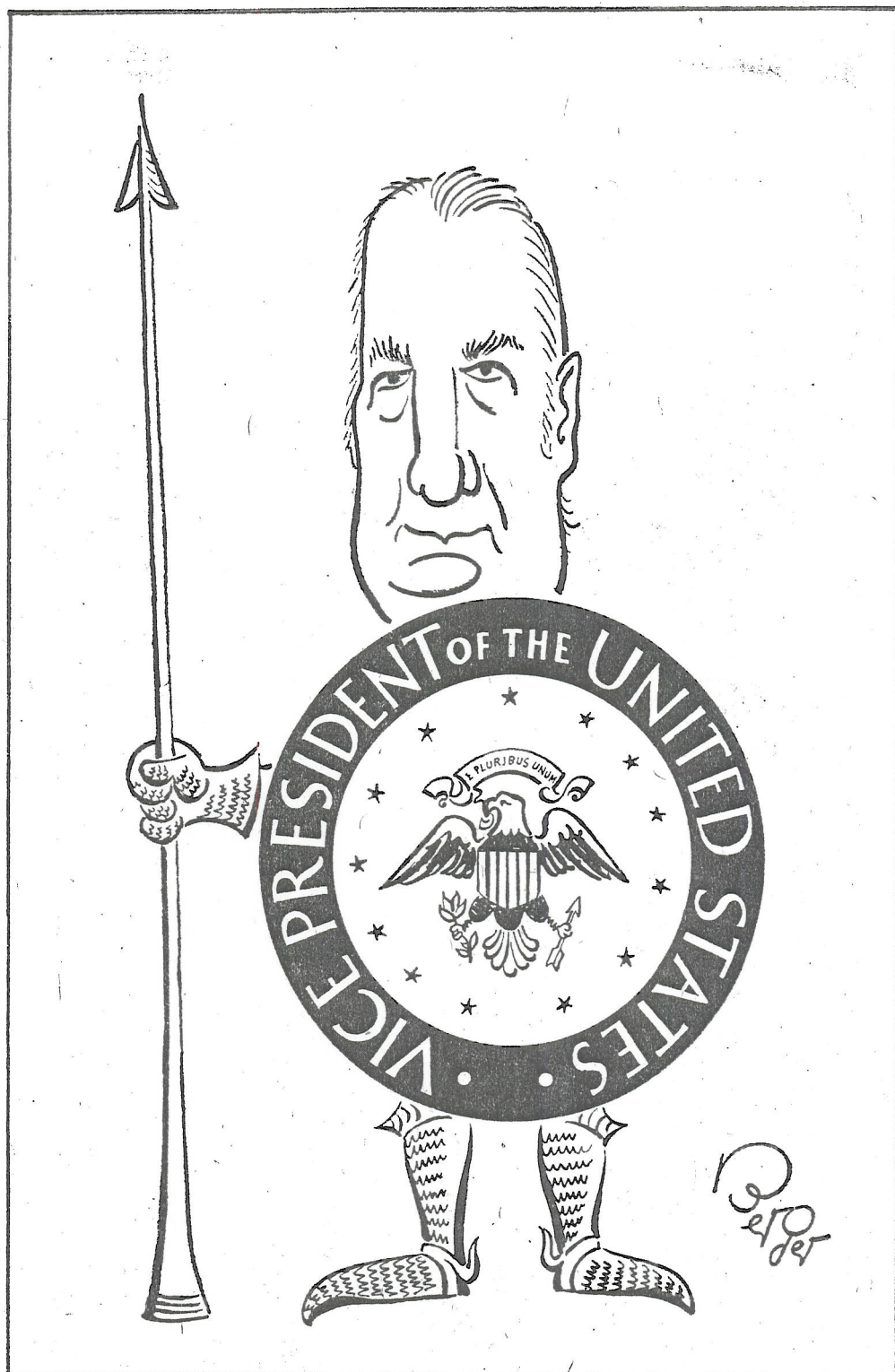


A Spiro Agnew Sampler

Whatever else Spiro T. Agnew did, he infused a power into the vice presidency that had long been missing: the power of language. Neither Harry Truman nor Lyndon Johnson nor Hubert Humphrey—nor even Richard Nixon—in their vice presidential years emerged as so separate a force, so strong a symbol, as did Agnew. Whether or not one agreed with Agnew's themes, which mostly dwelt upon class antagonisms, it can scarcely be doubted that he used rhetoric to carve out a niche for the vice presidency, to demonstrate that the office need not be the totally powerless post it has so often been made out to be.



Drawing by Oscar Berger

*"I think the Vice President of the United States should stand on his own feet."
—News conference, Aug. 8, 1973*

A LITTLE OVER A WEEK AGO, I took a rather unusual step for a Vice President . . . I said something. Particularly, I said something that was predictably unpopular with the people who would like to run the country without the inconvenience of seeking public office. I said I did not like some of the things I saw happening in this country. I criticized those who encouraged government by street carnival and suggested it was time to stop the carousel.

It appears that by slaughtering a sacred cow I triggered a holy war. I have no regrets. I do not intend to repudiate my beliefs, recant my words, or run and hide.

What I said before, I will say again. It is time for the preponderant majority, the responsible citizens of this country, to assert their rights. It is time to stop dignifying the immature actions of arrogant, reckless, inexperienced elements within our society. The reason is compelling. It is simply that their tantrums are insidiously destroying the fabric of American democracy.

—Pennsylvania Republican dinner,
Harrisburg, Oct. 30, 1969

SOMETIMES, IT APPEARS that we are reaching a period when our senses and our minds will no longer respond to moderate stimulation. We seem to be approaching an age of the gross. Persuasion through speeches and books is too often discarded for disruptive demonstrations aimed at bludgeoning the unconvinced into action.

The young—and by this I don't mean by any stretch of the imagination all the young, but I'm talking about those who claim to speak for the young—at the zenith of physical power and sensitivity, overwhelm themselves with drugs and artificial stimulants. Subtlety is lost, and fine distinctions based on acute reasoning are carelessly ignored in a headlong jump to a predetermined conclusion. Life is visceral rather than intellectual, and the most visceral practitioners of life are those who characterize themselves as intellectuals.

Truth to them is "revealed" rather than logically proved, and the principal infatuations of today revolve around the social sciences, those subjects which can accommodate any opinion and about which the most reckless conjecture cannot be discredited.

Education is being redefined at the demand of the uneducated to suit the ideas of the uneducated. The student now goes to college to proclaim rather than to learn. The lessons of the past are ignored and obliterated in a contemporary antagonism known as the generation gap. A spirit of national masochism prevails, encouraged by an effete corps of impudent snobs who characterize themselves as intellectuals.

—*Citizens' Testimonial Dinner,
New Orleans, Oct. 19, 1969*

THERE'S A WIDELY held misconception that I called students "effete snobs." Well, this is ridiculous. This is typical of the tactic the media employ where they strip qualifications from your remarks as they repeat them. I said that some of the demonstrators were encouraged by an effete corps of impudent snobs. And I didn't say that the demonstrators themselves were snobs. But pretty soon it got to be all of them were snobs. And then the next thing I knew, all students were snobs, and then all young people are snobs. And it's pretty hard to cope with that thing when it's picked up and repeated with the qualifications which are, say, stripped away from it. It's what happens today in the media. I can vouch for it.

—*Interview with William H. Buckley Jr.,
WTOP-TV, syndicated Jan. 3, 1970*

A SOCIETY WHICH comes to fear its children is effete. A sniveling, hand-wringing power structure deserves the violent rebellion it encourages. If my generation doesn't stop cringing, yours will inherit a lawless society where emotion and muscle displace reason.

A society which looks calmly into the logic or illogic of its youths' anger and ambition, accepting the rational and rejecting the immature, is alive. Ask yourselves what kind of society you want for tomorrow—tomorrow when you are the establishment.

—*Ohio State University commencement,
Columbus, June 7, 1969*

WHEN I ACCEPTED the invitation to participate this afternoon in the groundbreaking ceremony of a new Service Center of the Internal Revenue Service here in Memphis, a rather chastening thought occurred to me. This evening, it will be my pleasure to speak at a partisan gathering of the political faithful, and see whether we can raise a sizable score for the Republican Party.

The thought that came to me was that here I am, with a reputation as something of a fund raiser, sharing the platform with the greatest fund raiser in the nation, Commissioner of Internal Revenue Randolph W. Thrower. His operation makes me look like an amateur.

—*IRS groundbreaking ceremony, Memphis,
Sept. 22, 1970*

I AM CONVINCED that George Meany is absolutely right when he says that the American working man is the captive of no party. More and more, the American working man is turning away from the people who have sold out his interests; more and more, he is turning to candidates who understand his needs and respect his views.

Never forget this: The only kind of government that works is the kind that respects people who work.

This is the man who has built America—with his heart and his mind and his hands. He is proud of his country. He properly resents seeing it run down by people who have never had to work as hard as he does.

He and his sons have served proudly in our armed services. Many of them have fought, and some have died, in Vietnam. He does not appreciate the suggestion by some senators that this sacrifice be thrown away. He respects the flag.

This forgotten American has strong family ties and keeps faith with his religion. He is fed up with the tired rationales and the general permissiveness that have brought rioting in the streets and on the campuses. He is fed up with watching college buildings destroyed in the name of academic freedom—especially when the wanton destruction drives up the tuition he must scrape to pay.

He does not enjoy being called a bigot for wanting his children to go to a public school in their own neighborhood.

For too long, this American has been for-

gotten—but on this election day the forgotten American won't forget.

—*Michigan Republican dinner, Grand Rapids, Sept. 16, 1970*

ONE REASON the silent majority is so silent is this: They're too busy working to make a lot of noise.

All too often today, we see some young people—by no means all, but some—who take refuge in postgraduate study not to get a better education, not to prepare themselves for productive lives, not even to evade the draft—but to avoid going to work.

We see some welfare rights organizations denouncing our family assistance plan, not because it doesn't help the helpless, but because it requires able-bodied people to go to work.

We see some employees arriving at work in the morning with their minds fixed on the coffee break; we see people starting their careers with one goal in mind—early retirement; we see some union leaders promising their membership a golden era of a 20-hour week.

I submit that the people with a phobia about working are missing one of the great satisfactions of life. The quality of life will not be determined by how much time off we have; it will be determined by the quality of work we do.

—*Order of Ahepa banquet, Washington,
March 9, 1970*

I DO NOT ACCEPT the proposition that every American boy and girl should go to a four-year college. Even now, with nearly 8 million students on the campuses of this country, there are tens of thousands there who did not come for the learning experience and who are restless, purposeless, bored and rebellious. College, at one time considered a privilege, is considered to be a right today—and is valued less because of that. Concentrations of disoriented students create an immense potential for disorder.

—*Iowa Republican fund-raising dinner,
Des Moines, April 13, 1970*

TOO MANY OF US are unwilling to argue a point but are too willing to point at an arguer. Too many of us stand ready to evade a debate by challenging the motives of the debater. Why bother to come to grips with a real issue, they ask, when a straw man of your own offers such an inviting target?

That kind of evasion results in "ricochet rhetoric"—when people do not respond to what is said, but to what other people say you meant. There is nothing wrong with joining an issue, but there is something very definitely wrong in two sides deliberately missing each other's point.

That is why there is so little real communication between those who demonstrate and those who are the targets of demonstration. That is why what should be a "meaningful dialogue" has become all too often a cacophony of meaningless monologues. That refusal to approach an issue with an open mind, that refusal to entertain a spirit of compromise—that is what is building barriers between the young and the not-so-young, between an outspoken minority and a soft-spoken majority. That is the barrier we must begin to dismantle—from both sides.

Freedom of speech is useless without freedom of thought. And I fear that the politics of protest is shutting out the process of thought, so necessary to rational discussion. We are faced with the Ten Commandments of Protest:

Thou Shalt Not Allow Thy Opponent to Speak.

Thou Shalt Not Set Forth a Program of Thine Own.

Thou Shalt Not Trust Anybody Over Thirty.

Thou Shalt Not Honor Thy Father or Thy Mother.

Thou Shalt Not Heed the Lessons of History.

Thou Shalt Not Write Anything Longer Than a Slogan.

Thou Shalt Not Present a Negotiable Demand.

Thou Shalt Not Accept Any Establishment Idea.

Thou Shalt Not Revere Any but Totalitarian Heroes.

Thou Shalt Not Ask Forgiveness for Thy Transgressions, Rather Thou Shalt Demand Amnesty for Them.

—Speech to governors and their families,
Dec. 3, 1969

FOR THE FIRST TIME in history, a great nation is threatened not by those who have nothing—but by those who have almost everything.

—American Retail Federation meeting,
Washington, May 4, 1970

MUCH HAS BEEN MADE of the Nixon administration's attitude toward the Southern states—mostly by the Northeastern liberal community. They've accused us of something, as you heard tonight, they call "The Southern Strategy." We have no Southern strategy. We do have a conviction that the people of the United States, irrespective of their point of geographic residence, have an inherent right to be treated evenhandedly by their government.

For too long the South has been the punching bag for those who characterize themselves as liberal intellectuals. Actually, they are consistently demonstrating the antithesis of intelligence. Their reactions are visceral, not intellectual; and they seem to believe that truth is revealed rather than systematically proved. These arrogant ones and their admirers in the Congress, who reach almost for equal arrogance at times, are bringing this nation to the most important decision it will ever have to make. They are asking us to repudiate principles that have made this country great. Their course is one of applause for our enemies and condemnation for our leaders. Their course is a course that will ultimately weaken and erode the very fiber of America. They have a masochistic compulsion to destroy their country's strength whether or not that strength is exercised constructively. And they rouse themselves into a continual emotional crescendo—substituting disruptive demonstration for reason and precipitate action for persuasion.

—Mississippi Republican Dinner,
Jackson, Oct. 20, 1969

IN WILL ROGERS' observation, what you knew was what you read in the newspaper. Today, for growing millions of Americans, it is what they see and hear on their television sets.

How is this network news determined? A small group of men, numbering perhaps no more than a dozen "anchormen," commentators and executive producers, settle upon 29 minutes or so of film and commentary that is to reach the public.

We cannot measure this power and influence by traditional democratic standards for these men can create national issues overnight. They can make or break—by their coverage and commentary—a moratorium on the war. They can elevate men from local obscurity to national prominence within a week. They can reward some politicians with national exposure and ignore others. For millions of Americans, the network reporter who covers a continuing issue, like ABM or civil rights, becomes, in effect, the presiding judge in a national trial by jury.

It must be recognized that the networks have made important contributions to the national knowledge. Through news, documentaries and specials, they have often used their power constructively and creatively to awaken the public conscience to critical problems.

But it was also the networks that elevated Stokely Carmichael and George Lincoln

Rockwell from obscurity to national prominence . . . nor is their power confined to the substantive.

A raised eyebrow, an inflection of the voice, a caustic remark dropped in the middle of a broadcast can raise doubts in a million minds about the veracity of a public official or the wisdom of a government policy.

I am not asking for government censorship or any other kind of censorship, I am asking whether a form of censorship already exists when the news that 40 million Americans receive each night is determined by a handful of men responsible only to their corporate employers and filtered through a handful of commentators who admit to their own set of biases.

The questions I am raising here tonight should have been raised by others long ago. They should have been raised by those Americans who have traditionally considered the preservation of freedom of speech and freedom of the press their special provinces of responsibility and concern. They should have been raised by those Americans who share the view of the late Justice Learned Hand that "right conclusions are more likely to be gathered out of a multitude of tongues than through any kind of authoritative selection."

—Midwest Regional Republican Committee,
Des Moines, Nov. 13, 1969

MY DIFFERENCES with some of the news media in this country have come not over their right to criticize government or public officials, but my right to criticize them when I think they have been excessive or irresponsible in their criticism. As the news media have often pointed out, I am not really expressing any new thoughts. It's just that most of my predecessors, and many of my colleagues, have found it more comfortable to rock with the criticism than to return it.

I hope that former President Lyndon Johnson will forgive me for disclosing one bit of advice he passed along to me, shortly before I was sworn in as Vice President. I had known him during the preceding two years while I was governor of Maryland and, in the wake of a hard campaign for Vice President, was discussing with him some of the problems that lay ahead with the national press. He sympathized completely but warned

me against "taking on" the press.

"Just remember this," he said, "they come out every day; you don't."

But problems of public officials with the press go back, at least in this country, to the beginnings of the Republic.

In almost any disclosure on journalism or freedom of the press in this country, you will hear quoted these words by Thomas Jefferson, the author of our Declaration of Independence and our third President: "The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

That often-quoted statement by Jefferson was made in 1787 before he became President. Listen to this lesser known observation from midway in his first term in 1803: "Indeed the abuses of the freedom of the press here have been carried to a length never before known or born by any civilized nation."

And four years later, midway through his second term, he said: "Nothing can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper. Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle."

Gentlemen, that disenchanted view of the press by one of the founders of America's freedoms makes my well-publicized rhetoric pale by comparison. I cannot agree that newspapers are that bad.

—*International Federation of Newspaper Publishers, Washington, June 15, 1970*

I BELIEVE it is appropriate before this audience of United States attorneys, who

are appointed by the President as the federal prosecutors and are thus in the vanguard of the war on crime, to focus the spotlight of publicity on some of the "criminal elements" referred to by the President.

Those elements are truly the enemies of our country.

They weaken its moral fiber by purveying illegal drugs and pornography.

They weaken its will by instilling in our citizens a fear of walking the streets at night—a fear of every approaching stranger.

They weaken its governmental structure by corrupting weak public officials and framing others. In one way or another, they affect local political processes.

They weaken its economy by infiltrating legitimate businesses and labor unions, by cheating on taxes and by other frauds.

These then are the enemy:

The organized criminal: the Mafia chief-tain and his henchmen; the labor racketeer, the drug pusher and the smut peddler.

The street criminal: the rapist, the robber and the burglar.

The white collar criminal: the tax cheat, the embezzler, the dishonest repairman, and the dishonest businessman.

Like all who threaten the life and health of this nation, they must be fought with every weapon available and consistent with our Constitution.

—*Annual conference of U.S. attorneys, Washington, June 11, 1970*

THE PROFESSIONAL pessimist has always been with us, and on the great movements of American history, he has always been wrong.

Today, he is out of office and out of sorts. You can find him poring over newspapers with a magnifying glass, eagerly seeking out any evidence to prove his point that America is on her way to perdition. To this man, bad news is good news.

A couple of years ago, he was sitting

pretty. He could point to the steady climbing rise in the cost of living. He could point to high casualties in a war that had no end in sight. He could point to ever-increasing rates of crime, and a government that had lost the confidence of the people.

But ladies and gentlemen, the heyday of the professional pessimist is past. More and more, he is finding it harder to make his case that the United States of America is on its last legs.

Of course, he is in there trying. When wholesale prices drop, he is quick to say it's too soon to establish a firm trend; when the rate of inflation can be shown to have been cut in half, he says that it is still too high.

When he sees the rate of crime's increase dropping for the first time in five years, he can find a particularly lurid crime to show society's decay. When he sees defense plants humming with activity, he denounces the military-industrial complex, and when he sees a defense plant close down as a war comes to an end, he blames the peacemakers for a rise in unemployment.

In the United States today, we have more than our share of the nattering nabobs of negativism. They have formed their own 4-H Club—the "hopeless, hysterical hypochondriacs of history."

—*California Republican State convention, San Diego, Sept. 11, 1970*

WHY IS IT that my phrases are regarded as so inflammatory and intolerant whereas those that are turned against me are excused as perfectly acceptable? Why is it that the string of four-letter epithets that I encounter ever time I run through a bunch of these radically violent people is totally overlooked? Why is it that when a group of students throws bricks at a National Guardsman and break his leg and cut fire hoses and burn down ROTC buildings that this is not mentioned, and yet when I criticize them I am being intolerant? I don't understand that, I really don't.

—*David Frost interview, televised May 13, 1970*

MOST PEOPLE WOULD consider it predictable and rational for a Vice President of the United States to look to his predecessors in that office for enlightenment and guidance. The office itself has been maligned and ridiculed over the years, mainly because its principal constitutional importance is contingent. Yet, the vice presidency has been viable and productive under strong and imaginary Presidents.

Over the period of our history, our Vice Presidents themselves have covered a range from effective to extraneous. Some have slid lazily into the vice presidency as though it were a warm bath, treating it as a well deserved sinecure. Others have sulked and fretted in its ego-starving grasp, feeling pangs akin to unrequited love. Presidential rockets that have fallen slightly short of that target have settled into the placid orbit of the vice presidency, bringing about only dissatisfaction and four years of reflecting on what might have been.

Among my greatest predecessors in this singular office have been some of the greatest men in American history, men who often said things worth remembering. Today the advice of one Texas Vice President sticks in my memory—it was an injunction made four decades ago by Cactus Jack Garner, who said often that there came a time in a public man's life "when you have to give it to 'em with the bark on."

—*Ohio Republican dinner, Cleveland, June 20, 1970*

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IF I AM KNOWN to raise my voice in criticism, it is because I see danger in our nation's course. Because America, like ancient Athens, can become foolish and corrupt; because a life of ease is not synonymous with a life of fulfillment; and because no generation can confer wisdom upon its children. Each generation must work to earn its own.

—Theodore S. Agnew Scholarship Fund
dinner, Baltimore, Dec. 10, 1969

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IN THE PAST SEVERAL months I've been living in purgatory. I have found myself the recipient of undefined, unclear, unattributed accusations that have surfaced in the largest and most widely circulated organs of our communications media.

I want to say at this point clearly and unequivocally: I am innocent of the charges against me.

—National Federation of Republican
Women's convention, Los Angeles,
Sept. 29, 1973