

# Our Judicial System. What's Right And Wrong With It.

By George A. Burns

## The Death Penalty-Morally Right Or Wrong

So there you have it. A scriptural account that by all measures would somehow seem to imply that capital punishment is in fact supported by God's work, the Bible, and a statement which by contrast seems to imply otherwise.

With the emergence again of capital punishment in this country, the moral viewpoint of "an eye for an eye" seems to be the consensus, especially of those who are directly affected by criminals and their heinous criminal acts.

At present, the national death row population is 1,137. That statistic is an increase by over 200 in just one year. Those states which comprise the most sitting in death's row are Florida (189), Texas (153), Georgia and California with 118 each. The means to put them to death vary. At present, there are 15 electric chairs, 9 gas chambers, several gallows and ad hoc firing squads back to regular work. In addition to these, there has been introduced a new and peculiarly American technique for killing, lethal anesthesia injections, which could increase public acceptance of capital punishment. Nevada's Governor Richard Bryan recently signed into law this more "humane" way of execution.

But questions continue to arise in regards to capital punishment, such as: Is it morally right? What's to be gained by the taking of another human life? Does it deter criminal acts? Is it barbaric, especially in our humane society? What crimes constitutes its usage? Are there more blacks and other minorities on death row than there are whites? Has crime decreased since capital punishment's increased? and the questions go on and on.

With mass murder crimes being committed at epidemic rates, especially during the past 20 years,

the prevalent consensus on the parts of many Americans is to agree that more capital punishment should be implemented. Says William Bailey, a Cleveland State University sociologist: "Nothing seems to be done to solve the problem, so the feeling grows that if we can't cure murderers, something we can do is kill them!" Also adds 44 year old Jim Jablonski, a Chicago steelworker, "Murders got to pay. I say, fry the bastards!"

Many believe that the killing of a human being as a solution to any problem is deeply uncivilized. Says attorney Bradford Coleman of Detroit, "Executing murderers does not demonstrate resolute regard for the sanctity of human lives. The marginally demented guy sees an execution as a prescription, not a threat. If a state has a quarrel

...But in case there should happen to be a man hating his fellow man and he has lain in wait for him and has risen up against him and struck his soul fatally and he has died...the older men of his city must then send and take him from there and they must deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, and he must die!

Deut. 19:11,12

"There has never been any evidence that the death penalty deters crime nor criminal acts."

New York Governor Mario Cuomo.

with Gary Gilmore, it kills him. Then if I have a quarrel with someone, I'll kill him. We all say that we think human life is sacred and precious, and then to prove that, we kill somebody. The vicious circle goes round and round and that's crazy!"

Along the same line of the con argument of capital punishment is the opinion of criminal defense attorney Joel Berger who deeply feels that capital punishment attempts to vindicate one murder by committing a second murder, and the second murder is more reprehensible because it is officially sanctioned and done with great ceremony in the name of us all. He goes on by saying that "the deranged killer or mad psychopath is a loose cannon, but the well orchestrated modern execution, careful, and thoroughly considered, is horrible because of its meticulous sanity. Executions are worse, in the abolitionists' moral scheme, because the government is always in control; it knows better, but kills anyway."

Next week: Leading Nevadans' viewpoints of the death penalty, and its effect on blacks.

# APRI CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON LABOR- BLACK ALLIANCE

"The Reagan Administration has contributed enormously to the sundering of the social fabric," Norman Hill, President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute told over 800 black trade unionists and community leaders who gathered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania recently for the Institute's 14th National Conference. "The Administration's policies have heightened the sense of frustration among blacks, workers, and the poor. But the evidence of 1982 and 1983 is that these constituencies, these victims of Reaganomics have not lapsed into apathy and indifference but have dealt severe electoral setbacks to the Administration."

in government are the problem; that the malingerers in our society are the problem; that if we just make the rich richer, everything will be okay because the wealth will just trickle down." Yet in reality, Lautenberg noted, only "crumbs are trickling down."

The Senator asserted that the President had a false view of the American people. "No one likes to bring home a welfare check or food stamps. Everyone likes to bring home a paycheck. Everyone likes to have a job," Lautenberg asserted.

The focal point of the APRI Conference was the presentation of the 1983 A. Philip Randolph Freedom Award to the great black opera singer Marian Anderson. Miss Anderson was honored for her "contributions to the cause of civil rights and social justice" on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the March on Washington, in whose program she participated.

The A. Philip Randolph Achievement Award was presented to William Burrus, Executive Vice President of the American Postal Workers Union. Burrus was cited for his "contributions to the cause of trade unionism and civil rights in the tradition of A. Philip Randolph."

APRI's Special Recognition Award was presented to William Bowe, Treasurer of the New York City AFL-CIO, and a long-time leader of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

Guests honoring the Award recipients included Postal Workers President Moe Biller, New York City AFL-CIO President Harry Van Arsdale, and Gene Boucher, President of the American Guild of Musical Artists.

Democratic Mayoral Candidate Wilson Goode and Congressman William Gray (Dem-Pa.), a leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, praised APRI for its work in increasing black voter participation. APRI Chairman Bayard Rustin; Gus Tyler, Assistant President of the International Ladies' Gar-

Hill called upon APRI leaders to "start the work of strengthening our organization and solidifying the links between blacks and labor." According to Hill, "The labor-black alliance must be at the center of any strategy for black progress."

Hill reminded conference participants that 1983 marks the 20th anniversary of A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin's historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. "In the twenty years since the March on Washington," Hill noted, "blacks have won the right of access to jobs. Yet access alone is not enough. For blacks to fully participate in our nation's life they must participate fully in its economic life. Without economic equality there can be no true equality." Therefore, Hill concluded, blacks must focus on a strategy of full employment.

Hill's remarks were echoed by other speakers who addressed the 1983 APRI Conference theme: "New Economic Realities: The Future of the Labor-Black Alliance."

Senator Frank Lautenberg, (Dem.-N.J.) delivered a blistering attack on Reaganomics, and made a spirited defense of government's vital role as an instrument for social justice. Lautenberg charged the Administration with attempting to "persuade all of us that people who work

## YOUR LEGAL QUESTIONS - please!

By Attorney Herb Lewis

Do you have any legal questions? If you do, the Las Vegas SENTINEL-VOICE can get the answers for you at no charge through the help of Attorney Herb Lewis. All you need to do is to write this paper with your legal question and address your letter to Atty. Herb Lewis. LAS VEGAS SENTINEL-VOICE, 1201 SOUTH EASTERN AVENUE, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89104. Your answers will be published in a subsequent issue of this paper. Do not use the phone for your questions. They must be submitted in writing. Remember, there is no charge for this service. The series will begin in next week's issue.

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