

AGNEW CRITICIZES MEDIA ON ATTICA

Says 'Radical Left' Seeks Another Cause Celebre

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 27—

Vice President Agnew accused the "radical left" and news media today of seeking to transform the Attica Prison revolt into "yet another cause celebre in the pantheon of radical revolutionary propaganda."

The Vice President praised Governor Rockefeller for "the courageous action he took in ending the confrontation at Attica after exhausting all practicable alternatives."

Mr. Agnew thus took issue with critics who have blamed Mr. Rockefeller for complicity in the deaths of 29 inmates and nine hostages who died as a result of the armed assault Sept. 13 on sections of the prison held by the inmates. There were 42 deaths in all stemming from the five-day uprising at the maximum security prison.

633 Law Officials Killed

Instead of paying homage to 633 law enforcement officials killed in the United States in 10 years, there has been "inordinate attention focused on the self-declared and proven enemies of our society," the Vice President declared in a speech to the International Association of Chiefs of Police in Anaheim, Calif. Copies of the speech were made available here.

"Now the name 'Attica' joins the list of geographic place names and slogans whose very utterance, in the litany of anti-American hate preached by radical propagandists, is a dagger at the heart of our country's free institutions," Mr. Agnew said.

Some members of an observer committee of legislators, lawyers, newsmen and former Attica inmates have criticized Governor Rockefeller for refusing to visit the prison when they sought to mediate and end to the uprising.

Demands Are Scored

"A Governor of a state cannot allow himself to be peremptorily summoned into the presence of outlaws to meet their demands," the Vice President

said. "Had he gone, and still refused to surrender the state, the next demand might have been for the President of the United States to demean himself in their presence."

Although he said no citizen could ignore the real need for prison reform, Mr. Agnew said that was not the primary issue of Attica.

"Only by the total inversion of all civilized values can those among the militant inmates which killed a guard and slashed the throats of fellow inmates during the period of their holdout be termed heroes in a struggle for human life and dignity," he said.

True to form, he contended, the media have given wide currency to "the most inflammatory and baseless charges" of convicted criminals and their supporters. Readers and viewers would have had to "follow the events at Attica with the utmost diligence to determine that the instigators of the confrontation actually possessed criminal records," Mr. Agnew said.

He did not specify any individuals against whom he was making his complaints.

If Attica provides a lesson, Mr. Agnew said, "it is that Americans who value our system and its free institutions cannot underestimate the potential for violence and destruction inherent in any radical militant movement."

Paragraph inserted in version carried by SFChronicle this date, filed Nix Ad:

Although Agnew was talking about the rebellion at Attica, no such incidents happened there, according to pathologists' reports. There were reports of inmates' throats being slashed during the George Jackson escape attempt at San Quentin last month.

*The press initially accepted the official version, apparently without question, and printed as fact, without qualification (such as use of the word "alleged"), statements that hostages' throats were slashed and that one was thrown from window. (Or, in version carried by N.O. States-Item and SFExaminer 10 Sep 71, "eight guards were thrown from cell-block windows to the prison yard below.") These were "inflammatory and baseless charges," and they certainly received "wide currency."