both were politically pivotal experiences about which

he would later write in his book *Finding the Trapdoor*. He later was part of the movement against the Vietnam War, and, after several years as a daily newspaper reporter, worked as a writer and editor for the leftwing *Ramparts* magazine. In the mid-1970s, he was one of the co-founders of *Mother Jones*.

Hochschild's first book was a memoir, *Half the Way Home: a Memoir of Father and Son* (1986), in which he described the difficult relationship he had with his father. His later books include *The Mirror at Midnight: a South African Journey* (1990; new edition, 2007), *The Unquiet Ghost: Russians Remember Stalin* (1994; new edition, 2003), *Finding the Trapdoor: Essays, Portraits, Travels* (1997), which collects his personal essays and reportage, and *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (1998; new edition, 2006), a history of the conquest and colonization of the Congo by Belgium's King Léopold II. His *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves*, published in 2005, is about the antislavery movement in the British Empire.

Hochschild has also written for *The New Yorker*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *The Nation*. He was also a commentator on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*. Hochschild's books have been translated into twelve languages.

A frequent lecturer at Harvard's annual Nieman Narrative Journalism Conference and similar venues, Hochschild lives in San Francisco and teaches writing at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley. He is married to sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam\\_Hochschild](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Hochschild)

## SECURITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

By Robert Adams

### UN: Amnesty Urges International Action on Armed Drones

*AIUSA press release issued October 20, 2017*

On October 20 Amnesty International will launch a new briefing at the UN General Assembly, setting out measures to bring the use and transfer of armed drones in line with international human rights and humanitarian law.

The briefing, *Key principles on the use and transfer of armed drones*, has been developed in response to the rapid proliferation of armed drones, and their use in extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings around the world.

"The past few years have seen an alarming growth in the use of armed drones by states including the USA and the UK, yet the circumstances in which they are deployed remain shrouded in secrecy," said Rasha Abdul Rahim, Arms Control Campaigner at Amnesty International.

"What we do know is that their use has created a situation in which the whole world can be treated as a battlefield, and virtually anyone can count as collateral damage. Armed drones have been used to carry out unlawful killings with minimal oversight and accountability, and with devastating consequences for civilians in countries like Yemen and Afghanistan.

"We are calling on all states to bring their use of armed drones in line with international human rights and humanitarian law – unlawful use must not become the norm."

The principles outlined in Amnesty International's briefing provide a basis on which UN member states can develop binding policies that will ensure accountability, protect the right to life and prevent future violations and abuses.

Amnesty International is calling on all UN member states to:

- Ensure that their use of armed drones complies with international law, including international human rights law
- Publicly disclose the legal and policy standards and criteria they apply to the use of armed drones

- Ensure effective investigations into all cases where there are reasonable grounds to believe that drone strikes have resulted in unlawful killings and/or any civilian casualties
- Establish rigorous controls on transfers of armed drones, and on assistance to operations of other states using armed drones
- Enable meaningful oversight and remedies

The launch of the briefing will take place at a side event of the UN General Assembly First Committee, hosted by PAX and the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on Friday, October 20.

It will take place between 1:15 – 2:30 in Conference Room 7 at the United Nations in New York.

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

### UN and the Death Penalty

September 29, 2017, the United Nations Human Rights Council voted on a resolution, “The Question of the Death Penalty.” Within the text, it says, “Taking note of the reports of the Secretary General on the question of the death penalty, in the latest of which the Secretary General examined the disproportionate impact of the use of the death penalty on poor or economically vulnerable individuals, foreign nationals, individuals exercising the rights to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression, and the discriminatory use of the death penalty against persons belonging to racial and ethnic minorities, its discriminatory use based on gender or sexual orientation, and its use against individuals with mental or intellectual disabilities,” (for the entire text, go to <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/36/L.6>).

Thirteen countries voted against the resolution. Those countries included Botswana, Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, China, India, Iraq, Japan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and the United States. Ty Cobb, director of the Human Rights Campaign Global said he believes the Trump administration

showed a “blatant disregard for human rights and LGBTQ lives around the world” because for the first time ‘sexual orientation’ was in the resolution’s language.

In response to criticism, a US State Department spokesperson, Heather Nauert, said that the US’s position on the resolution was misleading because the US “unequivocally condemns” the use of the death penalty for homosexuality, adultery, and religious offenses. However, the US’s problem with the resolution was that it was seen as calling for the abolition of the death penalty altogether. Ms Nauert said, “We had hoped for a balanced and inclusive resolution that would better reflect the positions of states that continue to apply the death penalty lawfully, as the United States does.” The UN resolution calls upon all states who continue to use the death penalty to consider abolishing it; it does not say they must. The US has always voted against or abstained from voting on resolutions regarding the death penalty.

In the US, 31 states continue to use (or have at their disposal) the death penalty (including California). In the world, the US is in the top 10 countries to employ executions.

### **“Did our family want justice or did we want revenge?”**

Cynthia Statemen’s father was murdered by a 19-year-old man. As her family grappled with how they felt about the upcoming trial of this young man named David, they struggled with this question: “Did our family want justice or did we want revenge?”

Ms Statemen and her family decided to meet David and the District Attorney. Instead of asking for the death penalty, the family and DA agreed to an in-prison education program that included training for a trade and reading books to broaden his knowledge about the world and people. David also was allowed to come to the father’s funeral where he asked to speak. He said, “A good man is dead because of what I did. I’m sorry.” He gestured to the family members and said, “They spared my life. I didn’t deserve that. I’m going to be in prison for a very long time, but I’m not being sent there to die. What I want to ask all of you here is: Is there

any way you can forgive me?" This was at a church service that ended with the entire congregation laying their hands of forgiveness on David while singing "Amazing Grace."

The family found the answer to their question: "Did our family want justice or did we want revenge?"

This, I believe, is a question I, and perhaps all of us, wrestle with.

Pope Francis recently wrote a letter to the President of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty. In that letter, he stated that he believes that the death penalty "does not render justice to the victims, but rather fosters vengeance."

Today when you read about the recent executions, pay attention to how many years have passed since these men were sentenced to death. Think about who you were that many years ago and if you are the same person now that you were then. I know that part of the reason the recent California initiative passed to lessen the time from trial to execution to five years is so that these vast amounts of time will not pass before the State can kill people. Then please look at the people who were recently exonerated and how many years passed.

Do we want justice or do we want revenge? And if we want justice, what would true justice look like?

## Recent Exonerations

Lamar Johnson  
State: MD Date of Exoneration: 9/19/2017  
In 2005, Lamar Johnson was sentenced to life in prison for murder in Baltimore, Maryland. He was exonerated in 2017 after witnesses identified the real gunman.

John Horton  
State: IL Date of Exoneration: 10/4/2017  
In 1995, John Horton was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a murder and robbery in Rockford, Illinois that took place when he was 17. He was exonerated in 2017 based on evidence that his cousin committed the crime,

and because the prosecution concealed evidence that discredited one of its witnesses.

Lamonte McIntyre  
State: KS Date of Exoneration: 10/13/2017  
In 1994, Lamonte McIntyre was sentenced to life in prison for a double murder in Kansas City, Kansas that occurred when he was 17. He was exonerated in 2017 after several witnesses identified the real killer, and new evidence showed that the prosecution had concealed statements from witnesses that he was not the gunman.

## Stays of Executions

September  
26 Keith Tharpe GA  
(Stay [granted](#) by the U.S. Supreme Court on September 26, 2017 "pending the disposition of [Tharpe's] petition for a writ of certiorari" seeking review of a decision by the 11th Circuit denying him an appeal of his habeas corpus claim that his death sentence was unconstitutionally tainted by the participation of a racially biased juror.)

October  
5 Jeffrey Borden AL  
18 Melvin Bonnell OH  
(Rescheduled for April 11, 2018)  
18 William Montgomery OH  
(Rescheduled for January 3, 2018)  
18 Raymond Tibbetts OH  
(Rescheduled for February 13, 2018)  
19 Torrey McNabb AL  
(executed)  
26 Clifton Lee Young TX

## Executions

October  
5 Cary Michael Lambrix FL  
Lethal injection 3-drug (etomidate)  
33 years from sentencing to execution  
12 Robert Pruett TX  
Lethal injection 1-drug (Pentobarbital)  
15 years from sentencing to execution  
19 Torrey McNabb AL  
Lethal injection 1-drug (Pentobarbital)  
19 years from sentencing to execution

## Group 22 Participates in Caltech Fair



Thanks to Wen Chen and Stevi Carroll for tabling at the Caltech Y Community Service and Advocacy Fair on October 18. They obtained 17 new signups for the Group 22 mailing list, plus 15 signatures on the Narges Mohammadi petition and 12 on the Gao Zhisheng petition. Stevi said they had a great time.

A special welcome to those who signed up at the Fair and are receiving this newsletter for the first time! Thank you for your interest in human rights, and we would be very happy to see you at one of our Group 22 events.

## Former Prisoner of Conscience Gao Zhisheng Detained Again!

By Joyce Wolf

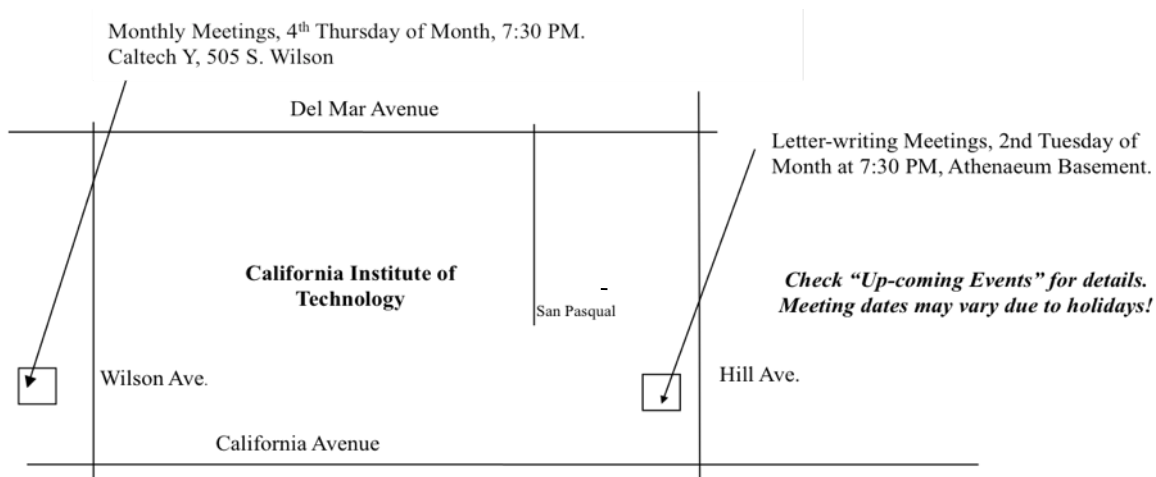
Amnesty published an Urgent Action for Gao Zhisheng, an activist and respected human rights lawyer. His family reported him missing on August 13, and he is now said to be in police custody in Beijing.

Gao Zhisheng was Group 22's adopted Prisoner of Conscience from 2010 to 2015. During this time he was subject to forced disappearance and repeated torture, and he served three years in prison. We are very distressed to learn that he has been detained again and that the authorities refuse to disclose his exact location and condition.

You can find the Urgent Action for Gao Zhisheng (UA 212.17) at <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-former-prisoner-of-conscience-detained-again-china-ua-212-17/>

### GROUP 22 OCTOBER LETTER COUNT

UA for Gao Zhisheng	14
Other UAs	29
Total	43



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.