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AGNEW CRITICIZES SCHOOL SYSTEM

Says Too Long an Education
Alienates Young People

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Special to The New York Times

BALTIMORE, Dec. 10—Vice President Agnew said today that young Americans were alienated from the society in which they lived. But he cast aside the traditional reasons given by disillusioned youths and focused instead on the educational system.

"Many young people have cause to complain," Mr. Agnew said. "They are alienated, not by our hypocrisy, or racism, or the war in Vietnam, but by our best intentions and inappropriate institutions."

In a speech prepared for delivery to a scholarship banquet honoring his late father, Theodore Spiro Agnew, the Vice President said that the complaints of hypocrisy, racism or immoral wars that are voiced by the younger generation "are not borne out by the facts."

The frustration of the young is caused, said Mr. Agnew, by a system that holds them apart from responsibility and emphasizes higher education as a prerequisite to participation in American society.

"We have stretched post-adolescent dependency a full 10 years," he said.

He called for an examination of educational institutions and concepts by educators, government and the young people themselves.

"If we are not going to have revolution within our educational community, we will be wise to take a revolutionary look at our institutions of education," he said. "We should not be reluctant to ask daring questions or consider bold solutions."

Emphasis Is Questioned

For example, he said, it is necessary to ask whether four years of college are essential, or whether the nation should invest more in adult education and enrichment.

The Vice President, whose speeches in recent weeks have been critical of dissenting youth, spoke in the city where his political career began and where his father, a Greek immigrant, was a restaurateur. He said he had raised his voice in criticism "because I see danger in our nation's course."

America "like ancient Athens, can become foolish and corrupt," he said, adding: "No generation can confer wisdom upon its children. Each generation must work to earn its own."

If education is the key to knowledge, Mr. Agnew said, it is time to realize that emphasis on education as a prescribed period in an individual's life, whether 12 years or 20, is "consigning a huge group of our young citizens to an academic limbo totally alien to their human instincts."

"Whether we realize it or not, whether we intend it or not, we have created a disenfranchised social class called youth," he continued.

Kept Out of Public Life

The Vice President cited statistics showing that the number of young people in school had increased markedly, with 40 per cent of young people attending at least a year of college.

He contended that reverence for education had inadvertently denied the young generation its "right to participate as mature citizens."

Consequently, "denied political participation in the real community," Mr. Agnew said, "the youth seeks to politicize the only community he has, the academic one."

Black students' demands for black studies programs, separate dormitories or different grading systems "are often smokescreens evading the basic failure in black primary and secondary education," Mr. Agnew said.

He suggested that Americans had neglected vocational and technical education "for the elegant ornament of the liberal arts."

He called for a reevaluation of "those policies which protract dependence" and listed as subjects for review the present civil-service age requirements, "restrictive" apprenticeship programs, and age limits on voting and candidacy for public office.

But he emphasized that students had an obligation "to question radicalism and demands for relevance as satisfactory answers."

"Revolution is ridiculous," he said, "and relevance is often an excuse for more amusing and less arduous involvement."

Mr. Agnew asked: "Is 'doing one's own thing' ennobling, or selfish; profound or simply vacant?"

American concepts of education, he added, should not be questioned "in the fear that we are out to destroy popular education, but as a positive search to broaden educational opportunities and to make our educational institutions fit the public rather than make the public fit the institutions."