

UNIVERSITY AIDES EXPLAIN C.I.A. TIE

But Michigan State Officials
Differ on Circumstances

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WASHINGTON, April 14—Officials at Michigan State University described today their ties to the Central Intelligence Agency in South Vietnam as innocent, though embarrassing, but gave contradictory accounts of when they had learned of the link.

Spokesmen for the university and professors who directed its Vietnam project from 1955 to 1962 acknowledged the presence of at least five C.I.A. men on their payroll for five years but contended that they had conducted no undercover or counterespionage activities. They said they had done only what they had been hired to do—train the police forces of former President Ngo Dinh Diem.

James Dennison, the university's official spokesman, said the employees had been discovered to be C.I.A. agents "some time" after the start of the project and "phased out" as soon as possible. After the discovery, he said, the university made sure the agents were not conducting their own operations and finally arranged for their transfer to the United States operations mission in Saigon in 1959.

However, Prof. Wesley Fisher, one of the first American advisers to President Diem and head of the Michigan State contingent in Saigon from 1956 to 1958, said the men were known from the start to be on leave from the C.I.A.

Diem Knew Everything

"Oh, sure," he replied, when asked if their backgrounds had been known when they were hired. "The Vietnamese Government also knew it. We never anything from President Diem."

But there was no disagreement among the Michigan State officials in their bitter denunciation of Ramparts magazine, which disclosed the C.I.A. connection in a broadside assault on the university in the April issue.

Professor Fishel, a political scientist who had been singled out as "instrumental" in bringing President Diem to the United States in 1950 and promoting his bid for power in Saigon, denounced the authors of the article for "deliberate lying." Their article was a "scurrilous and silly hatchet job," he said, "with so many inaccuracies one hardly knows where to begin to reply."

He said the authors, Warren Hinckle, Robert Scheer and Sol Stern of the Ramparts staff,

and their principal source, Stanley K. Sheinbaum, were "outspoken advocates of the Vietcong" and wanted them to win the war in Vietnam.

Mr. Sheinbaum, an economist was coordinator of the Michigan State Vietnam project and now is with the Center for Democratic Studies in Santa Barbara, Calif.

Professor Fishel, who has continued to advise the Government on Vietnam affairs, said the writers have a right to their views but that the public ought to know of their partisanship, not only for the Vietcong, but also, at least by Mr. Sheer, for Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba.

The disclosure of the C.I.A. incident caused deep chagrin on the Michigan State campus. According to sources there, officials were concerned about the possibility of a special investigation by a committee of the State Legislature. They were also worried that news of the C.I.A. link would injure their operations in a dozen developing nations.

Noisy News Conference

The Ramparts editors clearly hoped to arouse a strong reaction among legislators and students in Lansing, Mich. They arranged a noisy and confusing news conference in Detroit this morning, addressing the assembled reporters from San Francisco through three telephone amplifiers, each backed by a placard bearing an editor's name.

The conference produced re-assertions by Ramparts that the university had known from the outset that it was providing support and cover for the C.I.A. and dozens of questions based on partial denials and countercharges by the university. Two university observers sat in the rear of the room but did not speak.

No discernible reaction was reported from the campus. In the State Legislature, however, Representative Jack Faxon, a Democrat of Detroit who is chairman of the Higher Education subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee, said the disclosures had raised serious questions that might merit an investigation.

Mr. Faxon asked whether the trustees had known of the university's involvement with the C.I.A., how much state money was used in Federal projects and to what extent universities had become "instrumentalities" of the Federal Government.

Fund Figure Disputed

Mr. Dennison, who is a special assistant to Michigan State's president, John A. Hannah, said all the funds for international programs came from other sources, including foundations and the Federal Government. Upon checking the records of the Vietnam project, he said, it was found that the university had received \$5,354,352.75 for the seven-year assignment, not \$25-million as Ramparts had reported.

The Ramparts editors said books by project members supported their contention that the university had received \$10-million for itself and advised the Government in the spending of \$15-million.