

Editorial

A kinder, gentler America

The extraordinary brutality with which President Bush refused to accept an Iraqi surrender, will enter history as one of the United States' sorriest moments. Most shocking is the unremitting carpet bombing of the civilian population of Iraq.

How is it, we ask, that this butchery is not only tolerated, but subscribed to, by world leaders, and by large sections of the populations of the United States and Britain? It is important to remember that this is George Bush's second unjust war.

Certainly, the U.S. invasion of Panama, an equally unjustified if only somewhat less brutal war, played a part in conditioning the American people. In Panama, too, the civilian population was subjected to terror bombing, killing thousands (something which the administration has attempted to suppress). And the bombing of Panama City continued even after General Noriega sought refuge in the home of the Papal Nuncio. Now there is a cease-fire in the Gulf, but the burning question is where Bush and the British intend to strike next.

Bush's kinder, gentler America is a cruel joke. Americans have been systematically desensitized to violence in their daily lives. In apparently senseless instances of violence without motive, even young children are gunned down while they play; other young people get caught in the criminal world of drugs and are destroyed. They have become accustomed to homeless men and women dying of cold on city streets.

Equally desperate is the case of the elderly and disabled. Less than three months after signing legislation that would cut some \$32 billion over the next five years from Medicare, the federal health care program serving 33 million elderly and disabled Americans, Bush broke all promises to Congress and the American people and demanded another \$23 billion in cuts in the Medicare program as part of the 1992 budget. One immediate target of these cuts is programs which train young physicians in hospitals serving the poor. The cuts will also force perhaps 40% of non-profit hospitals to close their doors at a time when AIDS is reaching pandemic proportions. In New York City alone, over 13,000 beds were decertified for use over the last de-

cade—so that people wait up to 36 hours in emergency rooms before even being seen.

Approximately 2,300 Americans now await execution, since the resumption of the death penalty. The United States has a higher rate of incarceration per capita than the Soviet Union or the Republic of South Africa; furthermore, black males are four times more likely to end up in jail if they live in the United States than if they live in South Africa.

This can be attributed to the combined problems of bias in the court system against blacks, and the fact that 50% of black adults in New York City are unemployed—and this is not atypical for cities throughout the United States. Layoffs are, however, hitting every section of the population, with basic industries such as auto going into a shutdown mode. Forty-three thousand auto layoffs were announced just this past month. Things are so bad that the state of Maryland has announced that those unemployed workers who cannot find new jobs will not be eligible for welfare assistance until at least the end of 1991, because the welfare rolls have been frozen.

Then there is the case of Nancy Cruzan—a young woman who was starved to death because she was brain damaged, despite the fact—media accounts to the contrary—that she was not even in a coma. This case is only the most glaring instance of the domestic policy to give "useless eaters" the euphemistically named right to die: the same euthanasia policy practiced by Hitler when he did away with the retarded and mentally ill. The very problems which Bush went to war to avoid—a panic bank collapse, an out of control budget deficit, mass unemployment, and the bankruptcy not only of basic industry but of states and municipalities as well—have still not been solved.

President Bush's mad-dog policy toward the Iraqi people is genocidal, and so are his domestic policies, even if the casualty rate is still somewhat lower. George Bush will come out of this war with an apparent victory. Nonetheless, God's law is never violated with impunity. One way or another he will be called to account, and with him, all of those who have tolerated his evil.