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May 4, 1966

Genism

Dr. John A. Hanna, President
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

Dear President Hanna:

I have watched the continued phenomenal growth of Michigan State University under your leadership for many years and hold a great personal admiration for you and the University.

I have been greatly puzzled by the recent official reaction to the article referring to the proported retention of C.I.A. officials in the employ of Michigan State. Why is it necessary for the leader of a great academic institution to apologize for any assistance offered to our government in any manner or form? It seems to me that realistically the C.I.A. or any other intelligence facility is required by our nation in our struggle to remain free and able to maintain our way of life and the institutions such as yours resulting therefrom.

Incidentally, I noted in this morning's Free Press that Stanford University has also apparently divorced themselves of any connection with the C.I.A., so that this is not meant to be a criticism of you or Michigan State, only a sincere desire to gain some knowledge to show where my thinking is wrong when I feel, along with many other people to whom I have spoken, that this type of assistance to our government should be a source of pride rather than a source of apology.

Sincerely,

Raymond M. Catsman

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May 6, 1966

Dear Mr. Catsman:

Thank you very much for your thoughtful inquiry about Michigan State University's role in South Vietnam.

The reason we objected strongly to being wrongfully accused of providing cover to CIA agents is that a University cannot afford to engage in surreptitious activities because that is against the whole academic tradition. That is to say, we objected to it being charged that we only pretended to be carrying out an educational function whereas we were really assisting CIA agents in their operations without the knowledge and approval of the Government of South Vietnam.

This may be a fine distinction, but it is one that is sharply drawn in the minds of university people.

Another major concern is that our own and other educational programs in foreign countries might be compromised if foreign governments were led to believe that professors might be only CIA agents in disguise.

I certainly agree that the CIA has an important role to play, and hope you will understand why the University has made a valiant effort to have its name cleared without disparaging the necessary work of the CIA.

Sincerely,

President

Mr. Raymond M. Catsman
Catsman Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 708
Flint 7, Michigan

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