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Mr. Agnew's Speeches

To the Editor:

Once more we are treated to the spectacle of the indefatigable Vice President Agnew on the campaign trail. As usual, his speechwriters—having assiduously combed the pages of Webster and Roget—have armed him with those matchless alliterative pronouncements which at times appear an unwitting travesty of Wagnerian verse, but whose sentiments seem drawn from a somewhat later school of German oratory.

Clearly his branding of student dissenters in Grand Rapids as "enemies" (of what?, of whom?, of the state, perhaps?) belies any of the Administration's calls for reason and reconciliation. Is that what is understood as "cooling the rhetoric"?

Instead, his crass appeals to the fears and bewilderment of so many of our people in this time of unrest, and his rally cry for a mindless "patriotism" in the face of an unpopular war can only lead to further dissent and conflict. These, in turn, will undoubtedly supply him with further ammunition in his fight for "law and order". An absurd equation.

It has become fashionable in certain circles these days to compare America of 1970 with Germany of the Weimar years. A firm respect for our democratic traditions prevents me from accepting that tempting but simplistic analogy.

However, the tenor of the Vice President's remarks smacks very much of those conservative voices in that unhappy era who sought to exploit public apprehension for political gain, only to unleash forces they could no longer control.

Let us contemplate the consequences and beware. JAMES P. MCCANDLISH
Ronkonkoma, L.I. Sept. 17, 1970