

June 16, 2021

Hello from Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech!

We hope you have stayed safe and well and are cautiously resuming pre-pandemic activities. Here is one more in the series of occasional updates from Group 22.

This Update includes the following:

- * Upcoming Events for Summer 2021.
- * Reports on Letter Writing meetings and Book group Discussions
- * Prisoners of Conscience Narges Mohammadi and Gao Zhisheng

Reminder:

Current information about Group 22 Upcoming Events and a link to Group 22's Facebook page are available at <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/>

*** UPCOMING EVENTS FOR SUMMER 2021 ***

Sunday, June 20, 6:30 pm. Human Rights Book Discussion on Zoom. Our June selection is "The Red Daughter" by John Burnham Schwartz. This novel is based in the story of Svetlana Alliluyeva, Stalin's only daughter. The author's father was the young lawyer who escorted Svetlana when she defected to the U.S. in 1967.

Monday, June 21, 6:30-7:30pm. Rebuilding Lives Forum, an online presentation by Jessica Goudeau, author of "After the Last Border: Two Families and the Story of Refuge in America". The event is co-sponsored by several Amnesty Local Groups in California. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/refugee2021>

Tuesday, July 13, 7:30-9:00 pm. Letter Writing. This will probably be another online Zoom session. There is a chance that we might meet at Caltech's outdoor Rath al Fresco if it becomes available; currently it's not open Tuesday evenings. Current Urgent Actions selected for Group 22 are available on our website above.

Sunday, July 18, 6:30 pm. Human Rights Book Discussion on Zoom. Our July selection is "Eat the Buddha: Life and Death in a Tibetan Town" by Barbara Demick. This book by an award-winning journalist spans decades of modern Tibetan and Chinese history, as told through the private lives of Demick's subjects. <https://www.barbarademick.com>

Tuesday, August 10, 7:30-9:00 pm. Letter Writing. Contact aigp22@caltech.edu to confirm whether online Zoom or in person at Caltech.

Sunday, August 15, 6:30 pm. Human Rights Book Discussion Group. Traditionally we choose a mystery for our August selection. This year

we selected "A Midsummer's Equation: A Detective Galileo Mystery" by Keigo Higashino. Manabu Yukawa, the physicist known as "Detective Galileo," solves a murder in an aging resort town where he is attending a conference about a proposed underwater mining operation.

*** REPORTS ON LETTER WRITING MEETINGS AND BOOK GROUP DISCUSSIONS ***

Group Coordinator Kathy reported the count for our April Urgent Actions:
37 Emails, 39 Letters, 2 Faxes.

And for May Urgent Actions, Kathy reported the following:
62 Emails, 28 Letters, 18 Tweets.
(Also 2 emails, 2 letters for Narges Mohammadi)

Thank you, Kathy. We are very grateful to group member Paula for being our Letter writing Zoom host all through the pandemic. Thanks also to our regular attendees who did all the writing – Stevi, Paula, Radulf, Randy and Doni, Elena and Arturo, Kathy and Robert.

Our Human Rights Book Group continues to meet regularly on the third Sunday of every month, with Kathy as our Zoom host and Stevi as discussion leader.

The subject of our April 18 meeting was "The Wall", by John Lanchester. This dystopian novel is about an island nation surrounded by a Wall protecting it from desperate outsiders trapped by rising seas. I found it a good read with an interesting premise, some dark humor, and a decent plot.

And for our May 16 meeting we read a literary history of the granddaddy of all dystopias, "The Ministry of Truth: The Biography of George Orwell's 1984" by Dorian Lynskey. The first part was about the development of Orwell's social philosophy and his writing; the second part discussed 1984 in popular culture in the decades since its 1949 publication. I was inspired (or compelled?) to re-read 1984, and found it every bit as powerful and wrenching as ever. Orwell's writing is amazingly good, and author Lynskey is not bad himself.

*** PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE NARGES MOHAMMADI AND GAO ZHISHENG ***

We are very distressed to learn that Group 22's adopted Prisoner of Conscience Narges Mohammadi, released October 2020, has received a new prison sentence. The following is from Amnesty's Iran Team:

In a 24 May post on her Instagram account, Narges Mohammadi wrote that she has been sentenced to a prison term, flogging and fines in relation to her peaceful human rights activities while she was

previously unjustly jailed. Branch 1188 of Criminal Court Two in Tehran sentenced her to two-and-a-half years in prison, 80 lashes and two separate fines for charges that include "spreading propaganda against the system".

Please visit Group 22's web page for Narges for more information and suggested action. There is also a link to a June 4 interview with Narges, in which she muses on what might happen next and how she feels.

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/POC-Narges/Narges.html>

April 20 was the 57th birthday of our adopted Prisoner of Conscience Gao Zhisheng. He's still missing after he was forcibly disappeared in August 2017. At the suggestion of Suzanne Wright, chair of AIUSA China co-group, we wrote to Secretary of State Antony Blinken about Gao's case. We mailed a printed letter with our signatures and also posted on social media and submitted the letter on the State Department online contact form. You can use our letter as a guide for taking action for Gao.

http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/GaoPOC/2021_Apr_Gao.pdf

*** LAST WORD ***

Happy summer! Stay safe.

Peace and all good,

Joyce and Kathy and Stevi