

Prison Revolts

Agnew Attacks Radicals, Media

Anaheim

Vice President Spiro Agnew yesterday accused the "radical left" and the news media 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 Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York for "the courageous action he took in ending the confrontation at Attica after exhausting all practicable alternatives."

Agnew thus took issue with critics who have blamed Rockefeller for complicity in the deaths of 29 inmates and nine hostages who were slain as a result of the armed assault September 13 on sections of the prison held by the inmates. There were 42 deaths in all during the five-day Attica uprising.

HOMAGE

Instead of paying homage to the 633 law enforcement officials killed in the United States in ten 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.

"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," Agnew said.

Some members of an observer committee of legislators, lawyers, newsmen and former Attica inmates have

criticized Rockefeller for refusing to meet with them at the prison when they sought to mediate an end to the uprising.

CITIZEN

"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, 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 who 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.

Although Agnew was talking about the rebellion at Attica, not 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.

Agnew contended that the media, true to form, 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," Agnew said.

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

N.Y. Times Service

Final paragraph in version carried by NYTimes this date, filed Attica:

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."

* The press initially accepted the official version, apparently without question, and printed 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 Sept 71, "Eight guards were

thrown from cell-block windows
to the prison yard below.")

These were "inflammatory and
baseless charges," and they certainly were given "wide currency."

Filed Attica.