

Opinions

Agnew close up

by joe gallagher

The Scene: Reynolds Coliseum, Oct. 26, 1970. At 5:30 the crowd began to gather for the Agnew Rally. A festive mood permeated through the crowd. Politics were secondary as old friends meet and relived old times. They stood in their own "select" groups, watching the show of freaks.

The CONspiroCY marshals circulated, passing out statements of their policy. The crowd eagerly accepted these leaflets; but, after reading the first paragraph, they were thrown to the ground. One nice woman, upon returning the leaflet to the Marshal said, "You can take this and RAM IT!"

At 6:30 the doors were opened. The crowd of 7,000 squeezed into the Coliseum. A handful of freaks got passed the careful screening. At 7:30 the doors were closed and locked, leaving scores of people outside.

Inside there was a carnival air as the Young Republican Party of N.C.S.U. passed out placards saying such things as "Spiro our Hero," "God Bless Spiro," and "The Spiro of '76." On the floor republican snobs waved their signs at each other and tried to be cute.

As 8:00 o'clock drew near, the campaigning started. The Candidates came on stage and waved to the crowd. In came The Howell for Congress Girls singing and chanting like the Red Guard. The pre-rally atmosphere seemed to be a hold-over from the State Fair. Promptly at 8:00 o'clock the campaign speeches started. The head of the statewide Young Republicans Club warmed up the crowd by emphatically asking, "Do you love your Country? Do you love your flag? Do you love your God? Do you love the Republican Party?" After this rabble-rousing, she called for contributions by saying, "Wave your money while the band plays so all you can see is a sea of green." This met with little response, except for a few would-be hecklers waving their draft cards.

The crowd seemed to lull during the ensuing campaign speeches by Congressional hopefuls. After Frank Everett's campaign speech, The Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem were recited and sung. The Convocation by Reverend Maloy Owen, followed. Reverend Owen ended his politically oriented prayer with, "Thank You, Oh Lord, for men who speak out... Thank you, Oh Lord, for President Nixon and Vice President Agnew." Separation of church and state—Right On. This fan-fare was a prelude to the arrival of Vice President Agnew.

Agnew was greeted by a thunderous round of applause from 99% of the crowd; the other 1% remained silent. Herbert Howell was given the dubious honor of introducing the Vice President. As Agnew moved to the podium, police officers located themselves near any would-be hecklers.

Mr. Agnew's oratory started with his usual attacks aimed at "radical liberals." The Republican crowd loved it, but those who didn't agree did not voice their opinions because they were intimidated by the police. The local minority remained silent.

With no hecklers to add spice to his speech, Mr. Agnew was forced to follow his prepared text. His speech soon became bland and the crowd became sluggish,

applauding only at the appropriate times.

Agnew attacked the usual people: Ted Kennedy, George McGovern, Birth Bayh, and J. William Fulbright. The crowd peaked during his verbal abuse aimed at these "radical liberal" Senators.

His audience sat back and listened to candidate endorsement, Southern strategy, and dull review of the Administration policy on textile quotas.

Near the end of his address, Agnew brought the crowd back to life by re-affirming the Administration's stand on Law and Order, saying "He (Nixon) has had enough of molly-coddling the criminals in the streets and anarchists on the campus."

After this piece of classic rhetoric, he finished his address

with an allusion to the Ted Kennedy-Mary Jo Kopechne incident. This ended his oration with a bang.

After a long ovation the crowd filed out of the Coliseum, where they met about a hundred demonstrators.

The Republican crowd closed their ears and looked down their noses at the young people. The youthful demonstrators were voicing their opinions in the only avenue left open to them. They can not afford any \$100 a plate dinners to bring in big-name speakers to champion their cause. This student action at the Coliseum did little more than polarize, these stalwart Republicans. The New Left seems to be speaking to deaf ears. Paul Simon put it all together when he said, "A man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest."



Vice President Agnew relaxes in the glory of his soul-stirring speech.

(photo by dean duncan)

ConSPIROcy meets ProSPIROcy

Ed. Note:

On the scene in Raleigh, at N. C. State, and in the Coliseum, our two reporters gathered these impressions of the Veep's visit and its repercussions.

by bill holder

Dateline Raleigh, October 14, 1970. THE RALEIGH TIMES, Editorial. "Cathy Sterling, who has played well the role of student activist during incumbency as student body president at N.C. State, has a conservative idea on the greeting of Agnew on October 26: 'Right now, we just plan to ignore him; treat him like any other speaker on-campus.'"

This short statement by the president of State (following closely the similar policy adopted by the Student Senate) officially laid the groundwork for Agnew's visit to the second largest and most conservative campus in the state. Democratic nightmares of mobs of chanting long haired disruptors vanished and the rally was viewed as another cog in Nixon's Southern strategy machine. Political activists at State realized though, a strong anti-Agnew sentiment on-campus and feared bands of protestors from other campuses. To ward off potential trouble a group of 25 organized into what they appropriately titled conSPIROcy.

The idea was formulated to hold a rally to counteract the Coliseum rally planned by Republicans; also planned was a free 'peoples' dinner in contrast to \$100 per plate affair being held prior to Agnew's rally. \$180 was raised to finance the free dinner and the NCS College Union agreed to buy and prepare food at cost. The administration stood aloof during this and neither endorsed nor condemned the activities.

Thirty miles away, in Chapel Hill, the mood was more militant but also restrained. Student Body President Tom Bello released a press statement urging, like his colleague at State, total peacefulness.

Meanwhile in Raleigh the conSPIROcy combatted problems of a hastily-thrown-together organization. The SGA lent them a temporary office. Signs were made advertising the free dinner and rally and placed around campus. But even then active interest had stagnated to handful of politically motivated students. Republicans were busy distributing tickets to the Angew event. Young Republicans at State were given the privilege of marshalling the Republican gala. Rumors of 20,000 tickets circulated were heard. The Coliseum held only 7,000.

Day of the rally found the campus same as usual for the majority of students. ConSPIROcy released Policy Statement. Statement, while sounding too Marxist-orientated because of excessive concern with 'exploited workers', proved idealistic dedication and sincere attempt at avoidance of ultra-radical tactics. ConSPIROcy had marshall meeting at 4:00, 350 volunteers, optimism for big turnout ran high. 4:30, free dinner begins in Plaza while Agnew is being greeted at airport. 1500 students eat supper at free dinner. 5:30, Agnew crowds start gathering on steps of Coliseum. Speech isn't until 8:00 but reports are that doors will be closed at 7:00 and no one else will be admitted. Cops everywhere, anticipating trouble, preparing for what might be another Battle of the Pentagon.

Group from Raleigh begin demonstrating. They number over 100. 6:30, the Coliseum doors open. Student's tickets checked for validity since it is thought counterfeit one are out. Most turned away at doors for a counterfeit tickets were freaks. Investigation showed that most

tickets called counterfeit were picked up at Republican headquarters. Open discrimination went on. Republicans inside Coliseum get message from Fire Department and Secret Service that building is filled to safe capacity. Police lock doors, leaving over 1000 ticket-holding Republicans outside with students and demonstrators.

In Coliseum, candidates on wooden stage stood and waved to crowd which responded with eager enthusiasm. Few freaks that gained admission are isolated and carefully watched. 8:00, speeches begin. The rally takes on air of Billy Graham Crusade though savior is Republican party. Leader of young Republicans brings crowd to emotional pitch with patriotic rhetoric that combines love of God and love of Republican party. Republican eongressmen used their speech time to tear down the opposition with the usual rhetorical mudslinging that left nobody enlightened and more than one bored. Reverend Owens of

Raleigh offered convocation that showed only political alignment and belief that Nixon has divine right of leadership.

The Vice President makes entrance. "Agnew" signs and banners litter arena as Republicans stand to be counted on right side. The letdown was speech itself which said nothing. The few freaks and radicals in audience remained silent and prevented Agnew from distilling any of his famous off the cuff remarks. Speech is confined to clever jabs at democratic opponents which go for most part unnoticed by crowd.

Speech over, people went home. At ConSPIROcy rally in plaza, bands were playing and rock-festival atmosphere prevailed...feeling of fellowship and warmth...ultra-radical grabbed microphone on-stage and urged march on Agnew's hotel...crowd did nothing. Everybody listened to music and danced and hoped that sometime Agnew would come again.

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