

among other great nations, such as China, India, and Russia, that hold the key to remedying the world crisis through a strategic partnership with the United States,

Hereby endorse Democratic Party candidate for the U.S. Presidency Mr. Lyndon LaRouche.

We truly believe putting LaRouche on the year 2000 Presidential ballot is the only hope for a just and lasting peace in Burundi, in Rwanda, in the Great Lakes, in the Horn of Africa, and all over the conflict-torn continent.

LaRouche's policies can heal Africa

We believe that only LaRouche's policies can heal Africa from the structures of sin it has been subjected to by the British-American-Commonwealth policies, especially the structural adjustment policies designed and implemented by the IMF and the World Bank to keep Africa poor, indebted, and backward.

We encourage all our friends and supporters of the LaRouche Presidential campaign who are actively involved in organizing voters at the grassroots, in petitioning for LaRouche, and in raising the money that is needed to get things done in this unique Presidential race, to use every available and imaginable medium to reach out to those U.S. citizens who are generally considered second-class, or who are generally not aware that their votes do count and can make a huge difference at this critical juncture. We are indeed well-informed that it is these so-called marginal and unexpected votes that have in past Presidential elections clearly shown where Republican and Democratic nominees actually stand on such vital issues as health care, education, justice, civil rights, general welfare, social security, and foreign policy.

Our own findings and lessons from the epochal victory of Frodebu Party candidate Melchior Ndadaye in June 1993 in Burundi are edifying. There is no such thing as a first-class or a second-class citizen when it comes to going to the polls. Once the voters understand that Presidential elections are not about Hollywood celebrities or sports events or job fairs, but about serious participation in political decision-making processes at local, state, and federal levels by the voters' own folks, then you have silenced the powerful media chains run by the financial oligarchies.

The world now critically needs a mature leader like LaRouche—a competent and courageous President truly in charge of the White House, a President who wields this power for building a new just world economic order, in which all people on this planet can enjoy peace, justice, and general welfare.

Washington, Nov. 17, 1999, endorsed by:

Jacques Bacamurwanko, Burundi's former Ambassador to the United States

Joseph Bangurambona, Burundi's former Ambassador to Kenya

Perpetue Nshimirimana, Burundi's former Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva

Isaie Kubwayo, former Member of Parliament

Reports point to U.S. human rights violations

by Marianna Wertz

Two recent reports put a spotlight on ongoing and serious violations of international standards of human rights in the U.S. justice system. The first, "International Perspectives on the Death Penalty," by the Washington, D.C.-based Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC), is the first comprehensive report on the use of capital punishment in the United States, as viewed from the standpoint of modern international human rights standards. The second, "United States of America, Rights for All: Betraying the Young," by Amnesty International, focusses on violations of international norms of human rights for treatment of children in the U.S. justice system.

While the Amnesty report, coming as it does from a London-based non-governmental organization whose purpose is to undermine national sovereignty, must be read with this in mind, its factual content, as well as that of the DPIC report, is startling, and underscores the importance of making the kind of changes in the U.S. justice system for which the LaRouche political movement has been calling for many years. While America must not allow London to use these issues to dictate policy to it, neither can honest Americans tolerate the conditions to which these reports point.

Unless immediate changes are made, the reports make clear, not only will the United States continue to lose the respect of many important allies, but also, nations such as Russia and China, at whom the United States repeatedly points the "human rights" finger, will, with increasing legitimacy, point right back at America's hypocrisy. In the area of capital punishment, in fact, while the number of U.S. executions is expected to top 100 this year, setting a record since the 1976 reinstatement of the death penalty in the United States, Russia this year joined most of the civilized nations of the world in abolishing the death penalty, and China, since 1996, has cut by half the number of executions it carries out annually, bringing its rate to roughly the same per capita as the United States (see **Table 1**).

Beyond the loss of its reputation, however, these reports make clear that in fact the United States is now *becoming* the kind of "human rights violator" nation which the U.S. State Department so readily denounces around the world, as police-state methods increasingly take over the American justice system.

TABLE 1

International executions in 1998

(confirmed judicial executions)

China	1,067	Kyrgyzstan	4
Congo (Democratic Republic)	100	Pakistan	4
United States of America	68	Zimbabwe	2
Iran	66	Palestinian Authority	2
Egypt	48	Lebanon	2
Belarus	33	Bahamas	2
Taiwan	32	Guatemala	1
Saudi Arabia	29	Ethiopia	1
Singapore	28	Syria	1
Sierra Leone	24	United Arab Emirates	1
Rwanda	24	Thailand	1
Vietnam	18	Russian Federation	1
Yemen	17	Sudan	1
Afghanistan	10	Somalia	several
Jordan	9	St. Christopher & Nevis	?
Kuwait	6	Iraq	?
Japan	6	Uzbekistan	?
Nigeria	6	Total 1998	1,625
Oman	6	Total 1997	2,375
Cuba	5	Total 1996	4,272

Source: Amnesty International Report 1999.

While 105 nations have abolished the death penalty, almost half since 1980, the United States is moving in the opposite direction. While China still executes the most people, it has cut its executions by more than half since 1996, while the United States is well on its way to executing a record 100 people this year.

Focus on children

Because a nation's treatment of its most vulnerable populations is key to judging its human rights record, both reports focus on the American criminal justice system's treatment of children, and both document pervasive violation of fundamental human rights standards in this area.

The cover of the Amnesty report, a photo of then-12-year-old Nathaniel Abraham, speaks volumes on this subject. Nathaniel was the youngest American citizen ever to be tried for murder as an adult. In a November trial in Michigan, which drew widespread international criticism, Nathaniel faced a sentence of life imprisonment without parole if found guilty of first degree murder. At least in part because of the publicity, the jury voted on Nov. 16 to find him guilty of second degree murder, which carries the lesser, but still stark, possible maximum sentence of life in prison with possibility of parole.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the United States ratified in 1992, while reserving the right not to implement the provision prohibiting capital punishment for minors, specified the rights of minors who are accused or convicted of violating criminal law. These

rights — all of which are being systematically violated in the U.S. justice system today — include:

1. the death penalty must not be imposed for crimes committed by people when they were under 18 (Article 6(5));

2. the right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment (Article 7);

3. rights that provide for fair trials (Article 14);

4. the right of children who are incarcerated to be kept separate from adults (Article 10).

State-sanctioned killing of minors

With respect to the death penalty for minors, the United States was one of only three countries which took reservation to Article 6. Norway's and Ireland's reservations became moot when they abolished the death penalty. The United States reserves the right "to impose capital punishment on any person (other than a pregnant woman) duly convicted under existing or future laws permitting the imposition of capital punishment, including such punishment for crimes committed by persons below 18 years of age."

Eleven countries formally protested the U.S. reservation to Article 6, including close allies France, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and Spain.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that it is not a cruel and unusual punishment to apply the death penalty to those who were 16 or 17 years old at the time of their crime. Justice Antonin Scalia, whose repudiation of constitutional norms of justice has characterized his sordid term on the bench, in the opinion upholding the death penalty for juvenile offenders, explicitly rejected the notion that world-wide perceptions of decency were relevant to the Court's consideration.

Since the founding of the United States, approximately 355 juveniles have been executed, according to the DPIC report. Twenty-three states presently either have no age restriction on the use of the death penalty, or specifically allow it for those who committed their crime while under the age of 18. Since 1973, states in the United States have sentenced more than 180 juvenile offenders to death and have carried out 13 executions. Ten of the 13 executions have occurred in the 1990s, including seven in George W. Bush's Texas. In June 1998, seventy people were on death row for crimes they

committed when they were under 18 years of age.

The U.S. record stands out like a sore thumb internationally. Although records on executions of minors are incomplete, only five other countries—most of which have been high on the U.S. human rights target list—are known to have executed juvenile offenders since 1990: Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. The United States executed ten juvenile offenders in that time, more than any other country.

Torture and cruel punishment

Both reports document the systematic use of what must be truthfully called torture, as well as cruel and unusual punishment, against minors and others incarcerated in the United States. The DPIC report cites the typical death-row experience as “torture,” involving an average of nine years in a six- by nine-foot isolated cell, with little chance for exercise, visitors, or contact with other human beings, all the while never knowing when the death sentence will be carried out.

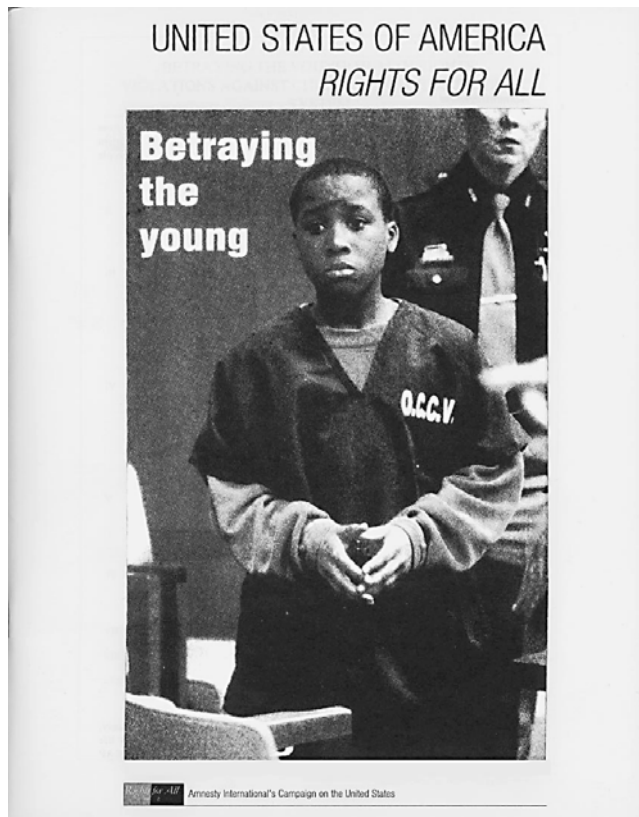
The Amnesty Report is jam-packed with evidence of serious abuses of human rights norms in the incarceration of youths in the United States, including excessive use of incarceration; excessive incarceration of mentally ill youth, because of lack of available mental health facilities; excessive use of force and restraints; excessive use of solitary confinement; the failure to separate incarcerated children from adults, subjecting the children to potential physical and sexual harm from adult inmates; the use of harsh and inflexible sentences; and the lack of access to education and other services. With respect to each of these areas of abuse, the report cites relevant American and international human rights laws, which are being systematically violated in state after state.

To give concrete examples, a 1997 investigation of Georgia’s juvenile detention facilities by the Department of Justice found that children with mental illness were often hit, shackled, put in a restraint chair for hours, and sprayed with pepper spray. In a 1997 report from Florida, a 14-year-old child incarcerated at the Pahokee juvenile institution said he was shackled to his bed for three hours after he repeatedly banged on the door of his solitary confinement cell to ask staff for toilet paper.

Treatment of the mentally ill

A second major focus of both reports is the woeful treatment of the mentally ill, including mentally ill youth, in America’s justice system. This highly vulnerable population is also protected by international human rights treaties, but, as these reports demonstrate, America’s mentally ill are increasingly being incarcerated rather than treated, as treatment centers shut down to save tax dollars.

In Virginia, whose record on abuse of human rights is most evident in the long, unjust imprisonment of several lead-



The cover of Amnesty International’s pamphlet on human rights violations in the United States.

ers of the LaRouche political movement, roughly half of all youths in juvenile prisons require mental-health treatment. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* recently reported that some judges are deliberately sending youths to the overcrowded correctional centers for psychiatric treatment, because there is no room in the one remaining 48-bed state mental institution for children and adolescents.

Amnesty International quoted Chris Siegfried, Senior Community Mental Health Consultant for the U.S. National Mental Health Association, that “social workers in a number of states . . . instruct desperate parents to have their children arrested in order to get services, because community health services are so scarce.”

The execution of those with mental retardation and severe mental illness has also raised an international outcry. At least 34 individuals with identified mental retardation have been executed since 1976 (about 6% of all executions). A recent report from the Justice Department revealed that 16% of inmates in the nation’s prisons suffer from mental illness.

Both these reports are readily available and should be widely read and circulated. As the world moves toward abolishing some of the worst human rights abuses, the United States will either join this effort or suffer justified international scorn and loss of its proud heritage.