

N.Y. TIMES, POST AGNEW TARGETS

Growing Monopolization Charged by V-P

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, asserting there is "growing monopolization of the voices of public opinion," aimed particular criticism Thursday night at The New York Times and The Washington Post.

In a followup speech to one last week in which he hit at the news programming of the television networks, Agnew said the day is over when the news media "enjoyed a form of diplomatic immunity from comment and criticism of what they said."

In remarks prepared for the Alabama Chamber of Commerce, the vice president asserted:

"Just as a politician's words—wise and foolish—are dutifully recorded by the press and television to be thrown up to him at the appropriate time, so their words should likewise be recorded and likewise recalled."

MAIN THRUST IGNORED

Arguing that many of the critics of his attacks on the networks ignored the main thrust of his remarks, Agnew elaborated on what he said is his principal point:

"When they (the news media) go beyond fair comment and criticism they will be called upon to defend their statements and their positions just as we must defend ours. And when their criticism becomes excessive or unjust, we shall invite them down from their ivory towers to enjoy the rough and tumble of the public debate."

The vice president said: "I do not seek to intimidate the press, the networks or anyone else from speaking out. But the time for blind acceptance of their opinions is past. And the time for naive belief in their neutrality is gone."

The vice president made only minor departures from his prepared speech, leaving his text at one point to declare that the United States "is a great country where every man is allowed freedom of speech, even the

vice president."

APPLAUDED OFTEN

Agnew was interrupted by applause 17 times in his 35-minute speech, receiving a standing ovation when he said, "It is my right and my duty to stand up and speak out for the values in which I believe."

Gov. Albert Brewer, a Democrat, prompted laughter from the crowd when he said he felt honored to introduce the vice president, and added:

"There are others who would relish this honor, not the least of whom are the presidents of the three television networks."

SAME EDITORIAL LINE

Agnew hit at The Washington Post Co. after saying that should a shoe company and a shirt manufacturer form a conglomerate, there would be righteous demands that the combination be broken up. He went on:

"But a single company, in the nation's capital, holds control of the largest newspaper in Washington, D.C., and one of the four major television stations, and an all-news radio station, and one of the three major national news magazines—all grinding out the same editorial line..."

Agnew said he is not recommending dismemberment of the Washington Post Co., which, in addition to publishing the newspaper, owns WTOP-TV, WTOP radio and the magazine Newsweek.

"I am merely pointing out,"

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he said, "that the public should be aware that these four powerful voices harken to the same master."

"I am merely raising these questions so that the American people will become aware of—and think of the implications of—the growing monopolization of the voices of public opinion on which we all depend—for our knowledge and for the basis of our views."

REPLY ISSUED

Katharine Graham, president of the Washington Post Co., issued a statement in reply, which read in part:

"The Washington Post, Newsweek, WTOP-TV and WTOP radio decidedly do not 'grind out the same editorial line.' It is a long-standing policy of the Post Co. to enlist in each of its enterprises the best professional journalists we can find and to

give them a maximum of freedom in which to work. Each branch is operated autonomously. They compete vigorously with one another. They disagree on many issues. We think the result is journalism of a higher caliber that is notable for a diversity of voices on a wide range of public issues."

NOTES DIFFERENCE

Noting the demise of many daily newspapers in New York City, Agnew said, "The New York Times was a better newspaper when they were alive than it is now that they are gone."

Saying that much competition has been stilled in recent years in the newspaper industry, Agnew declared that "lacking the vigor of competition, some of those that have survived have, let us face it, grown fat and irresponsible."

Noting that The Washington Post and The Baltimore Sun—"scarcely house organs of the Nixon administration"—gave front page display last week to expressions by House and Senate members of both parties endorsing President Nixon's Vietnam policy, Agnew added:

"Yet the next morning The New York Times, which considers itself America's paper of record, did not carry a word. Why?"

RAPS NEWS PLAY

"If a theology student in Iowa should get up at a P-TA luncheon in Sioux City and attack the President's Vietnam policy, my guess is that you would probably find it reported somewhere the next morning in The New York Times. But when 300 congressmen endorse the Presi-

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dent's Vietnam policy, the next morning it is apparently not considered news fit to print."

Turning to events of this week, Agnew took another jab at the Times, saying:

"Just this Tuesday, when the Pope, the spiritual leader of half a billion Roman Catholics, applauded the President's efforts to end the war in Vietnam, and endorsed the way he was proceeding—that news was on page 11 of The New York Times. But the same day, a report about some burglars who broke into a souvenir shop at St. Peter's and stole \$9,000 worth of stamps and

curency—that story made page 3. How's that for news judgment?"

In a statement of reply, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, president and publisher of the New York Times, said in part:

"Vice President Agnew is entitled to express his point of view, but he is in error when he implies that the New York Times ever sought or enjoyed immunity from comment or criticism. Indeed, all American institutions from the press to the presidency should be the subjects of free and open debate.

"It would be wise, however, for those involving themselves in such a discussion to be certain of their facts. Some of Mr. Agnew's statements are inaccurate."

Besides carrying the story of congressional endorsement of President Nixon's policy in Vietnam in its later editions, Sulzberger pointed to subsequent related stories and said, "The Times has given considerable attention to that story as it developed."

Referring to stories relating to the Vatican, Sulzberger said "the complicated problems of making up a newspaper" require that many important stories appear on pages other than page one, and that the page on which a story appears is not a true index of its importance.

OVER REACTED CHARGE

The Vice President, stating that "I am opposed to censorship of television or the press in any form," argued that "a broader spectrum of national opinion should be represented among the commentators of the network news" and a high wall of separation built between news and commentary.

He said that is what he tried to suggest in his talk a week ago.

Critics who responded to his remarks over-reacted, he con-

tended, by ignoring the main points he had raised.

Referring to the controversy he had aroused, Agnew said:

"It is not an easy thing to wake up each morning to learn that some prominent man or institution has implied that you are a bigot, a racist or a fool.

"I am not asking any immunity from criticism. That is the lot of the man in politics; we would have it no other way in this democratic society.

"But my political and journalistic adversaries sometimes seem to be asking something more—that I circumscribe my rhetorical freedom, while they place no restrictions on theirs."

REFUSES QUESTIONS

In Washington, White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said President Nixon had not seen the text of Agnew's speech prior to its public distribution.

When newsmen sought to question Ziegler about various aspects of the vice president's remarks, he replied, "I'm not going to take questions on the speech."

Making evident an apparent determination to press forward with periodic criticism of news media, Agnew said everyone could do worse than adopt a motto he attributed to William Lloyd Garrison, a militant crusader for the abolition of slavery:

"I am in earnest. I will not equivocate. I will not excuse. I will not retreat a single inch. And I will be heard."

RIGHT AND DUTY

Agnew said that one magazine this week stated he would go down as the "Great Polarizer" in American politics. He added:

"Yet, when that large group of young Americans marched up Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues last week—they sought to polarize the American people against the President's policy in Vietnam. And that was their right.

"And so it is my right, and my duty, to stand up and speak out for the values in which I believe. How can you ask the man in the street in this country to stand up for what he believes if his own elected leaders weasel and cringe?"

The vice-president took issue

with a New York Times editorial following Agnew's expression of views about street and campus demonstrations against the war. He quoted the newspaper as editorializing that Agnew "lambasted the nation's youth in sweeping and ignorant generalizations, when it is clear to all perceptive observers that American youth today is far more imbued with idealism, a sense of service and a deep humanitarianism than any generation in recent history, including particularly Mr. Agnew's."

SONS, DAUGHTERS

The vice-president termed the editorial "a peculiar slur on a generation that brought America out of the Great Depression without resorting to the extremes of either fascism or communism" and of a generation that carried the American flag in World War II.

"This might not be considered enough of a 'sense of service' or a 'deep humanitarianism' for the 'perceptive critics' who write editorials for The New York Times," said Agnew, "but it's good enough for me; and I am content to let history be the judge."

He said:

... I have not nor do not condemn this generation of young Americans ... They are our sons and daughters. They contain in their numbers many gifted, idealistic and courageous young men and women.

"But they also list in their numbers an arrogant few who march under the flags and portraits of dictators, who intimidate and harass university professors, who use gutter obscenities to shout down speakers with whom they disagree, who openly profess their belief in the effi-

cacy of violence in a democratic society."

Network Officials Condemn New Attack

NEW YORK (AP) — The three major television networks, targets last week of an attack on their news presentation by Vice President Spiro Agnew, issued statements Thursday night condemning Agnew's latest speech.

The vice president criticized the New York Times and the Washington Post in a speech in Montgomery, Ala.

"Again I leave it to the public to determine whether the vice president's renewed attack is an attempt to intimidate and discredit not only television news reporting, but other major news media," said Leonard H. Goldenson, ABC's president. "Personally, I believe it is."

Dr. Frank Stanton, president of CBS, again characterized Agnew's words as an attempt to intimidate and said: "Whatever the deficiencies of a free press, they are minor compared to those of a press which would be subservient to the executive power of government."

Reuven Frank, president of NBC News, commented: "We do not welcome this sort of government intervention directed against newspapers any more than we relish it when it strikes at broadcast news."

The president of Associated Press Radio Television Association, Tom Powell, said the speech was another indication that Agnew "seeks a compliant and uncritical press."

Powell, news and public affairs director of WDAU-TV, Scranton, Pa., added that Agnew's "constructive criticism has been overshadowed by implied threats of government interference in the free flow of information," and that attacks by government officials "seem calculated to persuade the press that it faces a choice between conformity and control."

Negroes Picket Speech Scene

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — A small group of Negroes picketed for several hours Thursday in front of the hotel where Vice President Spiro T. Agnew was to speak, but city police ordered them away just before Agnew arrived.

A police captain said he ordered the group away from the Jefferson Davis Hotel for security reasons. After a brief delay, the Negroes moved across the street from the hotel. They carried placards accusing Agnew of racism.