

AGNEW TO PURSUE A 'FEARLESS' ROLE

Will Not Eliminate Emotion
From Appeals—Supports
'Rational' Dissenters
JUN 16 1970

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

DETROIT, June 15—Vice President Agnew said here tonight that he would continue to speak out "forcefully, factually and fearlessly" and would not eliminate emotion from his public appeals.

"No argument is fair that appeals exclusively to emotion," he said, but he added that "no argument is realistic that rules out all emotion."

However, in his speech prepared for delivery at a Republican fund-raising banquet here and in an earlier address today in Washington, Mr. Agnew adopted a tone that appeared to be notably less caustic than that of most of his speeches during the last seven months.

The Vice President explained in some detail tonight his philosophy on dissent, forming in the process a response to his critics. He said that dissent should be rational rather than illogical, that it should focus on an issue instead of consisting wholly of an emotional outburst, and that it should seek to persuade rather than demand.

Mr. Agnew rejected demands from some of his critics that he de-escalate his public rhetoric. "On the contrary," he said, "we have to elevate the rhetoric," which he defined as "use of public discourse to persuade."

"Rational dissenters," Mr.

Continued on Page 26, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

Agnew continued, "have never been more needed than they are today. They are with us, but their ideas are too often ignored—not by the majority, but by the emotionaries, a relatively small group of anti-intellectuals that has snatched the standard of dissent from their hands."

In one sense, Mr. Agnew's remarks tonight were a concession to what he called "some of the rational dissenters I have been meeting with recently."

When 11 professors from the University of Minnesota met with Vice President on June 4, they warned him that his public statements were driving moderate students into the arms of radicals and they urged him to explain at length his views on reasonable dissent.

Mr. Agnew told reporters here that he had taken the professors' suggestion to heart.

In his speech, the Vice President said that dissent was an element of freedom. "We cannot govern with the consent of the governed unless we respect the right of dissent of the governed," he said.

However, he continued, "Just as unity is not an end in itself, dissent is not an end in itself. Here is where I part company with some dissenters."

While conceding that emotionalism was not limited to those who oppose the Nixon Administration, Mr. Agnew said, "We cannot abandon the public forum to the anti vs. the anti-antis. We cannot refrain from speaking out in the voice of reason, both in affirmation and in dissent, for fear of becoming identified with the emotionaries of the extremes."

There was little in tonight's speech of the slashing rhetoric that Mr. Agnew has used since last fall to describe young anti-war critics and their intellectual mentors. There were no comments like his previous criticism of "effete corps of impudent snobs" and nothing like his previous reference to student radicals as "rotten apples."

Mr. Agnew said that history was full of partisan personal attacks and "studied insults," but he added that "the times have changed and the climate is wrong for slam-bang vituperation."

"In its improper definition as invective, the rhetoric has already de-escalated," he added. "But in its proper definition as rational public persuasion, the rhetoric of our times needs to be put to constructive use. In the very act of encouraging peaceful argument, we automatically discourage violent protest."

Mr. Agnew urged his Republican audience in Cobo Hall

here to join in a "progressive partisanship" that would be based upon the rules of dissent laid down "by my ancestor," the Greek philosopher Aristotle.

Paraphrasing Aristotle, the Vice President said he would be guided by these principles:

"Every view is a proper target for rational challenge. Every challenge is a proper target for criticism and rebuttal."

"No view has a claim on truth by virtue of wide acceptance. No view has a claim on truth by virtue of limited acceptance."

"Every partisan has an obligation to present his position forcefully, factually and fearlessly. Every partisan has an obligation to admit to the possibility of error."

"Every man has a right to be heard to the extent he shows a willingness to listen. No man should interpret a willingness to listen as a commitment to follow."

"No argument is fair that appeals exclusively to emotion. No argument is realistic that rules out all emotion."

"No age group or minority group or income group has a monopoly on wisdom. No majority has the obligation to be silent, or the right to overwhelm dissent."

"And finally, the 13th rule of rhetoric for our times, and the most painful one of all: Provided he acts without vio-

lence and within the constitutional law, every man has the right to disagree with, and to break, every one of these 'rules.'"

Such principles do not mean, the Vice President said, that "affirmers or dissenters have to color their speeches gray."

In his Washington speech today, to the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers, Mr. Agnew criticized anew the news media but omitted personal attacks like those he had previously made.

He said that telling both sides of a story, particularly when it concerned Vietnam, was "something that has gone out of vogue in some of the major news organizations in America." He did not name the organizations.

Mr. Agnew said that former President Johnson had "warned me against 'taking on' the press" after the 1968 election, telling Mr. Agnew to remember that "they come out every day; you don't."

But the Vice President said he had decided not to go along with his predecessors and colleagues in finding it "more comfortable to rock with the criticism than to return it."

He warned that the "price for not presenting both sides of a story is loss of credibility as a public institution," a heavy price, said Mr. Agnew, "to pay for a fleeting exercise in power or influence."