

Say It Isn't So

19 May 70

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew assures us he will "continue to speak out." Nothing could have cast greater gloom over the start of a tense new week.

Because Mr. Agnew insists on seeing everything in a one-dimensional perspective, he incites radicals to new heights of feverish determination, and he drives stable young middle-of-the-road students to the brink of radicalism. College presidents and governors, their lives ruled by logic in the past, find themselves incensed by an obtuse refusal to entertain even the possibility that young people have something to say and to contribute.

In the face of indisputable evidence that students and faculty are deeply troubled and embittered by the continuing and even expanded Vietnam and Cambodian conflicts; in the face of huge demonstrations in Washington, D.C., within shouting distance of the White House, Mr. Agnew was able to say over the weekend that the demonstrations are, in fact, not indicative of "deep-seated student hostility on the Cambodian decision."

What would the Vice President consider to be an indication of unrest? What would he use as a gauge for real bitterness?

What passes for campus hostility, meanwhile, has brought death, directly or indirectly, to students at Kent State University in Ohio and Jackson State College in Mississippi. In other parts of the country, schools have been closed down and the physical plants are a shambles.

And yet Mr. Agnew is apparently not impressed that anything is amiss.

"I think a lot of those students were out on a typical spring lark," he said. "I think there were some who actually had the feeling they were participating in a very important venture."

The tragedy that has enveloped the campuses during the past few weeks does not impress us as the kind of "spring lark" we remember.

President Nixon seems to realize this, his staff is conscious of the dangers, and the President's cabinet is deeply worried and concerned.

Only Mr. Agnew refuses to pay attention.