

Editorials

The CIA Hires A University

RAMPARTS MAGAZINE charges that Michigan State University aided the CIA in propping up the Ngo Dinh Diem dictatorship in South Vietnam. We are shocked at the relationship which MSU was willing to accept with the espionage agency.

A university lending itself to the CIA as a cover for spying and "counter-subversion" operations is a travesty of the idea of a university devoted to free inquiry and the search for truth.

The freedom of scholars to be guided only by their conscience is important and precious to a free and democratic society; it is the objective of one of the longest continuing struggles in American life. Michigan State has prostituted this freedom. By putting some of its professors under a contract project with the Government (for which read the CIA) during the years 1955-59, and by sending people to and bringing them from Vietnam under a mission for training the civilian police force and setting up a civil service organization and training institute, MSU escaped notice as a cover for espionage. But there can be no doubt that it was sheltering the spying activities of CIA agents: the university's spokesman, Professor Ralph Smuckler, acting dean of its office of international programs, concedes that men "borrowed" from the government for the MSU project—nominally from the Department of the Army—were CIA agents interested in the Diem police and other "countersubversion" work.

THE CIA HAS PROBABLY not hesitated to try to corrupt more illustrious schools than the Big Ten football champion of 1965, which hires its athletes and is, as it now turns out, itself for hire; but universities worthy of their freedom and of public respect will follow the Harvard policy. That is to have nothing to do as an institution with the CIA, allowing members of its faculty, however, to engage in such CIA work as their wishes, discretion and time may permit.