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Agnew Comment 'Fair'

To the Editor:

As a reporter and later a producer for one of the three networks for more than eight years now, I believe Vice President Agnew's comments on television news are in the main accurate, fair and long-overdue.

Television news is controlled by a few, powerful men who do think alike on most major issues. This control is not manifested, as Mr. Agnew may have implied, in a conspiratorial, concerted attempt to present or distort the news according to these men's biases.

But the end product, what is seen and heard on the air, especially in live programming, too often results from these biases. The reason, I suggest, is not

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conscious prejudice, but the common, implicit assumptions influencing the major commentators and producers. As the Vice President said, they do live in the provincial and parochial confines of Washington and New York City. They do read the same newspapers, bound on one flank by The Times, on the other by The Washington Post, with perhaps some turning to Newsweek, and the New Republic. Their constant interaction does reinforce their common viewpoint.

There is an establishment point of view shared by the television news élite. I do not think this view is deliberately thrust upon the public, and if Mr. Agnew is suggesting some form of government censorship, I oppose him.

But if he is attempting to prod the members of this élite to look more closely at themselves, and to urge the American public to make its dissatisfaction known, then I applaud him.

And, in one respect, he already has succeeded. Would all three networks have carried his entire speech live if he had been attacking antiwar demonstrators, or the automobile industry, or newspapers?

DAVID JAYNE
Pelham, N. Y., Nov. 14, 1969

through some other backdoor method.

If the Nixon Administration is so confident of its support on Vietnam by the "silent majority," why this belated and thinly disguised attempt at censorship of the TV media? [Editorial Nov. 15.]

ROBERT N. KASTOR
West Long Branch, N. J.
Nov. 14, 1969

Censorship Charged

To the Editor:

The crude attempt on the part of the hatchet man of the Nixon Administration, Vice President Agnew, and the even cruder attempts of the newly appointed chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Dean Burch, to impose censorship on the television editorial condemnation. Their next step will of course be to curtail the freedom of the press either by intimidation or