Understanding Marshall McLuhan / Felix Greene at *f*5.6

April 1966

Ramparts

Seventy-five Cents

The university on the make

[*or* how MSU helped arm Madame Nhu]

The university on the make

Introduction

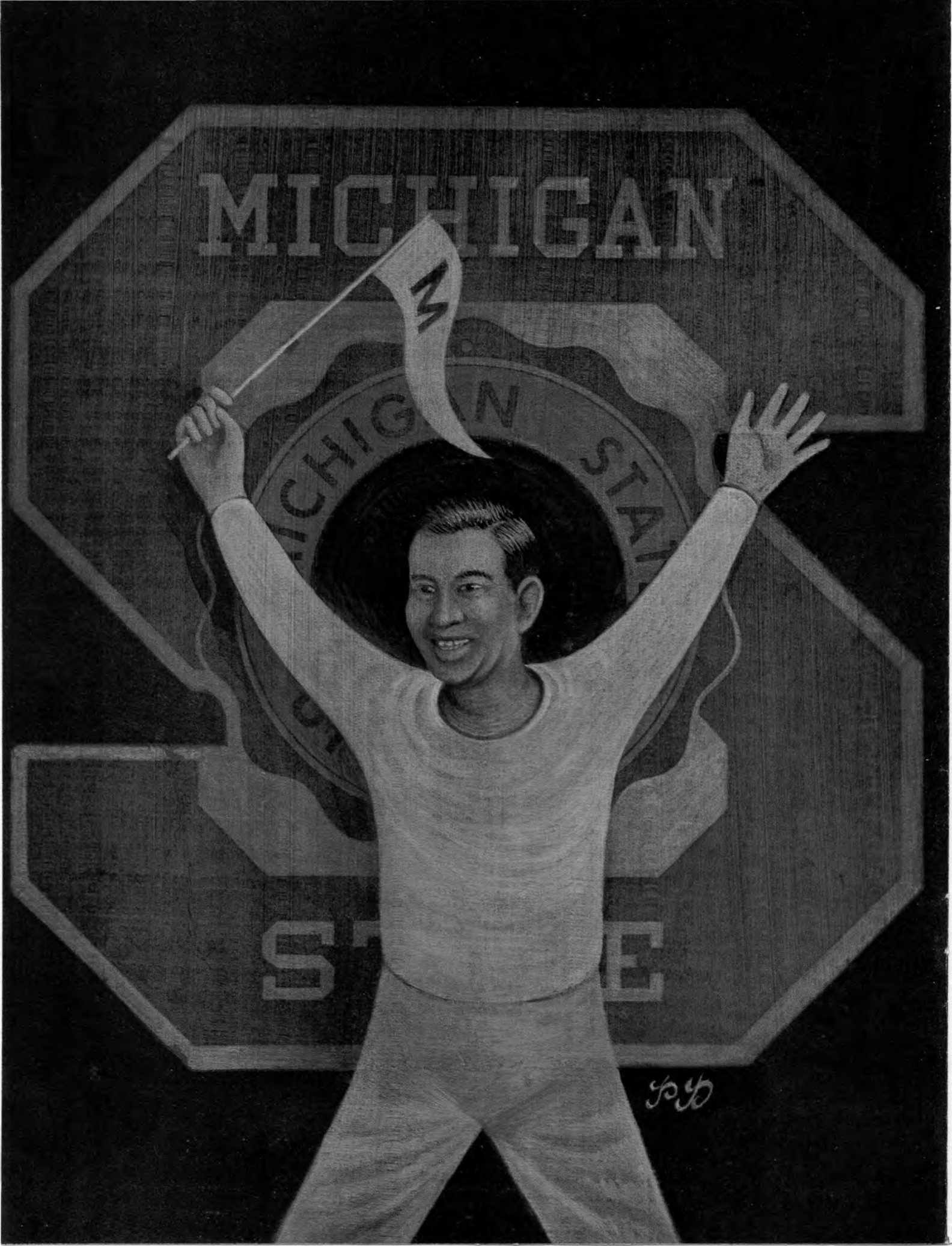
DURING THE SUMMER OF 1958, I cut my vacation short and rushed off to San Francisco to meet the four leading police figures of South Vietnam. Among them they controlled the Saigon police, the national police and the VBI, South Vietnam's equivalent of the FBI.

Within an hour of their arrival the youngest, a nephew of Ngo Dinh Diem, conspiratorially drew me aside and informed me that one of the others was going to kill the eldest of the group. The story he told possessed plot and counter-plot. In essence, Michigan State University was being used to invite these men to the United States under the auspices of its foreign aid contract in Vietnam. The dirty deed was to be done prophylactically in the States, uncluttered by any complicating factors in Saigon.

At a time when relations between Diem and the U.S. were already strained, the whole story might have been a trick to embarrass Washington. Or else my informant's facts could have been straight, and failure to take action would have been equally embarrassing. The upshot was some nocturnal maneuvers and a cross-country flight designed to separate the quartet by forcibly hospitalizing the supposed target on the pretext he showed signs of T.B.

Nothing ever came of the episode. The intended target lived long enough to be executed by Diem's successors for having assassinated a variety of political prisoners himself.

The question is, why was I, of the Department of Economics at MSU, involved in such ugliness?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I was coordinator of the Vietnam Project at Michigan State University, and I am no less culpable of the charges I make herein, or are made in the following article, than are any of my former colleagues. Looking back I am appalled how supposed intellectuals (Aren't academicians supposed to be intellectuals?) could have been so uncritical about what they were doing. There was little discussion and no protest over the cancellation of the 1956 elections. Nor were any of us significantly troubled by the fact that our Project had become a CIA front. (The University is still denying this in an odd mixture of embarrassment and loyalty.) On the campus a pitiful handful of faculty— usually mavericks and among the best teachers — questioned MSU's role in assisting U.S. foreign policy. (One of these became an enthusiast when the opportunity arose for him to make a leisurely trip to Saigon on behalf of the Project.) From Saigon some professors did write popular and troublesome articles criticizing Diem's oppressions. Good, but even these bold ventures accepted U.S. policy as given with no questions asked.

The Michigan State professors performed at all levels. They advised on fingerprinting techniques, on bookkeeping, on governmental budgeting and on the very writing of South Vietnam's constitution. One was even instrumental in the choice of the President of South Vietnam. But in all this they never questioned U.S. foreign policy which had placed them there and which, thereby, they were supporting.

The following article on MSU's involvement in Vietnam is merely a case study of two critical failures in American education and intellectual life today. The first and more obvious is the diversion of the university away from its functions (and duties) of scholarship and teaching. The second has to do with the failure of the academic intellectual to serve as critic, conscience, *ombudsman*. Especially in foreign policy, which henceforth will bear heavily on our very way of life at home, is this failure serious.

For this failure has left us in a state of drift. We lack historical perspective. We have been conditioned by our social science training not to ask the normative question; we possess neither the inclination nor the means with which to question and judge our foreign policy. We have only the capacity to be experts and technicians to serve that policy. This is the tragedy of the Michigan State professors: we were all automatic cold warriors.

On every campus from Harvard to Michigan State, the story is the same. The social science professor, trained (not educated) to avoid the bigger problems, is off campus expertising for his government or industry client whose assumptions he readily adopts. His students are mechanistically led through the same social science materials by a less competent instructor or graduate assistant, and they will be as little exposed to questions of judgment and the application of wisdom as was the professor in the first place.

No doubt the problem is far more advanced at parvenu institutions like Michigan State than in the Ivy League. The struggle for status, recognition and money is an irresistible lure; the glamorous project is grabbed and sometimes even invented. Within the university only the exceptional faculty member seeks reward and promotions via scholarship and teaching. The easier and even the more prestigious route, is that of the new breed professor with his machine-stamped PhD who orbits in the university's stratosphere of institutes, projects and contracts. The student is lowest among his priorities. The work he emphasizes is of dubious value — by reason of his bias against considerations of value.

Where is the source of serious intellectual criticism that would help us avoid future Vietnams? Serious ideological controversy is dead and with it the perspective for judgment. Our failure in Vietnam was not one of technical expertise, but rather of historical wisdom. We at Michigan State failed to take a critical stance a decade ago. This was our first responsibility, and our incapacity gave rise to the nightmare described in the following pages.

—*Stanley K. Sheinbaum*

THE VIETNAMESE SOLDIER in the sentry box stood at attention as the chauffeured limousine bearing license plate No. 1 from the government motor pool roared down the long driveway of the French villa, picked up speed and screeched off along the road towards the palace where the President was waiting breakfast.

The year was 1957, the city was Saigon, and the man who lived in the huge villa with its own sentry box was no Batman of the diplomatic corps. He was only Wesley Fishel of East Lansing, Michigan, assistant professor of political science at Michigan State University.

Peasants who scrambled off the road to make way for the speeding professor might have wondered what was happening, but Fishel's academic compatriots could have no doubt: he was "making it." To make it, in the new world of Big University politics, was no longer as elemental as publishing or perishing. You needed "contact" with the outside world. You had to get a government contract. You had to be an operator. And some people viewed Professor Fishel in South Vietnam in the mid 1950s as the Biggest Operator of them all.

Illustrations by Paul Davis

Some professors on the make have had a bigger press, but none deserves notoriety more than Wesley Fishel. Eugene Burdick, for instance, got a lot of publicity out of his quickie novels and underwater beer commercials on television. But no academician has ever achieved Fishel's distinction in getting his school to come through with enough professors, police experts and guns to secure his friend's dictatorship.

That was what Wesley Fishel was about on that humid Saigon morning, burning rubber to visit Ngo Dinh Diem. The presidential palace was known informally and with some degree of jealousy by the United States Mission in Saigon as the "breakfast club," because that was where Diem and Fishel and Wolf Ladejinsky, the agricultural expert left over from the New Deal, ate morning melons several times a week and discussed the state of the nation.

Leland Barrows, the United States Mission chief, was disturbed because he couldn't get to see Diem anywhere near that often. And Fishel was particularly closed-mouthed about his regular morning conferences. Saigon in the early days of the Diem regime was a status-minded city, and Fishel had a bigger villa than Barrows, bigger, even, than the American ambassador's. This residential ranking attests to Fishel's importance as head of the Michigan State University Group in Vietnam, an official university project under contract to Saigon and Washington, with responsibility for the proper functioning of Diem's civil service and his police network, the shaping up of the 50,000 man "ragamuffin" militia, and the supplying of guns and ammunition for the city police, the civil guard, the palace police, and the dreaded *Sûreté* — South Vietnam's version of the FBI. No small task for a group of professors, but one which Michigan State took to as if it were fielding another national championship football team.

One lesser-known, and perhaps more unpleasant task of the MSU professors was to provide a front for a unit of the United States Central Intelligence Agency. This is a role that both Professor Fishel and Michigan State University have now chosen to forget. It is described here as a specific, if shocking, documentation of the degree of corruption and abject immorality attending a university which puts its academic respectability on lend-lease to American foreign policy.

[JOHN A. HANNAH, THE PRESIDENT AS COACH]

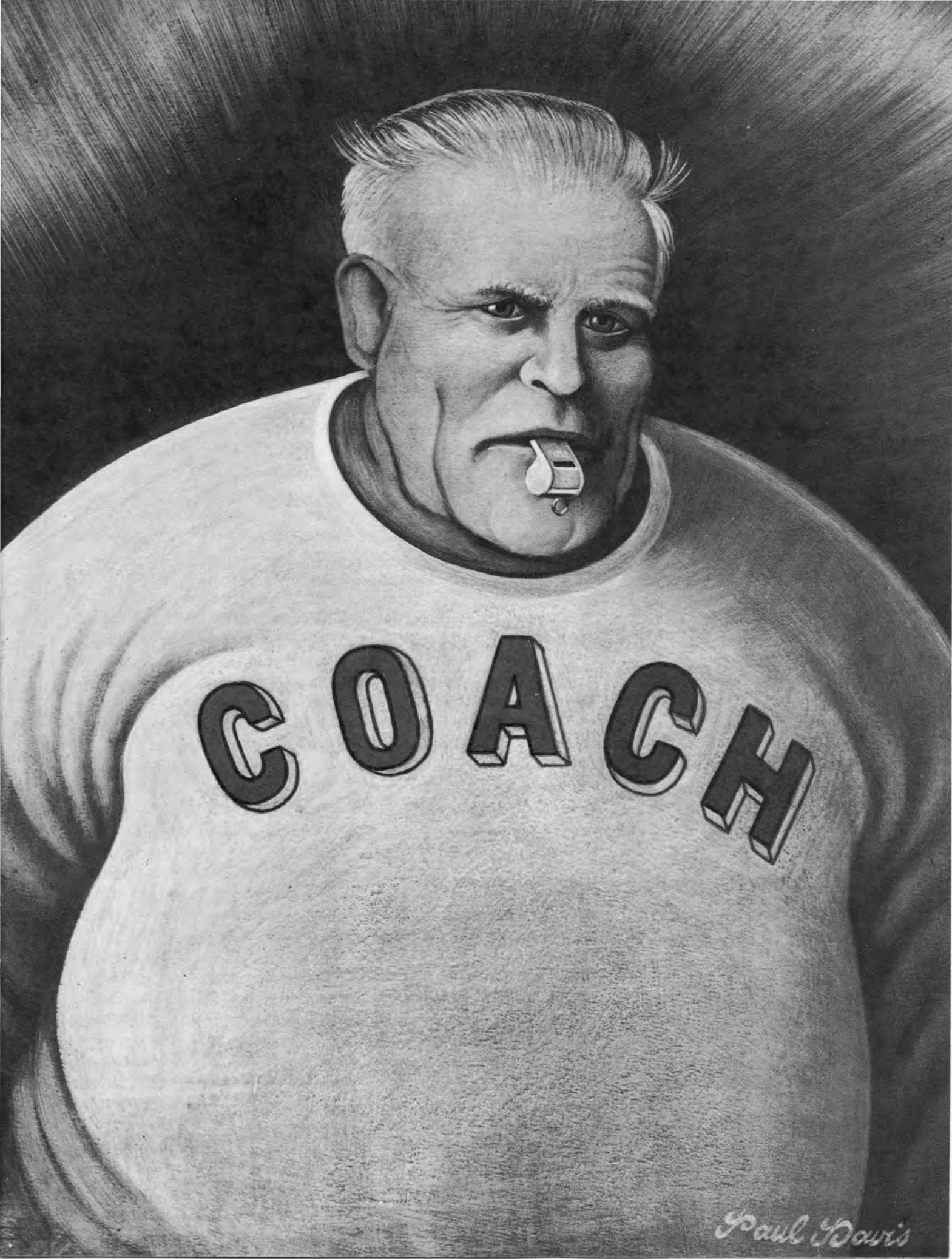
THE DECAY OF TRADITIONAL academic principles found in the modern university on the make may well be traced to Harold Stassen and Clark Kerr, but it is best exemplified by President John A. Hannah of Michigan State University. Stassen, in the International Cooperation Administration, was responsible for the concept that American universities should be tapped as "manpower reservoirs" for the extension of Americanism abroad, and Clark Kerr, the embattled Berkeley savant, first came up with the vision of the large university as a "service station" to society. Hannah, an Eisenhower liberal with a penchant for public service, has made these concepts the *raison d'être* of MSU.

Hannah, in a blustery way, represents the best traditions of the American Success Story. The son of an Iowa chicken farmer, he took a degree in poultry husbandry from Michigan Agricultural College in 1922. Then, like the football hero who works for 30 years in the college bookstore because he can't bear to leave the campus, Hannah stayed on in East Lansing. He taught chicken farming, married the president's daughter, got his first taste of public service during a stint with the Department of Agriculture as an NRA administrator, came back to campus and in 1941 succeeded his father-in-law as president.

MSU, under President Hannah's tutelage, is more service oriented than the average Standard Oil retail outlet. MSU's School of Agriculture aids farmers, its School of Hotel Management turns out educated room clerks, its School of Police Administration graduates cops sophisticated in the social sciences. MSU once offered a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Mobile Homes under a program financed by the trailer industry.

BUT IT IS IN THE FIELD of international service that Michigan State has really made it. A shiny new building on campus houses MSU's Center for International Programs — an edifice built, incidentally, with funds from the administrative allowance on the seven-year Vietnam contract. The University has over 200 faculty members out every year in the boondocks of the world running "educational projects" in 13 countries including Colombia, Taiwan, Turkey, Brazil and Okinawa. *Time* magazine recently acknowledged the MSU president's extensive influence on the role of American universities overseas by recording Hannah's boast that he can "tap his campus specialists, get an answer to most any question for government or research groups within 30 minutes." Now that *is* service.

The list of countries MSU is presently "helping" is lopsided with military dictatorships, but it is not President Hannah's style to question the assignment his country gives him. A former Assistant Secretary of Defense under General Motor's Charles Wilson, Hannah sees the military, like football, as an important character-building element in life. His view of the modern university is tied to the liberal concept of America as the defender of the free world. That the university must prepare young citizens to assume this proud task, and to be a leader abroad in areas


COACH
Paul Davis

chosen for it by the Federal government, is Hannah's educational credo.

Despite Hannah's obvious pride in the work his university is doing overseas, he is particularly reticent in discussing its most extensive foreign operation. In a colorful brochure about MSU's international programs, given away free to visitors, there is only one sentence about the Vietnam Project — despite the fact that this was the largest single project ever undertaken by an American university abroad, a project that spent the incredible amount of 25 million in American taxpayers' dollars in giving "technical assistance" to the Republic of South Vietnam under Ngo Dinh Diem. This one-sentence treatment of MSU's Vietnam operation is like reducing to a photo caption in the school yearbook the story of the prize-winning basketball team — because the coach was caught taking bribes.

A key to MSU's apparent official desire to forget about the Vietnam experience, dubbed the "Vietnam Adventure" by some professors who worked on the Project, might be found in the unexpressed fear that the details of the University's "cover" for the CIA may become public knowledge. If pressed for an answer, Fishel denies any such role and so does President Hannah. "CIA agents were not knowingly on our staff — if that were true we didn't know about it," Hannah said recently in his office, sitting beneath the portrait of Lincoln that hangs above his desk. But this assertion of innocence is flatly contradicted by the disclosures of other professors who held administrative positions in the Project. Indeed, the weight of evidence is that MSU finally had to ask the CIA unit to go elsewhere because its presence had become such embarrassing general knowledge in Saigon and East Lansing.

Economist Stanley K. Sheinbaum, the campus coordinator of MSU's Vietnam operation for three years, was flabbergasted by Hannah's denial: "If John Hannah can make up something like that, he calls into question his competence as a university president," he said.

[Wesley Fishel, the Professor as Proconsul]

One indication of Wesley Fishel's power in Saigon in the hey-day of the Diem era was provided by a veteran of that period who recently paid a return visit to Saigon. "I heard people talking about what 'Westy' would think," he said, "and for a minute I thought that Wesley was back."

"Westy," in the Saigon vernacular, is General William Westmoreland, but those in the know used to talk about "Wesley" in the same awe-struck fashion. There is one public reminder of the transfer of power. "Westy" is now running the war out of the same office building, a reconverted apartment house at 137 Pasteur Street, that used to be "Wesley's" headquarters.

Like most fateful alliances, the Diem-Fishel axis had humble beginnings. The pair met in Tokyo in July of 1950 when each was going nowhere in his chosen field. Diem was an exiled Vietnamese politician with a mandarin personality and a strong sense of predestination but few tangible hopes of assuming power in his war-ravaged country. Fishel was just a run-of-the-mill academician, a young political scientist from UCLA who had written a nondescript thesis on Chinese extra-territoriality and was about to accept a position at Michigan State.

Both were ambitious, looking for an angle, and Napoleon-sized. Diem was 5′ 4″; Fishel, a well-built, curly-haired man with the stance of a bantam rooster, appears to be about the same size. The men became friends and a relationship developed by extensive correspondence over the ensuing year. They exchanged favors early. Fishel had his friend appointed consultant to Michigan State's Governmental Research Bureau and helped arrange a long stay in the United States where Diem picked up substantial backing among prominent Americans from Cardinal Spellman to Senator Mike Mansfield (Ramparts, July 1965). In return Diem in 1952 asked the French to let Michigan State furnish technical aid to Vietnam at United States expense, but the French refused.

Fishel, however, had ultimate faith. An East Lansing colleague recalls that one day Fishel cornered him in the faculty lounge and, with the exuberance of one who could no longer restrain himself, whispered excitedly, "My friend Diem is going to be Premier of Vietnam one of these days!" The prediction was taken lightly; Fishel had neither the swagger nor the stripes of a kingmaker.

But when Diem was named Premier in July 1954, almost his first official act was to request Washington to send Wesley to Saigon to advise him. Fishel arrived within weeks, and just weeks later Diem asked for the second time that MSU set up a technical assistance program in Vietnam. The request, this time, had smooth sailing.

With Fishel already in Saigon, there was virtually no one on the East Lansing campus with any knowledge about Vietnam when Diem's assistance request was relayed through official Washington channels. President Hannah, not one to let the possibility of a substantial contract go by, tapped four faculty members for an "inspection team" and put them on a plane to Saigon in almost whirlwind fashion.

The four were Arthur Brandstatter, an ex-MSU football hero who now heads the Police Administration School; James Dennison, the University's public relations man; Edward Weidener, then chairman of the Political Science Department; and Economics Department Chairman

Charles Killingsworth. None of these men had any experience in academic or technical assistance roles overseas, nor did they have any expertise in Far Eastern affairs, a deficiency they attempted to repair by reading newspaper clippings on Vietnam during the plane ride. The first time they met as a group was when they fastened their seat belts.

Saigon was a city in ferment in September 1954, when MSU's "inspection team" arrived. Diem was nominally in power, but he had no real support except among a small number of middle-class Catholics and Saigon merchants. The French were preparing to pull out, the Saigon police were controlled by the Binh Xuyen pirate sect, the private armies of the religious sects were in substantial control of the Vietnamese lowlands, the Vietnamese Army was in fledgling revolt against Diem, and the civil service machinery was in a state of stagnation.

The professors found their colleague Fishel and General Edward Lansdale of the CIA maneuvering furiously to consolidate Diem's support, an effort that culminated with the endorsement of Diem by the United States Security Council in the spring of 1955. The professors also learned that Diem was suspicious of the members of the United States Mission in Saigon, many of whom he felt held pro-French sentiments. The one American Diem really trusted was Wesley Fishel, and this trust was reflected two weeks later when the MSU inspection team returned to East Lansing and recommended a massive technical assistance contract, unprecedented in the history of university operations overseas. This contract committed Michigan State to do everything for Diem, from training his police to writing his constitution.

Contract negotiations bogged down over technical matters, but the jam was broken in the early spring of 1955 by a telephone call from Washington to Hannah requesting that the red tape be cut and MSU involve itself in Vietnam — in a hurry. Fishel once indicated in an interview that the request came from former vice-president Nixon, but he now denies this, and so does President Hannah. The phone call, Hannah told the *Detroit News*, came from an authority "even higher than Nixon." This leaves a choice of John Foster Dulles; his brother, CIA chief Allen Dulles; or Eisenhower himself. At any rate, President Hannah did his duty as he saw it. The first MSU professors joined Wesley Fishel in Saigon in late May of 1955.

IN 1956 FISHEL ABANDONED his role as "advisor" to Diem, and assumed the title of Chief of Mission of the MSU Group. For the next four years, he was the most important American in Vietnam. "Wesley was the closest thing to a proconsul that Saigon had," said one of the MSU professors. The assistant professor of political science entertained frequently and lavishly in his opulent villa, and if his parties got a little out of hand the Saigon police obliged by cordoning off the street. No professor has ever made it so big; in the academic world, Fishel was sovereign.

But if the proconsul lived well, so did his lieutenants. East Lansing is hardly a midwestern Paris, and for most of the professors the more exotic and free-wheeling life in Saigon was the closest thing to the high life they had known. Academicians and their families, at first a little uncomfortable, assumed the easy ways of the former French colonial masters. They moved into spacious, air-conditioned villas, rent-free, in the old French section of Saigon, bought the better scotches at the American commissary at $2 a bottle, hired servants at $30 a month, were invited to all the better cocktail parties because they knew "Wesley," went tiger hunting for laughs, and, with various "hardship" and "incentive" salary hikes, made close to double their normal salaries. (A professor earning $9,000 for teaching class at East Lansing got $16,500 a year for "advising" in Vietnam — taxfree.)

The "Vietnam Adventure" also did wonders for the professors' tenure. Despite the activist nature of their work in Vietnam and the lack of any substantial scholarly research during the Project, two-thirds of the MSU faculty who went to Saigon got promotions either during their tour of duty or within a year of their return. Professor Fishel, in particular, scored points. His published work was virtually non-existent and he was absent from his classes for years at a time. But, in 1957, MSU promoted him to the rank of full professor.

[HEAR-NO-CIA, SEE-NO-CIA]

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY MEN were hidden within the ranks of the Michigan State University professors. They were all listed as members of the MSU Project staff and were formally appointed by the University Board of Trustees. Several of the CIA men were given academic rank and were paid by the University Project.

The CIA agents' instructions were to engage in counter-espionage and counter-intelligence. Their "cover" was within the police administration division of the Michigan State Group. The CIA unit was self-contained, and appeared on an official organization chart of the MSU Project as "VBI INTERNAL SECURITY SECTION." This five-man team was the largest section within the police administration division of the MSU Vietnam operation. The police administration division in turn was by far the largest of the three divisions of the MSU Group.

"VBI" was Michigan State shorthand for "Vietnamese Bureau of Investigation," the new name the professors

had given the old *Sûreté*, the Vietnamese special police. The head of the "Internal Security Section" of the VBI under the Michigan State operation was Raymond Babineau who was in Saigon from the outset of the MSU Project. The other men were hired later by the University and listed on its staff chart as "Police Administration Specialists." All four — Douglas Beed, William Jones, Daniel Smith, and Arthur Stein — gave their previous employment as either "investigator" or "records specialist" in the Department of the Army.

THE CIA CONTINGENT, despite the continued denials of Fishel and Hannah, was identified by two former Project officials — Stanley Sheinbaum and Professor Robert Scigliano, an MSU political scientist who was assistant Project chief of the MSU Vietnam Group from 1957-1959. It is also confirmed, in writing, by Scigliano and Professor Guy H. Fox, a former MSU Project chief, in a book titled *Technical Assistance in Vietnam: The Michigan State University Experience*, published by Praeger in 1965.

Sheinbaum, as part of his duties as campus coordinator, hired Stein, Smith and Jones. At the time all he knew about the men was that they came from the "Department of the Army." Sheinbaum recalls that he was proceeding to investigate the background of the three applicants before accepting them when he was told "that it wouldn't be necessary to check out these guys." The message came from Professor Ralph Smuckler, a former Vietnam Project head.

Sheinbaum said he was on the job for 18 months before he was taken into the administration's confidence and told about the CIA men. "Smuckler pulled me aside one day and told me that I should know that these CIA guys were there, but that we didn't talk about them," he said.

Professor Scigliano's first brush with the CIA came during his first meeting with the police advisory group in Saigon. He said that Babineau, whom he knew from the organizational chart as head of the VBI Internal Security, was introduced as a CIA man. The other CIA agents were also introduced, and Babineau made a short speech in which he expressed hope that the professors and his people would get along well. Scigliano recalls Babineau saying, "We hope we don't get in your way."

A professor and his wife became friends with one of the CIA men and his wife, and the couples often dined together. "We talked about books and music," he said, but there was an unspoken rule that they would never mention the CIA. The entire unit operated on an identical hear-no-CIA, see-no-CIA basis. They worked out of offices in one corner of the police administration floor of the beige, converted apartment building that housed the MSU Project. The CIA men came in early in the morning, stayed for about an hour, and then locked their offices and left for the day. They all drove their own cars and their French was the most fluent on the Project.

If the CIA men got nothing else from their fraternization with Michigan State University, they became the first persons in the spy business to gain academic recognition. "Some of the CIA guys attained faculty status at MSU — some as lecturers, some as assistant professors, depending on their salaries. I know, because I remember signing the papers that gave them faculty rank," Sheinbaum said.

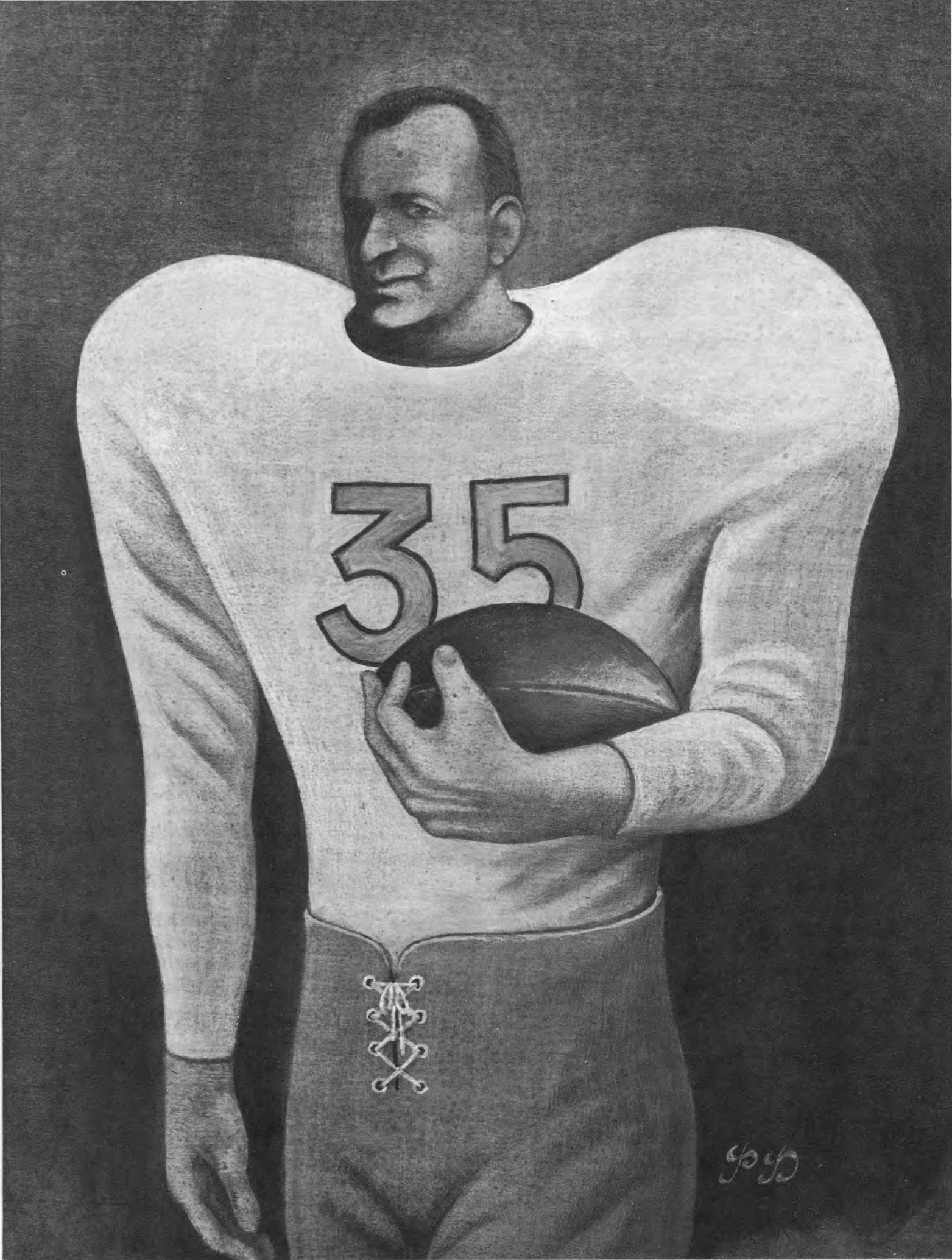
The CIA unit operated within its Michigan State "cover" until 1959. Scigliano and Fox state in their book, in what must rank as one of the more terse statements of the decade: "USOM [United States Operations Mission] also absorbed at this time [1959] the CIA unit that had been operating within MSUG [Michigan State University Group]."

In plain language, Michigan State threw the CIA men out. One of the principal factors leading to the MSU decision was that by 1959 just about everybody in the know was cognizant of the CIA operation. This was not only embarrassing to the legitimate professors, but it served to taint the reputation of the limited amount of solid academic work that was done during the Project. For instance, an anthropologist working far out in the Vietnamese flatlands was flabbergasted to find a local police chief interrupt his work on the grounds that he was digging up bones on behalf of the United States Central Intelligence Agency. The decision to terminate the CIA unit was brought to Professor Scigliano by Smuckler. Babineau was not in Saigon at the time, so Professor Scigliano gave Jones the bad news. He recalls that Jones was "quite upset," as was the United States Mission which wanted the CIA unit to stay right where it was — sheltered by the groves of academe.

Within weeks, the entire "VBI Internal Security Section" had moved over to the offices of the United States Mission to operate, presumably, more in the open. By 1959, the United States was making little pretense of following the Geneva Accords anyway.

[ACADEMICS IN ARMORED CARS]

IN THE SPRING OF 1955 Diem gained control of the Army. The United States, which was (and still is) providing the entire South Vietnam Army payroll, said it wouldn't give out any more checks unless the Army played ball with our boy. Diem then used the Army to crush the sect that had controlled the Saigon police and elements of the far-flung *Sûreté*. The gargantuan task of rebuilding the entire Vietnam police apparatus, from traf-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fic cop to "interrogation expert," as a loyal agency of the Diem government then fell to Michigan State University.

Diem, lacking popular support, could only retain power through an effective police and security network. The American embassy urgently signaled the MSU contingent to concentrate on this problem, and, like good team players from a school with a proud football tradition, the professors went along.

The professors not only trained Diem's security forces but, in the early years of the Project, actually supplied them with guns and ammunition. In doing so, the East Lansing contingent helped to secure Diem's dictatorship and to provide the base and the arms for the "secret police" which were to make Madame Nhu and her brother infamous at a later date.

If not academic, the professors were at least professional. Many supplies—revolvers, riot guns, ammunition, tear gas, jeeps, handcuffs, radios — were requisitioned by the East Lansing School of Police Administration from stocks left over from America's aid to the French Expeditionary Corps. These supplies were then turned over to the Vietnamese who would strive to achieve Diem's own form of "consensus" government — a consensus gained largely by hauling the dissenters off to jail. Despite the largess left by the French, the professors found it necessary to order some $15 million in additional "equipment" from the United States Mission.

Listen to some of the official progress reports sent home to East Lansing by the professors:

November 8, 1955: "During the month of October we received notice of Washington's approval of the recommended expanded police program . . . Conferences were held at USOM on October 10 and the Embassy on October 23 and 24, trying to coordinate Internal Security Operations in Vietnam in which our government has an interest."

April 17, 1956: "The training of the commando squads of Saigon-Cholon police in riot control formations has continued during the month . . . A report on riots and unlawful assembly is nearing completion."

June 5, 1957: "Training of the Presidential Security Guard in revolver shooting began during the month. Thirty-four VBI agents completed the revolver course."

September 11, 1957: "Eight hundred pairs of Peerless handcuffs arrived in Saigon, but distribution is being delayed pending arrival of 400 additional cuffs."

February 17, 1958: "The training of 125 military and Civil Guard fingerprint technicians at the VBI proceeds satisfactorily. The Palace Guard is being put through another class in revolver training, with 58 men receiving instruction. Forty members of the VBI completed firearm training."

SECTION B - AMMUNITION

		Total	MAAG Indochina Surplus	To Be Procured From MDAP	Cost
1. .38 Cal.		2,678,000	none	2,678,000	$160,000
2. Carbine Ammo		450,000	available		
3. S.M.G. Cal .45		1,632,000	none	1,632,000	
4. Rifle .30 Cal., M1		6,240,000	available		
5. B.A.R.					
6. Launcher (Grenade)		32,000	available		
7. Launcher (Rocket-236)		3,200	available		
8. Mortar 60 mm	Smoke	750	available		
	H.E.	500	available		
	Illum.	1,000	available		
9. Rifle 57 mm (recoilless	Smoke	750	available		
	H.E.	1,000	available		
	Heat	750	available		
10. Riot Gun Ammo		200,000	none	none	20,000
11. Tear Gas Projectiles		4,000	none	none	42,000
12. Grenades Frag, Hand	Practice	1,000		1,000	
	Armed	3,500		3,500	
Rifle, M-1 Smoke		1,400		1,400	
Tear Gas		8,000		8,000	48,000*
White Phosphorus		12,000		12,000	
13. .50 Cal.**		72,000	available		
				Total	$270,000

*To be procured from civil sources at once for immediate use.
**For .50 Cal. M.G. mounted on Scout Car and Armored Cars.

An MSU Inventory, 1955

As befits a university project, many of the professors indulged in their academic specialties. Ralph Turner, a professor of police administration, feels that one of the Project's most singular achievements was the program whereby every Vietnamese citizen would be given an identification card — with a special American touch. The cards were laminated so the poor, plasticless Viet Cong would have difficulty forging them.

Dean Brandstatter did not move lock, stock and pistol to Saigon, but he managed frequent "inspection trips"— as did some 11 of the University officials, including President Hannah, all of course at government expense. Brandstatter, a former military policeman, utilized his expertise to immediate effect during one of his first trips. Rumors of a coup against Diem were escalating, and the East Lansing official personally inspected the Palace Guard to see that they had enough guns to meet the threat.

Brandstatter, a large, jovial man in his early fifties, and devoted follower of MSU's football fortunes, played talent scout for the police operation. The services that the MSU team was called upon to perform for Diem's security

apparatus were so esoteric that even its heralded School of Police Administration wasn't up to the job. Brandstatter had to recruit specially trained cops from all over the country. Fingerprint experts, small arms experts and intelligence experts came from the Detroit police force, the New York police force, the FBI and even the Department of Defense. Other professors, doing civil service work, felt a little left out and labeled the onslaught of police experts "mercenaries." This might seem a little unkind, but the term seems somewhat applicable since, at one point in the Project, only four of the 33 police advisors had roots at the Michigan campus; the others were nomads. The Project, of course, still bore the name — or the "cover" — of the MSUG since these "mercenaries" were all put on the MSU payroll and provided with faculty status. In the action filled world of the service station university, not only do the professors become activists, but the cops aspire to professorships.

[Decline and Fall]

Ngo Dinh Diem was a nice man to buy guns for, but in other areas of human endeavor, the professors discovered that he could be a tough man to do business with. Even Wolf Ladejinsky who broke bread regularly with Diem was subject to occasional indignities. When an issue of the *New Republic* appeared in Saigon containing an article mildly critical of the Diem regime, the President sent Ladejinsky packing off from the palace to buy up all the copies from the dozen English language kiosks in Saigon.

The game in Saigon was to cater to Diem's pettiness and paranoia, and for the most part the men from Michigan State played it. There appeared to be a conscious effort within the Project administration to prepare reports pleasing, or at least palatable, to the President. Milton Taylor, an MSU economics professor who went to Vietnam as a tax advisor, said that his reports were often rewritten by the Project head. When he questioned this practice he was told that there were "higher considerations" at stake; other universities were in hot pursuit of the juicy Vietnam contract.

It became necessary to forsake principles for the good of the Project. At times, in the Saigon of the late 1950s, that must have been difficult. Professor Adrian Jaffe of the MSU English Department, one of the most persistent critics of his university's "Vietnam Adventure," recalls some vivid street scenes. Each morning, men, and more often than not women and children, were hauled out of the jail directly across from his office at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Saigon, handcuffed, thrown into a van, and driven away to an island concentration camp known as a sort of Devil's Island à la Diem. Professors in the Project, because of their intimacy with the Vietnamese security apparatus, knew this was happening, Jaffe said, but his colleagues said and did nothing.

The moral question raised by Jaffe is dismissed by many veterans of the Project as "unprofessional." Perhaps more professional was the work of Wesley Fishel, who, as late as the fall of November 1959, wrote an article in the *New Leader* with the obfuscating title, "Vietnam's One-Man Democratic Rule." The text requires no recounting, except to observe that Fishel uses adjectives for Diem that only Jack Valenti might dare use for Johnson.

The failure of the MSU professors to bear witness against what are now known to be Diem's outrageous violations of civil liberties raises serious questions about them as men. But their failure as professionals in exercising the traditional role of the independent scholar as critic accounted in large part for the general ignorance of the United States public about the true nature of Diem's regime. Professors, presumed to be men of principle, were on the scene in Vietnam and had to be accepted as the best unprejudiced source of information. David Halberstam, after all, simply could have been mad at Madame Nhu.

The same disastrous vacuum of information occurred in this country only a decade before when the China experts, almost to a man, were purged as Reds and comsymps, and yahoos were all the public had left to hear.

In Vietnam, at least, there was a Buddhist monk with the fortitude to burn himself — and the public suddenly wondered how what they had been reading about Diem for six years could have been so wrong. But the professors, by this time, were long back in East Lansing. The MSU Vietnam Project ended rather abruptly in 1962. The University claims that it terminated the arrangement in the name of academic freedom — but the truth is, unfortunately, more complex.

Diem, painfully aware of the slightest criticism, was infuriated by the modicum of critical material published in the United States in the early '60s by veterans of the MSU "experience." Professor Jaffe and economist Milton Taylor wrote an essay for the *New Republic* in 1961 that set Diem's paranoia percolating. The author dared to suggest that the President rid himself of the Nhus. The contract between Diem and Michigan State stipulated that members of the Project could not use materials gathered on the job "against the security or the interests of Vietnam." In other words, they were to keep quiet. Taylor recalls that many of his colleagues in Vietnam felt he was being "disloyal" in publicly criticizing Diem.

The President was also miffed that in 1959 MSU had drastically curtailed its police work after being urged both by Diem and the United States Mission to plunge more

deeply into para-military work than it already had. MSU's reluctance was understandable, since a greater degree of involvement would just about require its professors to shoot off howitzers and drill troops in the jungle.

Nevertheless, the University genuinely believed that its contract would be renewed in 1962. President Hannah even sent a special envoy, Alfred Seelye, dean of the Business College, to Saigon to smooth things out by telling Diem that the University was prepared to weed out any future troublemakers in the Project by selecting personnel more likely to "write scholarly scientific studies and not sensational journalistic articles." Diem, however, surprised everybody. He was adamant: no more MSU.

With no deal in sight, the business dean proceeded to make a strong declaration in defense of the academic freedom of MSU professors and beat Diem in announcing that the contract would not be renewed.

[THE RUINS]

LIKE A FACTORY that has contracted for a job and then completed it, there is little evidence on the MSU campus that it was ever involved in Vietnam. Thousands of pages of mimeographed reports and documents sent from Saigon have been piled haphazardly in out-of-the-way files in the University library, uncatalogued and unused. MSU has not a single course, not even a study program, to show for its six years in Vietnam.

Professor Wesley Fishel still flies in and out of East Lansing, but now he goes to Washington and advises the administration on Vietnam, a role which allows him to visit Saigon occasionally — where he has the look of a man who would like another try. But there is nothing for him to do. Fishel has been careful to exclude the infamous *New Leader* article from the otherwise thorough 64-page bibliography on Vietnam and Southeast Asia which he distributes to his students.

MSU is still big on police. There are, literally, policemen all over the campus, almost beyond the wildest expansion of the human retina. There is the campus police — a complement of roughly 35 men in blue uniforms. Then there are the professors and visiting firemen at the School of Police Administration. Finally, it is hard to find a parking spot on campus since so many police cars are occupying the stalls; state police headquarters adjoins MSU.

With all this protection the University officials should feel safe. But they do not. President Hannah has lately been publicly worried about the possibilities of what he terms a "Berkeley-style" revolt. The vice-president of student affairs bluntly stated that MSU had been "selected" as the "next Berkeley." Hannah, fearful of "outside agitators," has suggested that there is an "apparatus" at work on campus that is a "tool for international communism." The University police have a special detail charged with keeping tabs on student political activities, especially anything "radical." Several years ago a member of this "Red squad" endeared himself to the student daily by trapping homosexuals in a state-built bathroom.

These conditions would be sufficient enough for the light-hearted to suggest that MSU is a Lilliputian police state, but that is silly. Professor Alfred Meyer of the Polititcal Science department, during his course on the Soviet political system, always gets a good laugh by telling the students to take a good look around campus if they want to know what the Soviet system is like.

Hannah's concern over Berkeley is more than apocryphal. If the Berkeley experience meant any one thing, it meant that the University wasn't doing its job. It had lost its sense of purpose; it no longer had meaning to the students. In that sense East Lansing is, assuredly, another Berkeley. The university on the make has little time for nonconforming students and rarely enough for conforming students. Its service function is the first priority. The students are, in Clark Kerr's idiom, only the "raw material" that has to be processed. That was the making of the Berkeley revolt, and the ingredients are available in excess portions at Michigan State.

Acting dean of international programs, Ralph T. Smuckler, is perhaps the one person at MSU who got something lasting out of the "Vietnam Adventure." He derived an ideology, and it is an ideology that goes Clark Kerr one better. Smuckler sees the future of the social sciences in the world-wide scope of the "action" projects he is now directing — in Formosa as he did in Vietnam. "Classroom teaching is a tame business," said Smuckler, "and anybody who doesn't see how his discipline fits into the overseas operations of the University is already obsolete."

To question the assumption that the academician of tomorrow must be an operator is to ask but part of the essential question about MSU's "Vietnam Adventure." And to ask whether the University officials are liars, or whether the MSU Project broke the spirit of the Geneva Accords, is also neglecting the primary question.

The essential query, which *must* be asked before the discussion of Michigan State's behavior can be put into any rational perspective, is this: what the hell is a university doing buying guns, anyway?

By Warren Hinckle in conjunction with Research Editor Sol Stern and Foreign Editor Robert Scheer. Material appearing in this special report originated in Mr. Scheer's pamphlet "How the U.S. Got Involved in Vietnam" and will also appear in The Vietnam Lobby *by Mr. Scheer and Mr. Hinckle to be published this spring by New American Library.*