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## "We Love You in America": Spiro Agnew, the Media, and the Building of an Emotional Community

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In late 1969, the Nixon White House realized it had what a reporter later called "pure gold" in their awkward, "suburbanman" Vice President, Spiro Agnew.<sup>1</sup> By using television and print media to attack that same media, Agnew took center stage in what we would call the culture wars of the day. It succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, to the point where the largely unknown former Maryland governor emerged as a folk hero among a bloc of American voters.

Richard Nixon's animosity towards the press is legendary.<sup>2</sup> Heading into the 1956 reelection race, a campaign manager overheard then-Vice President Nixon deliver "a prolonged tirade against the press." It was "genuinely scary . . . the uncapping of a well of deep overwhelming resentment. He was like a caged animal . . . a man profane and insecure who had totally lost whatever control he once had."<sup>3</sup> In *The Atlantic*, David Wise reported how on the night of Nixon's long-awaited presidential triumph in November 1968, a group of campaign advance men gathered to hear the good news. They received congratulations from Nixon aide J. Roy Goodearle, who asked the group, "Why don't we all get a member of the press and beat them up? . . . I'm tired of being nice to them." Joseph Albright of *Newsday* jotted down Goodearle's comment. Another Nixon spokesman "insisted . . . 'it was a joke.' 'Perhaps so,' said Albright, 'but nobody laughed.'"<sup>4</sup>

Agnew's role in the Nixon White House's running battle with the press is not as well-known as Nixon's in large part because Agnew himself has received comparatively little attention from historians.<sup>5</sup> Designated as the point person in the administration's attacks, Agnew played a critical role in building a right-wing, populist base of white working- and middle-class supporters, what Nixon would call "the Silent Majority." To his audience he dutifully defended the Nixon White House's policy positions, but then having done so went straight for their emotions -- in particular their frustrations with, and resentment of, the antiwar movement, the student movement, and the counterculture generally. Agnew also accused the media of making celebrities of activists, hippies, and rock and roll stars. Thus a central part of Agnew's message included criticizing and cultivating mistrust of the media. David Greenberg makes a strong case that George Wallace in his 1964 campaign "more than anyone . . . turned the idea of a liberal media from an ideological belief into a political slogan and rallying cry around the nation." But, Greenberg continues, "Wallace's populism would remain limited so long as its messenger was so strongly linked to white supremacism."<sup>6</sup> Both Nixon and Agnew were smart enough to put at least a little distance between their appeals to white voters and

Wallace's. And since President Nixon sought to stay above the political fray, at least publicly, it ended up being Spiro Agnew who poured much of the emotional content into the Silent Majority identity.

Starting in late 1969, this large bloc of Agnew supporters emerged. Tens of thousands of Americans wrote letters to the Vice President -- and wrote letters-to-the-editor about him -- that shared unabashedly their feelings of anger and resentment of the media and the left and that also spoke of their love, loyalty, and admiration for this now largely forgotten figure. "I have always felt that you were a spokesman for middle America," one wrote, "and without you we have no one."<sup>7</sup> They assured him that there were millions just like them who shared Agnew's feelings and who shared these feelings about Agnew. Helen Hanson described herself as "sixty-five years old and a 'square,'" but she wanted Agnew to know that "there are more of us 'silent Americans' behind you and the President than most people realize...."<sup>8</sup> Even after Agnew's fall from grace with his 1973 resignation, another wrote to "bring you the love and appreciation that fills the heart of this 'silent majority' member."<sup>9</sup>

The consistency and intensity of these expressions of support make the case that something more than politics was at work here. The abundance of letters voicing virtually the same impassioned response to his speeches leads to the conclusion that Agnew created what historians like Barbara Rosenwein call an "emotional community." Rosenwein's work on the Middle Ages itself follows in the wake of Benedict Anderson's 1983 classic *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Anderson argued that members' sense of belonging to a nation was "imagined" since they would "never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them." Yet, he continues, "in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."<sup>10</sup> Rosenwein adds that historians can look to discover "what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they made about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore." She describes the "essentials" of the emotional community as "social groups that adhere to the same valuations of emotions and how they should be expressed" and as "groups of people animated by common or similar interests, values, and emotional styles and valuations."<sup>11</sup>

Using Rosenwein's framework to examine the surprising popularity of Spiro Agnew has particular relevance today. As political analysts try to comprehend the staying power of Donald Trump's support, they would do well to think of his MAGA base as members of an "emotional community" rather than focusing on immigration, anti-abortion judges, China, or opposition to the teaching of critical race theory. Karoline Andrea Ihlebaek and Carina Riborg Holter's examination of what motivates right-wing online commentators, places fear and anger in the "family of 'hostile emotions' together resentment, indignation, contempt, and disgust."<sup>12</sup>

The ideas of "an emotional community" and a "family of 'hostile emotions'" also add a useful dimension to Schlozman and Rosenfeld's "Long New Right" argument regarding the half century-rivalry between populist and Establishment Republicans. The tacticians of the Long New Right focused intently "on a take-no-prisoners mobilization of resentment." Their "pugilistic style" connects Joseph McCarthy's defenders and Barry Goldwater supporters of the 1950s and 1960s, to Pat Buchanan and Newt Gingrich voters and Rush Limbaugh listeners of the 1990s, to Trump's followers today.<sup>13</sup> Scholars also argue that the evolution of a stronger presidency and administrative state left the unintended consequence of "hollowed out" political parties and opened the way for ideologically-driven conservative groups like Young Americans for Freedom and the American Conservative Union to emerge. By the mid-1970s, Sidney Tarrow observes, these organizations had "surrounded the Grand Old Party like besieging troops."<sup>14</sup> In style and temperament, Spiro Agnew's vice presidential career fit the tenor of the "besieging troops" of the Long New Right perfectly. But first he had to catch Richard Nixon's attention.

The 1968 Nixon campaign's use of "controlled television (controlled, that is, by the candidate rather than by the network news department)" was a key factor in his election. "TV," Joe McGinniss writes, "both reflected and contributed to his strength. Because he was winning he looked like a winner on the screen."<sup>15</sup> They staged town hall meetings populated by Republican voters with planted questions, for example, showing Nixon as beloved and armed with clearly thought out answers for every question. These events reflected Nixon speechwriter Ray Price's conclusion that, "It's not what's there that counts, it's what's projected – and carrying it one step further, it's not what *he* projects but rather what the voter receives. It's not the man we have to change, but rather the *received impression*. And this impression often depends more on the medium and its use than it does on the candidate himself."<sup>16</sup> Price's view of the consumer – or voter, that is – was less than flattering, if fairly typical of that era of advertising and consumerism. The voters, he wrote, "are basically lazy, basically uninterested in making an *effort* to understand what we're talking about. . . . The emotions are more easily aroused, closer to the surface, more malleable . . ." So, Price concluded, "get the voters to like the guy and the battle's two-thirds won."<sup>17</sup>

How fitting then that Spiro Agnew first got on to Richard Nixon's radar when loyal aide Pat Buchanan saw Agnew, then governor of Maryland, on television calmly but viciously skewering the leadership of Baltimore's black community in the midst of the unrest following Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination on April 4, 1968. Agnew essentially blamed the city's black community for its own problems, asserting that its leadership had failed to stand up to Black Power radicals advocating for the violence that now had engulfed their neighborhoods.<sup>18</sup> Pundits at the time and historians later would explain Agnew's surprising selection as Nixon's running mate as filling a geographical and

ideological sweet spot between the Northeast and the South, between the moderate and conservative party wings.<sup>19</sup> But Buchanan liked what he saw and heard on television.

In his acceptance speech at the 1968 Republican national convention, Agnew sheepishly acknowledged that he wasn't exactly a household name. And Peter Jenkins may have had a point when he wrote of Agnew in 1972, "the phenomenon is more interesting than the man."<sup>20</sup> But this product of the Baltimore County (MD) suburbs emerged as the walking, talking personification of the Richard Nixon's "silent majority." He was "the commonplace made exceptional, the conventional made controversial" through his surprising rise to power.<sup>21</sup> Agnew served in the Army in World War II and then, like so many others of his generation, moved out to the suburbs, in this case, Lutherville, Maryland. He earned his law degree from the University of Baltimore the hard way, by attending night class. By the mid-1950s, Agnew was practically a poster-boy of the white middle-class Dad, with his stay-at-home wife, Judy, and their four children. He served on the local PTA, played ping-pong with the kids, and loved watching the Baltimore Colts on Sunday. Elected Baltimore County executive in 1962 and Maryland's governor in 1966, his name as well as lack of national recognition in 1968 made him an instant target for jokesters. Erma Bombeck, for instance, included in her column a conversation with her husband who reported hearing of a woman who thought "Spiro Agnew was a fern."<sup>22</sup>

Even before Nixon and Agnew prevailed in the 1968 election, there were clear indications of uneasiness brewing within "middle America." The growing number of stories about "white backlash" in the early to mid-1960s indicates that there was an emotional community ready to be called together by the time Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew ran in 1968. These were people who resisted the civil rights movement, including a growing number of white urban and suburban northerners, who, as Tom Wicker reported, "worry more about Negroes moving into the block, taking over their jobs, and making their streets a battleground."<sup>23</sup> The repeated use of the pronoun "their" is especially revealing in the context of this research. They also resented the growing antiwar movement rising alongside America's deepening involvement in Vietnam beginning in 1965. They grew increasingly defensive of their work-a-day jobs and material comforts in the face of the counterculture's alternative lifestyles. They were taken aback by the outspokenness of their own college-aged kids who seemed to delight in questioning and rejecting everything their parents stood for. And, as David Greenberg has noted, the backlash also took aim at a national media that seemed sympathetic or overly enamored with these agents for change.<sup>24</sup>

Out of this context then, starting in the fall of 1969, Agnew became a rock star in American politics through his speeches – many of them televised, workmanlike in their delivery, but often jarring in their content. What we might normally see as a garden-variety stump speech, televised or not, can also be understood as Agnew creating cherished rituals for his devoted followers, fellow members of the community. They attended his events not simply out of political support for the Republicans, but out of emotional

anticipation of his deeply-satisfying attacks – his greatest hits, so to speak. His list of targets and then his description of them, scratched that itch: it included anti-war protestors and the counterculture, college professors, liberal Democrats, and moderate Republicans. But almost always at the top of Agnew's hit list was the "big-city liberal media."<sup>25</sup> Against these enemies, he called true Americans to gather. As one fan expressed her appreciation of Agnew, "We love you in America."<sup>26</sup> These were not policy speeches: the thousands of letters his supporters wrote describe how good it *felt* to have Agnew on the attack. "I may be a 'nobody' American," wrote another admirer, but Spiro Agnew was fast becoming their champion.<sup>27</sup>

The early newspaper profiles of the newly-inaugurated Vice President Agnew depicted him as an earnest, "normal" fellow. One of his tasks was to "smooth out" federal-state-local relations in terms of executing new federal policies and directives.<sup>28</sup> At his first turn as President of the Senate, Agnew displayed "an essential quality of the Senate newcomer: humility."<sup>29</sup> Perhaps the biggest news of his first month in office was that he was assigned his own plane, an "eight-passenger Jetstar aircraft for use at will." This was a Vice Presidential first and the plane was designated Air Force 2.<sup>30</sup> Other than that, Agnew spent the early months in office performing the traditional vice presidential duties, capturing such riveting headlines as "Agnew Is Busy Welcoming Delegations at 3 Airports" and "Sponge Fishers Hail Agnew."<sup>31</sup> He conceded that the job was, as the *New York Times* put it, "limited."<sup>32</sup>

Gradually a "new" Agnew started to emerge. In mid-July, *New York Times* writer Warren Weaver, Jr. reported that "the intervals between Vice President jokes seem to be growing significantly longer." Now Agnew "seems to be more of a figure in his own right." In a bit of foreshadowing, Weaver noted that Agnew was "shaping up as a widely visible, free-speaking, unabashed spokesman for the Administration."<sup>33</sup>

The manner and context in which Agnew became "widely visible" is the key here. Agnew gave a glimpse of what lay ahead in a commencement day speech in June 1969 at Ohio State University. Against the backdrop of the growing antiwar and student movements, he warned that 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."<sup>34</sup>

Close analysis of these speeches is important since, as Barbara Rosenwein notes, "it is necessary to see how frequently and in what context" an "emotion word" is invoked and "how it is expressed." If these emotion words are repeated, "patterns should emerge – the outlines of an emotional community."<sup>35</sup> Rosenwein adds that "Emotional epithets and characterizations may be used by one group . . . for or against another."<sup>36</sup> Just in the Ohio State speech passage above one finds that effeteness led to fear; sniveling led to violence and rebellion; and cringing encouraged lawlessness. His use of emotionally-charged language did more than disparage: they pointed to an opposition that was

irrational and therefore dangerous since *their* particular emotional state had the power to “displace reason” and possibly lead to rebellion. In building his own “Agnewland” (with apologies to Rick Perlstein), Agnew would hit these same emotional touchpoints repeatedly over the next four years.

By mid-September 1969, the *New York Times* announced that Agnew was “alive and coming out of hiding.”<sup>37</sup> In ways that at times irritated his boss, he made news. He disagreed publicly with Nixon on a plan to limit the tax exemption of municipal bonds. As the titular head of the American space program, Agnew publicly urged that the U.S. go to Mars, a goal he had not bothered to run by Nixon, Congress, or space program officials. Both the President’s and Vice President’s office agreed that Agnew was of more use back on the stump. “Speechmaking and traveling,” John Ehrlichman noted, “were less taxing and more interesting” to the restless Vice President.<sup>38</sup> It was time to fire up Air Force 2.

In what *Time* magazine came to call its “Weekly Agnew Special,” the now-energized Vice President launched into his new assignment.<sup>39</sup> These months of 1969 were indeed a tumultuous time. The antiwar movement and the counterculture were reaching new heights, gathering hundreds of thousands at their giant war Moratorium events in October and November, after gathering together hundreds of thousands at Woodstock that summer. Elsewhere Charles Manson and his maniacal followers went on a murderous rampage in California. The Weather Underground launched their “Days of Rage” in Chicago. And the Vietnam war raged on. The June 27 edition of *Life* magazine ran the pictures of the 242 Americans killed in just one week of the war.<sup>40</sup>

Speaking at a Republican fund-raising dinner in New Orleans on October 20, Agnew tied the antiwar leaders of the Moratorium in with other forces of change working their way through the nation’s universities and popular culture. Enabled and encouraged by a new generation of academics and administrators, the college generation felt justified to merely “proclaim rather than to learn.” And what together the students and their professors seemed to proclaim – over and over – was how awful the United States was. As a result, “A spirit of national masochism prevails, encouraged by an effete corps of impudent snobs who characterize themselves as intellectual.” Compounding their bad judgement was the fact that despite, as young people, they were “at the zenith of physical power and sensitivity,” they instead “overwhelm themselves with drugs and artificial stimulants.”<sup>41</sup> Here, as at Ohio State, Agnew characterized the opposition in emotionally charged terms against which good Americans could come together: those adults giving encouragement to this misguided youth were masochists, effete, impudent, while their over-indulged students loomed, threatening in their physical power and drug-taking. In short, Agnew tied the antiwar movement, campus radicalism, and the counterculture all together into a frightening specter: a generation of drug-gobbling, unpatriotic kids, egged on by their permissive, weak professors.

The New Orleans speech generated support from precisely the kind of people Nixon and Agnew wanted to reach – the middle Americans. Letters to the *Washington*

*Post*, for example, relished this new sharp-edged message and his followers caught on immediately that Agnew was also aiming his criticism at the press and not just the students and their professors. While established newspapers like the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* had tended to treat Agnew as a "national giggle," his supporters asked, in essence, "how do you like him now?"<sup>42</sup>

In addition to echoing the emotionally-laden criticisms of Agnew's targets – weak yet dangerous, unkempt, over-indulged -- his supporters also began to invoke what emotionally-charged characteristics they deemed acceptable. One letter to the *Post* described attending an Agnew event: "I have seen Mr. Agnew in action, and his poise, sincerity, appearance and personality inspire an old-fashioned response – I am proud to be an American." The political implications were clear as these writers insisted that there was indeed a community of Pro-Agnew Americans that was being ignored. As for the *Washington Post*, this writer concluded, "You and others have underestimated the majority, and with Mr. Agnew speaking for us, we are no longer silent. Is this what worries you?" Another wrote that the *Post's* editorials "always seem to uphold the vociferous, regardless of their strength and their causes." But, "[i]f you were as close to the pulse of the great majority as one would expect of the *Post*, you would, for instance, realize that most Americans feel the same way about the so-called mangy peace-at-any-priceniks as Mr. Agnew." Agnew "has spoken for those of us who don't march and demonstrate, who patronize barbers, bathe frequently, and take it for granted that living in this country costs more than just the taxes we pay."<sup>43</sup> Poised, clean, and patriotic, members of Agnew's emotional community stood, in their minds, in stark contrast to the mangy appeasers – and, they were certain, "most Americans feel the same way."

Between his speeches and these letters to the editor, a kind of right-wing, populist call and response was emerging through the media between Agnew and his base. What got volleyed back and forth were not the political disagreements they had with those on the left; it was that Agnew and his base loathed the left. Agnew's address ten days later in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, was in some ways even more provocative. "I triggered a holy war," he gloated. "I have no regrets. I do not intend to repudiate my beliefs, recant my words, or run and hide." "We have," he continued, "among us a glib, activist element who would tell us our values are lies and I call them impudent. . . . I call them snobs for most of them disdain to mingle with the masses who work for a living." The "mature and sensitive people of this country must realize that their freedom of protest is being exploited by avowed anarchists and Communists who detest everything about this country and want to destroy it." Better therefore not to engage with them at all, Agnew proclaimed. Instead, he continued ominously, "We can . . . afford to separate them from our society – with no more regret than we should feel over discarding rotten apples from a barrel."<sup>44</sup> Agnew upped the rhetorical stakes again here, adding starkly drawn borders between his community and those who threatened it. Since his work was "holy," one could not possibly consider regrets or backing down.



Agnew's "rotten apples" speech was overshadowed for the moment by President Nixon's televised address on Vietnam on November 3. Nixon invested heavily in his "Vietnamization" speech in which he effectively gave the South Vietnamese notice that they would need to stiffen their efforts against the North and the National Liberation Front as the U.S. began a gradual troop withdrawal. In the speech, Nixon also famously called on what he dubbed "the Silent Majority" to step forward and be heard.

When Nixon became infuriated by some of the post-speech television analysis, aide Pat Buchanan sensed an opportunity for Agnew to take on an old enemy – the press -- on behalf of his boss. Buchanan, ever alert to the fighting side of the President, recommended that the White House hit back at the television commentators themselves – and by doing so raise doubts about the objectivity of the media itself. In a memo to Nixon, Buchanan suggested a "three-week offensive on this one subject" of media objectivity, or the lack of it. If memos can include a hint of glee, this one did: "the result will be to terrify the networks; and to discredit their reporting in the minds of millions of people." To kick things off, they would take advantage of the hot streak Agnew was on to deliver a major address challenging the still-new practice of network political commentary. Nixon loved it. Bob Haldeman relayed the good news back to Buchanan, using the White House short hand for the President: "Pat, let's go! P is all for it." Not only was Nixon "all for it," he helped draft the speech, at one point chuckling, "This really flicks the scab off, doesn't it?" Agnew then added his own touches, later describing his work on the speech as "a labor of love."<sup>45</sup>

The resulting "Des Moines speech" of November 13, 1969, secured Agnew's place as a household name. Speaking to "whoops and applause" from his live audience, and before a nationalized television audience – free publicity offered by the media industry he was about to attack – Agnew pinned his remarks to the television commentary that followed President Nixon's November 3 speech.<sup>46</sup> The audience for the President's painstakingly prepared remarks were then "inherited by a small band of network commentators and self-appointed analysts, the majority of whom expressed in one way or another their hostility to what he had to say." Even though, as Haldeman's diary indicated, the analyses were "mixed,"<sup>47</sup> Agnew complained that it was "obvious that their minds had been made up in advance." It wasn't just what these commentators said either. It was "the expressions on their faces, the tone of their questions, and the sarcasm of their responses" that "made clear their sharp disapproval."<sup>48</sup>

And who were "they" exactly? Here Agnew broadened his attack to the television news industry itself. He noted how "no medium has a more profound influence over public opinion." And yet "Nowhere in our system are there fewer checks on such vast power." As a result, a "little group of men" wielded an outsized influence over the news itself. They constituted a "tiny and closed fraternity of privileged men, elected by no one." What's more, said this champion of middle America speaking from the Heartland itself, they were urbane Easterners: "to a man, these commentators and producers live and work in the . .

. intellectual confines of Washington, D. C. or New York City." By virtue of their class and geography, Agnew could barely count them as Americans at all: the "views of this fraternity do not represent the views of America."<sup>49</sup>

The speech hit the bullseye. Nixon, Buchanan, and Agnew were delighted with the howls from those wounded by the Vice President's remarks. Former Kennedy press secretary Pierre Salinger, for example, called it "one of the most dangerous speeches ever given by a high public official." Buchanan recalled later how the next day, a grinning Agnew approached him aboard Air Force Two, stuck out his hand, and exclaimed, "Gangbusters!"<sup>50</sup>

Agnew's speech prompted "bitterness and bafflement" among network leaders. Leslie Midgely, an executive producer of CBS Evening News, responded that "With all respect, Mr. Agnew doesn't know a thing about television journalism." ABC News president Elmer Lowrer first explained that "I have no ax to grind, I'm a political independent." He then added, "What Agnew doesn't understand is that we're really a group operation," rather than the tightly-knit cabal that the Vice President described. And Wallace Westfeldt, an executive producer at NBC's *Huntley-Brinkley Report*, likewise explained that "Everything involves a group decision in which assistant producers, reporters and Huntley and Brinkley themselves take part. There is no such thing as NBC olicity, no dogma, no formula."<sup>51</sup>

But while on the surface Agnew's Des Moines speech seemed to fit a long tradition of political leaders complaining about the press, some understood instantly that the entire industry had just been attacked. Whereas the immediate reaction among network officials often sought to explain how the Vice President simply did not understand the production of television news, others grasped that Agnew likely did not care to learn. One unnamed network official confessed to *Washington Post* reporter Karl E. Meyer, "I could not sleep all night because of the Vice President's speech. I kept worrying that it might be another Wheeling," in reference to the 1950 speech that launched Joseph McCarthy's career.<sup>52</sup> Richard Wilson, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for the *Des Moines Register*, who was well-sourced within the Nixon White House, astutely described Agnew's comments as "bold and calculated" and predicting "there will be results."<sup>53</sup> CBS commentator Eric Sevareid also interpreted its intent correctly: it was, he said, "an attempt to intimidate the broadcast media."<sup>54</sup> In 1971, the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights held hearings on the freedom of the press which included current and former industry leaders. NBC news anchor David Brinkley testified that the negative feedback he received from viewers had not changed much: "In the mail, people who are angry at us still say precisely the same things they were saying before, but now they almost invariably add one more line at the bottom of the letters: 'Agnew was right.'"<sup>55</sup> (At least one close student of the press, Ben Bagdikian, a former assistant managing editor at *The Washington Post*, writing in 1973 for the *Columbia Journalism Review*, concluded that the Nixon-Agnew attack on the press achieved its objective: "A sample study of leading

papers and network specials during the presidential campaign makes it clear that the Nixon Administration's three-year war against the news media has succeeded. There has been a retrogression in printing newsworthy information that is critical of the Administration and a notable decline in investigation of apparent wrongdoing when it is likely to anger or embarrass the White House."<sup>56</sup>)

By now members of Agnew's emotional community knew exactly how to respond. A writer to the *Washington Post* clucked with satisfaction: "The response of the major networks to Agnew's speech sound like the whimperings of a spoiled child after a long overdue spanking."<sup>57</sup> One writer to the *Bluefield (WV) Daily Telegraph* celebrated Agnew's speech and Agnew himself: "Without political fear, with the guts that made us a great nation, and with professionalism unsurpassed, one man, namely Spiro Agnew, stood unafraid" and delivered. "Let us all, that are free thinking, freedom loving people, pray that Spiro continues to strike again, again, and again."<sup>58</sup> And an Iowan wrote how, "A great sense of relief was felt among the overwhelming majority of the people of our nation as we realized our own feelings about national television news coverage were being conveyed to the world." Agnew had "put into words, the thoughts and feelings that have long tormented the minds and hearts of the vast majority of the people of our nation."<sup>59</sup> While Agnew was ostensibly making a point about the television news industry, their emotions leap off the pages of his defenders' letters. The emotions range from being "tormented" by the liberal bias to the "great sense of relief" that Agnew had spoken up on their behalf. The letters called for guts, courage, and fearlessness against enemies who needed to be spanked or struck "again, again, and again."

One week later in Montgomery, Alabama, Agnew added attacks on print journalism as well, identifying the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* specifically. Of the *Times*, Agnew pointed out that when "300 Congressmen and 59 Senators signed a letter endorsing the President's policy in Vietnam, it was news – and it was big news." But "the next morning *The New York Times*, which considers itself America's paper of record, did not carry a word. Why? Why?" Agnew then speculated that if a "theology student in Iowa should get up at a P.T.A. luncheon in Sioux City and attack the President's Vietnam policy, my guess is that you'd probably find it reported somewhere in the next morning's issue of *The New York Times*."<sup>60</sup>

After then reading through several of the criticisms he received following his Des Moines speech – "classic examples of overreaction" – he quipped, "And they say I have a thin skin." Agnew's little joke there speaks volumes since it helped him again frame which emotions were acceptable and which were not. His elite critics, by accusing him of having "thin skin" were essentially saying he was being too emotional, maybe even irrational. His quick, clever pushback reminded his audience that it was their enemies who were overly emotional and irrational – they were the ones guilty of "overreaction."<sup>61</sup>

Agnew now had a self-generating line of attack: use the press to accuse the press of liberal bias, wait for the press to defend itself by criticizing him, and then complain

about the criticism, earning sympathy and support from his followers. It was a cleverly-built, self-propelling grievance machine. In the meantime, Agnew practically crowed: "The day when the network commentators and even the gentlemen of the New York Times enjoyed a form of diplomatic immunity from comment and criticism of what they said is over. Yes, gentlemen, that day is passed."<sup>62</sup>

His popularity soared heading into 1970. A Gallup poll slotted him as the third most respected man in the country in 1969 (behind President Nixon and Billy Graham) and an AP story looking back at 1970 concluded that "Few commanded as much page-one attention as Vice President Spiro Agnew."<sup>63</sup> *Life* magazine put him on the cover twice in 1970, once under the headline, "Stern Voice of the Silent Majority: Spiro Agnew Knows Best."<sup>64</sup> Hugh Sidey, a widely read political journalist with *Time*, observed astutely that Agnew was "a political phenomenon unknown in our history" because he had "built a constituency that goes beyond that of the President. In some instances, it is far more dedicated." A dedicated constituency – a community, in other words. Sidey added insightfully that Agnew's popularity was "a creation of his own unusual personality and the very electronics he periodically denounces."<sup>65</sup>

On May 4, 1970, Agnew returned to his usual themes while speaking at the American Retail Federation meeting in Washington, D.C., a small-business-oriented, Silent Majority organization if ever there was one. Agnew again defined and attacked "the elite" as those "found in every segment of society that helps to form . . . opinions . . . in the universities, the media, in government, in the professions." They were, he added, often those "born on the social ladder" and "formally educated." They were the ones who permitted the "paranoids" on campus. They were the ones who were "willing to believe that the criminal who throws a bomb at a bank is a hero and the policeman who gets killed trying to stop him is a pig." As a result, Agnew concluded, it was no wonder that "we have traitors and thieves and perverts and irrational and illogical people in our midst."<sup>66</sup> This lineup of emotionally charged characterizations had now become part of his set-list. Weak, entitled members of the elite had unleashed a life-threatening pestilence upon the rest of the nation. His community had to band together to protect itself and by extension, the nation.

May 4 of course was also the day of the horrendous shooting of the students in response to antiwar unrest at Kent State. An alarmed President Nixon quickly sought feedback on just how implicated his Vice President's pot-stirring had been in the violence against student activists. Members of his own administration, as well as a gathering of university presidents, all pointed to Agnew's speeches as having played a central role in creating the tense climate on college campuses that Spring. Nixon then attempted to rein in his Vice President. Bob Haldeman's diary recorded that, "Nixon wants VP to stop saying anything about students... Vice President disagrees. . . . The whole university community is now politicized, and there's no way to turn it off. All blame Agnew primarily."<sup>67</sup>

But Agnew by then had ample evidence -- thousands of letters -- that his supporters loved his speeches exactly *because* of their provocations and the emotional satisfaction they provided. Both critics and admirers saw clearly how Agnew had been instrumental in creating a "national mood" and a "public attitude" among millions of Americans who loved the attacks on the press and who did not lose a moment's sleep over the cold-blooded killing of four students on a college campus.<sup>68</sup> The novelist James Michener was shocked when he traveled to Ohio following the shootings. He read an interview in an Akron paper in which the interviewee confessed, "Frankly, if I'd been faced with the same situation and a submachine gun, there would not have been fourteen shot, there would have been 140 of them dead, and that's what they need." One Kent State professor, identified as a "soft-spoken conservative" no less, was told the "only mistake they made was not to shoot all the students and then start in on the faculty."<sup>69</sup> For Agnew's supporters then, now was not the time for their hero to go quiet since, as one writer to the *Baltimore Sun* wrote, "The bleeding hearts are having a field day over the recent tragedy at Kent State."<sup>70</sup>

Indeed, shortly after the Kent State shootings, Agnew prepared to go back on the attack. Less than two weeks later, Agnew wrote a memo to his chief of staff Art Sohmer outlining his midterm campaign strategy. Significantly, the opposition research Agnew wanted his staff to conduct was not of the Democrats, it was of the media. "We should go right to the jugular, which is an exposé of how frequently the media have been wrong in the past and how frequently true national leadership in the face of initial unpopularity has proven to be the right course." Agnew wanted "two full-time people immediately assigned to research. . . . They need to go back through the files of the New York Times, the Washington Post, Time Magazine, Newsweek and other liberal newspapers and media" and find "anything that can be gleaned from the wealth of material that proves that these rags are more often wrong than right in the long run."<sup>71</sup> Writing with the self-awareness that he was now a media figure who could use the media to attack the media, he continued: "What I say can make a substantial difference because it will be widely publicized. The people of the United States need to be made aware of the fallibility, the weakness and the utter futility of the masochistic frenzy that seems to be sweeping certain parts of the Establishment." "This assignment," he concluded, "is A-1 priority."<sup>72</sup>

Just as the memo to Sohmer indicates, Agnew had no intention of backing down. This became evident to those reporters who covered the Vice President. On May 17, John Carroll of the *Baltimore Sun* reported that "it was clear that whatever stresses and self-doubts...had passed." Carroll added, "...no one will be surprised when he comes back with another of his 'stem-winders,' as he likes to call his tough speeches. In political terms, Mr. Agnew is pure gold."<sup>73</sup>

The outlines of Agnew's emotional community were clear by mid-1970. It was an anti-liberal, anti-elite (as defined by Agnew) populist community bound together by an emotional commitment to toughness, patriotism, loyalty, faith. Their enemies were

similarly defined in emotionally charged terms: weak, effete, irrational, snobs, unclean, over-indulged, dangerous.<sup>74</sup> Community members were also becoming increasingly convinced that the survival of the nation was threatened by those whose emotions had led to irrationalism, violence, and political subversion. Some within the White House were, too. In a memo to Nixon, Pat Buchanan concluded, "we are an army under fire now." He added, "I see us as under very real attack from our enemies within the society, who have many powerful and influential weapons." They needed to be engaged in "heated political warfare" by "stirring the fires and passions often." They were "in a contest over the soul of the country now . . . it will be their kind of society or ours; we will prevail or they shall prevail."<sup>75</sup> With eyes on the 1972 campaign already, a bunker mentality started to set in. Buchanan's framing of the stakes reflected the victory-at-all-costs attitude that led to the dirty tricks campaign and eventually the Watergate break-in.

The Nixon-Agnew team eventually breezed to reelection over George McGovern and Sargent Shriver. Peter Jenkins' observation of an Agnew campaign stop late in the 1972 race reveals the rightward shift taking place within the GOP. The Vice President's appearance at an Orange County, California, event "had the air of an ultrapatriotic cult given the worship of the stars." In addition to Agnew, the stars included "the Hollywood Republicans...from John Wayne downwards. There were footballers and swimmers and racing car drivers." Flags waved, martial bands played, and "Spiro is our hero" placards were in abundance. Reverend Robert Shuller, in the early years of his long career as a conservative Christian evangelist and host of the *Hour of Power*, thanked God in very specific terms: "for our leaders, our President, and those all around him, who have the wisdom to know how to reduce unnecessary expenditures of funds without weakening our national defense." Jenkins concluded: "Spiro T. Agnew, the unknown Greek of 1968, is, in 1972, the darling of the Republican party....What more could a Vice President have going for him than that?"<sup>76</sup> An April 1973 Gallup poll had Agnew as the leading GOP candidate for 1976 with a solid fifteen-point lead over Ronald Reagan.<sup>77</sup> *Life* magazine ran an article entitled "Agnew Sitting Pretty" – and so it seemed.<sup>78</sup>

But in 1973, while the country gradually learned about the growing Watergate scandal, a separate federal investigation began to encircle Agnew regarding a bribery scheme from his days in Maryland politics. His followers rallied around the conviction that the enemies he had warned them about – the press especially -- had launched a "Get Agnew" movement against their hero. Speaking in Los Angeles before the National Federation of Republican Women, Agnew on September 29, 1973, gave a full-throated defense of his innocence before an adoring, raucous crowd of supporters. Rumors swirled that Agnew would be indicted, impeached, or forced to resign. But in this packed auditorium, emotions ran high as the women "yelled their approval of Agnew" and "stood on tables to cheer." They waved their scarves and held up signs proclaiming "Spiro My Hero" and "Agnew For President." His remarks at times were "drowned out by applause and cries of 'Right on.'" He concluded "above the din" that he had never "used my office

nor abused my public trust as county executive, as governor or as Vice President." Over the roar Agnew proclaimed defiantly, "I will not resign if indicted."<sup>79</sup>

Agnew accused federal investigators of colluding with the press to bring him down. Information from the investigation was indeed finding its way into newspapers. As a result, Agnew claimed that he was not afforded the same chance to clear his name because, thanks to the insiders and their accomplices in the media, his case had turned into a "cruel form of kangaroo trial in the media." "The well has been most successfully poisoned," he complained. Agnew was the victim here, not the culprit. He was "the recipient of undefined, unclear and unattributed accusations" that showed up where? "In the largest and most widely circulated organs of our communications media."<sup>80</sup>

An avalanche of letters to his office during these weeks repeated Agnew's charge with utter emotional conviction that the media was out to "get" him. "Keep giving those damn reporters hell," urged a Gary, Indiana, woman.<sup>81</sup> "Apparently," wrote a married couple, reaching back to the Des Moines speech, "you committed the unpardonable political sin when you took on the TV and finally the news media generally by exposing and criticizing their strong leftist bias several years ago."<sup>82</sup> Ed Boyd of Merritt Island, Florida, begged Agnew: "DON'T RESIGN." There are "millions of Americans, I am sure, that stand behind you and resent this concerted and well organized attempt by the entire communications media to force you out." "Millions of Americans," Boyd continued, "hav'nt [sic] forgotten that you are the first prominent politician to come along and tell us the facts about our lying and well-orchestrated propagandizing media."<sup>83</sup> An Army chaplain wrote of his admiration "for you in your battle against the communist-controlled news-media."<sup>84</sup> From Glenshaw, Pennsylvania, a woman encouraged Agnew: "I hope you shut up the Washington Post for good."<sup>85</sup>

Agnew's base believed that since the media was out to "get" him, they now had permission to reject the facts presented by that same media. One of the many letters typical of this view acknowledged the bad news swirling around Agnew, but insisted nonetheless that "I can honestly say, that I have not believed a word. The news media and critics have pounced on every inference that was breathed by any individual [and] have tried to make these allegations appear as facts. . . . The news media gobbles it all up like a bunch of hungry vultures and then spits it back on vulnerable Americans. I for one won't swallow it."<sup>86</sup>

The facts finally won out, however. Agnew resigned the Vice Presidency and pled *nolo contendere* to one charge of tax evasion on October 10, 1973. He was fined \$10,000 and given three years' probation, but served no jail time. The prosecution then published the 40-page case against Agnew that went into lengthy detail on how the bribery scheme had worked over the years from his position as the Baltimore County Executive, to his term as Maryland's governor, and then finally as contractors drove down the Baltimore-Washington Parkway to pay off the Vice President of the United States. It was a tawdry,

clownish scheme with code words used to communicate about the next round of payments. Had he not pled, he was looking at significant jail time.

Yet his supporters stood firmly by him; even after pled and resigned, Agnew's legions continued to blame the press. Mrs. Richard Damaske concluded angrily that the "Get Agnew' Conspiracy" had "won again!" The "Liberal and Biased News Media" and the "Angelic Democrat & liberals" had hit their target in Agnew.<sup>87</sup> A *New Yorker* wrote that he was "saddened and sickened by the fact that the same liberal cabal that you denounced in your Des Moines speech, was the same phalanx that conspired against you."<sup>88</sup> The fact-denying also continued. One woman wrote that "My husband and I want you to know that we don't believe a word that has been said or printed about you. . . . Something should be done about the Press – they tried and convicted you. Of course most of them are liberals."<sup>89</sup>

Agnew's community wanted him to know of their continued emotional attachment to him personally. Sally S. Monroe of Frankfort, Kentucky, wrote that "When I heard of your resignation . . . I felt that I had lost a very dear friend. As Vice President, it seemed that you were a close friend as I campaigned for you here in my community." She continued, "You were not afraid to speak out and say what was right. You were not afraid to stand up to the rioters and protesters . . . . You were not afraid to speak out on the terrible injustice the news media is doing . . . . Mr. Agnew, you were loved because you were not afraid."<sup>90</sup> Mrs. W. T. Douthwaite also took Agnew's resignation hard. "Words cannot adequately express the deep sorrow felt by us all for the loss of our great leader," she began, "Our courageous Vice President . . . . Who singularly stood up to the illicit media, the radicals, the partisan fame seekers, and was the eloquent voice of the people."<sup>91</sup> Mrs. C.H. Rutledge spoke of the "millions of Americans, nobodys [sic] like me, who know you have been the only person who spoke for us & said what needed to be said to counter what those who would destroy our country have been saying."<sup>92</sup> And even as Agnew was staring down his legal troubles that September, Ira E. Blackwood of Harrison, Arkansas, made it clear that "Nobody, and by God, I mean nobody, has the right to tell the Vice President that he must resign . . . . I say to you that anyone who so suggests should be told to go straight to hell. And let that be the final word."<sup>93</sup>

"Go straight to hell" are indeed fitting final words for the core of what motivated those to join Agnew's emotional community. The sneer captures the "pugilistic style" Schlozman and Rosenfeld identify as a key to the Long New Right's ascendance. Agnew's attacks on and through the media functioned as the rhetorical infrastructure that helped bring this emotional community together in self-defense, they believed, against its and the nation's enemies. During his years as Vice President, other than his unflinching support for the war in Vietnam, most Americans would have been hard-pressed to identify another important policy position that Agnew stood for. But, for or against him, everyone knew how they felt about Agnew -- and how he felt about them.



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The "pure gold" quote is from "'It'll Play in Peoria,' Thinks a cigar-smoking President," *Baltimore Sun*, May 17, 1970. The "suburbanman" quote is found in "Nation: Spiro Agnew: The King's Taster," *Time*, November 14, 1969.

<sup>2</sup> Most recently, John Cressman's excellent article "Agnew, ABC, and Richard Nixon's War On Television," in *Journalism History* vol. 47, no. 1 (March 2021): 27-53, reviews much of the relevant secondary source on the relationship between Nixon, Agnew, and the press as does Christopher Cimaglio's "'A Tiny and Closed Fraternity of Privileged Men': The Nixon-Agnew Antimedia Campaign and the Liberal Roots of the U.S. Conservative 'Liberal Media' Critique," *International Journal of Communication*, 10 (2016), 1-19. See also Nicole Hemmer, *Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2016); David Greenberg, *Republic of Spin: An Inside History of the American Presidency* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2016); Christopher F. Karpowitz, "What Can a President Learn from the News Media? The Instructive Case of Richard Nixon," *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39, No.4 (October 2002): 755-780. The number of Nixon biographies continues to grow. Of the more recent, see Michael Dobbs' *King Richard: Nixon and Watergate – An American Tragedy* (2021) and John Farrell's *Richard Nixon: The Life* (2017). David Greenberg identifies George Wallace's attacks on the "liberal, left-wing press" in his 1964 presidential campaign as a crucial moment in the rise of anti-media populism. See David Greenberg, "The Idea of 'the Liberal Media' and its Roots in the Civil Rights Movement," *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture*, 1:2 (December 2008): 179.

<sup>3</sup> Halberstam, *The Powers That Be*, (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, 2012), 465.

<sup>4</sup> David Wise, "The President and the Press," *The Atlantic*, April 1973.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1973/04/the-president-and-the-press/305573/>. Accessed July 13, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> I am co-author of a book that looks at Agnew's political legacy. See Charles Holden, Zach Messitte, and Jerald Podair, *Republican Populist: Spiro Agnew and the Origins of Donald Trump's America* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019). See also Justin Coffey, *Spiro Agnew and the Rise of the Republican Right* (Santa Barbara, CA. and Denver, CO.: Praeger, 2015); Jules Witcover, *White Knight: The Rise of Spiro Agnew* (New York: Random House, 1972); Richard Cohen and Jules Witcover, *A Heartbeat Away: The Investigation and Resignation of Vice President Spiro T. Agnew* (New York: Viking Press, 1973); Peter B. Levy, "Spiro Agnew, the Forgotten Americans, and the Rise of the New Right," *The Historian*, vol. 75, No. 4 (Winter 2013): 707-739.

<sup>6</sup> Greenberg, "The Idea of the Liberal Media," 180.

<sup>7</sup> Eloise M. Boyd to Spiro Agnew, October 11, 1973, Spiro T. Agnew Papers, Series 3, Subset 3, Box 6, Folder 1, October 11. (Unless indicated otherwise, all correspondence herein is from the Spiro T. Agnew Papers in the Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland. Citations will refer to Agnew Papers.)

<sup>8</sup> Helen Hanson to Spiro Agnew, October 10, 1973, Agnew Papers.

<sup>9</sup> Nancy Catalano to Spiro Agnew, October 18, 1973, Agnew Papers.

<sup>10</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London and New York: Verso, 2016), 6

<sup>11</sup> Jan Plamper, "The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns," *History and Theory* 49 (May 2010): 252-253. See also, Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions," *Passions in Context: Journal of the History and Philosophy of Emotions* 1,1 (2010). <https://alioshabielenberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Rosenwein-2010-Problems-and-Methods-in-the-History-of-Emotions.pdf>. Accessed July 12, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Karoline Andrea Ihlebaek and Carina Riborg Holter, "Hostile Emotions: An Exploratory Study of Far-right Online Commenters and their Emotional Connection to Traditional and Alternative News Media," *Journalism*, vol. 22, no. 5 (2021): 1207-1222.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Schlozman and Sam Rosenfeld, "The Long New Right and the World It Made," presented at the American Political Science Association meeting, Boston, MA, August 31, 2018, 3-4. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/540f1546e4b0ca60699c8f73/t/5c3e694321c67c3d28e992ba/1547594053027/Long+New+Right+Jan+2019.pdf>. Accessed July 25, 2022. See also Sidney Tarrow, *Movements and Parties: Critical Connections in American Political Development* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 135-147.

<sup>14</sup> Tarrow, *Movements and Parties*, 128.

<sup>15</sup> Joe McGinniss, *The Selling of the President* (New York: Penguin Books edition, 1988), 39.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>18</sup> "Agnew Insults Leaders," Baltimore *Afro-American*, April 13, 1968.

<sup>19</sup> See for example, Evan Thomas, *Being Nixon: A Man Divided* (New York: Random House, 2015), 162; John Farrell, *Richard Nixon: The Life* (New York: Doubleday, 2017), 333.

<sup>20</sup> "Agnew is the Common Man Made Exceptional," *New York Times*, October 29, 1972.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> "Trivia: Pro and Con," *The Pocono Record*, December 4, 1968.

<sup>23</sup> Tom Wicker, "Is the Backlash Here at Last?" *New York Times*, September 6, 1966. See also Michael W. Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Greenberg, "The Idea of the Liberal Media, 178-179.

<sup>25</sup> "Agnew Tells Why He Says What He Says," *U.S. News and World Report*, November 17, 1969.

<sup>26</sup> Phyllis N. Williams to Spiro Agnew, October 19, 1973, Agnew Papers.

- <sup>27</sup> David J. Jenkins to Spiro Agnew, September 29, 1973, Agnew Papers.
- <sup>28</sup> "A Task For Agnew Detailed By Nixon," *New York Times*, January 18, 1969.
- <sup>29</sup> "Agnew Has Debut In Presiding Post As Senate Meets," *New York Times*, January 22, 1969.
- <sup>30</sup> "Agnew Gets His Own Plane, Jetstar Called Air Force 2," *New York Times*, February 4, 1969.
- <sup>31</sup> "Agnew Is Busy Welcoming Delegations at 3 Airports," *New York Times*, April 1, 1969; "Sponge Fishers Hail Agnew," *New York Times*, June 18, 1969.
- <sup>32</sup> "Agnew Finds He's Limited," *New York Times*, April 9, 1969.
- <sup>33</sup> "Agnew: He's Beginning to Emerge as a Figure in His Own Right," *New York Times*, July 13, 1969.
- <sup>34</sup> "What Vice President Agnew told Ohio State graduates in his 1969 commencement address," <https://www.cleveland.com/metro/2013/05/what-vice-president-agnew-told.html>. Accessed June 30, 2022.
- <sup>35</sup> Plamper, "The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns," 253.
- <sup>36</sup> Rosenwein, "Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions," 13. <https://alioshabielenberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Rosenwein-2010-Problems-and-Methods-in-the-History-of-Emotions.pdf>. Accessed July 12, 2022.
- <sup>37</sup> "Agnew: Finding a New Way To Be a Household Word," *New York Times*, September 14, 1969.
- <sup>38</sup> John Ehrlichman, *Witness to Power: The Nixon Years* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 146.
- <sup>39</sup> "The Press: The Weekly Agnew Special," *Time*, November 28, 1969.
- <sup>40</sup> "One Week's Dead," *Life*, June 27, 1969.
- <sup>41</sup> "Agnew Says 'Effete Snobs' Incited War Moratorium," *New York Times*, October 20, 1969.
- <sup>42</sup> "Mr. Agnew: No Longer a Laughing Matter," *Washington Post*, October 21, 1969.
- <sup>43</sup> "Letters to the Editor: More on the Vice President's Remarks," *Washington Post*, October 26, 1969.
- <sup>44</sup> "Agnew Castigates 'Hate Merchants,'" *Washington Post*, October 31, 1969.
- <sup>45</sup> Holden, Messitte, and Podair, *Republican Populist: Spiro Agnew and the Origins of Donald Trump's America*, 109-111.
- <sup>46</sup> "Agnew Lashes TV Newsmen, Calls for Greater Objectivity," *Washington Post*, November 14, 1969.
- <sup>47</sup> Haldeman, H. R. *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House* (New York: Putnam's, 1994), 159.

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/spiroagnewtvnewscoverage.htm>. Accessed May 25, 2022.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Pat Buchanan, *Nixon's White House*, 74.

<sup>51</sup> "TV's 'Tiny, Closed Fraternity,' Baffled by Agnew Broadside," *Washington Post*, November 15, 1969.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Richard Wilson, "Sees Changes in TV After Agnew Blast," *Des Moines Register*, November 20, 1969.

<sup>54</sup> "Public Backs Agnew Blast At Networks," *Washington Post*, November 15, 1969.

<sup>55</sup> *Freedom of the Press: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 92<sup>nd</sup> Congress, First and Second Sessions* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1972), 320.

<sup>56</sup> Ben H. Bagdikian, "The Fruits of Agnewism," *Columbia Journalism Review* (January/February 1973), 9.

<sup>57</sup> "Letters to the Editor: On Vice President Agnew and Television Networks, Press," *Washington Post*, November 24, 1969.

<sup>58</sup> "Spiro Agnew is Urged to Strike Again," *Bluefield (WV) Daily Telegraph*, November 16, 1969.

<sup>59</sup> "Majority for Agnew," *Burlington (IA) Hawk-Eye*, November 20, 1969.

<sup>60</sup> "Transcript of Address by Agnew Extending Criticism of News Coverage to Press," *New York Times*, November 21, 1969.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> "Spiro Agnew Probably Top Personality of '70," *Great Bend (KS) Daily Tribune*, January 1, 1971.

<sup>64</sup> *Life*, May 8, 1970.

<sup>65</sup> Hugh Sidey, "Here comes the 'Aggernaut,'" *Life*, August 28, 1970.

<sup>66</sup> "Agnew Excoriates 'Elitists' Who Undermine 'Optimism,'" *Washington Post*, May 5, 1970; "Nixon Says Violence Incites Tragedy," *New York Times*, May 5, 1970.

<sup>67</sup> Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, 161-162.

<sup>68</sup> "Letters to the Editor," *Scarsdale Inquirer*, May 7, 1970.

<sup>69</sup> James Michener, *Kent State: What Happened and Why* (New York: Random House, 1971), 441-447.

<sup>70</sup> "Bleeding Hearts," *Baltimore Sun*, May 12, 1970.

<sup>71</sup> Spiro Agnew to Arthur J. Sohmer, May 16, 1970, Agnew Papers.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> "'It'll Play in Peoria,' Thinks a Cigar-smoking President," *Baltimore Sun*, May 17, 1970.

<sup>74</sup> Agnew's speeches in which he criticized the "nattering nabobs of negativism" and the "hopeless, hysterical hypochondriacs of history" were still in the future at this point.

<sup>75</sup> Pat Buchanan, "Media Memorandum For The President," May 21, 1970, Agnew Papers.

<sup>76</sup> "Agnew is the Common Man Made Exceptional," *New York Times*, October 29, 1972.

<sup>77</sup> "Gallup Poll Reports Kennedy Leading Agnew in Popularity," *New York Times*, April 30, 1973.

<sup>78</sup> David Maxey, "Agnew Sitting Pretty," *Life*, October 27, 1972.

<sup>79</sup> "Agnew Declares He Won't Resign Even If Indicted," *Washington Post*, September 30, 1973.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Dorothy DeVault to Spiro Agnew, September 23, 1973, Agnew Papers.

<sup>82</sup> Richard and Blanch to Spiro Agnew, September 29, 1973, Agnew Papers.

<sup>83</sup> Ed Boyd to Spiro Agnew, September 24, 1973, Agnew Papers.

<sup>84</sup> Clifford C. Cartee to Spiro Agnew, September 29, 1973, Agnew Papers.

<sup>85</sup> Mrs. McNulty to Spiro Agnew, September 23, 1973, Agnew Papers.

<sup>86</sup> Carol C. Hinson to Spiro Agnew, September 29, 1973, Agnew Papers.

<sup>87</sup> Mrs. Richard Damaske to Spiro Agnew, n.d., Agnew Papers.

<sup>88</sup> Stanley J. Feminella to Spiro Agnew, October 18, 1973, Agnew Papers.

<sup>89</sup> Isabel Lease [Loase?] to Spiro Agnew, n.d. (probably October 11 – says "Thursday" on top), Agnew Papers.

<sup>90</sup> Sally S. Monroe to Spiro Agnew, October 15, 1973, Agnew Papers.

<sup>91</sup> Mrs. W. T. Douthwaite to Spiro Agnew, October 11, 1973.

<sup>92</sup> Mrs. C.H. Rutledge to Spiro Agnew, n.d., Agnew Papers.

<sup>93</sup> Ira E. Blackwood to Spiro Agnew, September 23, 1973, Agnew Papers.