

Death penalty

Death penalty is one of the most controversial sentences in the history of mankind. It was known even 2000 years B. C. and the most famous civilizations as Roman Empire or ancient Greeks were using it. Later in 19th century we can hear first strong voices demanding abolishment of death penalty. The Pioneer was Cesare Beccaria and his work *Dei delitti e delle pene*. Nowadays 95 countries have abolished death penalty for all crimes, 9 countries abolished it for ordinary crimes and 35 countries have death penalty among sentences but they do not use it.

In Czechoslovakia there was death penalty almost through whole existence of Czechoslovakia. It was abolished not until year 1990, after “velvet revolution”.

Methods of executions have always been very different and they varied depending on the place and time. Among the most known belongs crucifixion, burning to death, decapitation, guillotine, hanging, gas chamber, electric chair and lethal injection.

In my dissertation I have to mention two very different countries which still use capital punishment to a large extent. These are United States of America and China. In the USA capital punishment has a long history and nothing seems to suggest that something is going to change even though there were executions of innocent people or executions which were based on the color of the skin. In China, there held in year 2009 more executions than in the rest of the world. Most people are sentenced to death because of murder and drug trafficking.

Death penalty belongs, and probably will, among the most discussable sentences between amateurish and expert public too. Among the most common arguments those who speak up for the capital punishment belong safety of the society, retaliation, putting fear on potential wrongdoers, costs of life imprisonment and morality of killing somebody who is murderer. On the other side opponents for example argue with judicial murders or judicial errors.

Many international documents deal with the death penalty too. The best known are Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental and its Protocols and on the western hemisphere American Convention on Human Rights.

In the countries which have abolished the death penalty had to replace it with another sentence. The most common is to replace it by life imprisonment or imprisonment which lasts many years. In this case parole is important.

Death penalty is cruel punishment which does not belong to 21st century. Unfortunately many countries still use it and probably will in the future. I hope this work of mine will help to better understand to death penalty and maybe convince some of those who support capital punishment about cruelty of this punishment and its pointlessness.