

COMMUNICATIONS

Editor, *Journal of Asian Studies*:

In the November 1962 issue of the *Journal of Asian Studies*, I have come across a review of my two books ("Decolonization of the Philippines: a Russian and a French View" by Theodore Friend).

I do not intend to state here my objections to the reviewer's opinion. I do not find it appropriate to enter into argument with one who does not observe the elementary rules of decent conduct and substitutes abuse for academic polemics. More than once have I met my American colleagues and had with them useful discussions conducted always in a spirit of mutual respect despite ideological differences. But you must agree that such words applied by Mr. Friend to my works as "nightmare," "hallucinations," and "paranoia" do not inspire a desire to start a discussion.

My purpose in writing to you is quite different.

To my great surprise I learned that the reviewer did not read my books at all: he does not know Russian and was helped by a certain Mrs. Ponafidine, who supplied him with some quotations from my writings. As you, Mr. Editor, may not know Russian either, I would like to inform you that the choice of quotations made by Mrs. Ponafidine was biased and deliberately misleading, and entirely distorted the essence of both my books. I believe that the Editors should have informed the readers that the article by Mr. Friend represents not a review of my works but a review of a "composition" by Mrs. Ponafidine.

May I add that in the Soviet Union and, I believe, in other countries too, not a single scientific magazine would offer its pages to a reviewer who does not know the language of the book whose merits he ventures to judge.

It is regrettable that two unscrupulous persons have misled the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Asian Studies* and eventually its readers.

PROF. DR. GEORGE I. LEVINSON

Editor, *Journal of Asian Studies*:

I should like briefly to reply to Professor Levinson's remarks about my review and the criticisms contained in it.

As to the method behind it: because Professor Levinson's books were otherwise unreviewed in this country, the *Journal of Asian Studies* agreed to my proposal of working with a translator. To assist me in presenting their conclusions to a readership of scholars, I therefore enlisted the services of Mrs. Elisabeth Ponafidine, a native speaker of Russian, with many years' experience in doing scholarly, legal, and accredited governmental translations from Russian and other languages. At considerable expense to myself, the most important sections and passages of both books were translated word for word, and others were synopsized or read to me at sight. The responsibility for seeing that the themes of Professor Levinson's volumes were given proper and balanced treatment is of course mine; to this end I conferred closely with Mrs. Ponafidine at every stage of her work over a period of months. As you will have seen, I indicated the nature of our teamwork and gratefully acknowledged her assistance on the first page of the review article.

As for the review itself: the pungent words which Professor Levinson collects occur in separate and rather bland contexts. I hope that they have not prevented him from grasping the substance of my reservations about his work, which are these:

(1) that the two books, covering forty years of recent Philippine history, reflect no archival research or personal interviews in either the Philippines or the United States.

(2) that the two books consistently advance oversimplified, aggressive military motives for American policy, when the whole range of American motives—political, economic, and strategic—is delineated in records which are available. but which have not been consulted.

(3) that the two books thoroughly miscon-

strue the basic political and economic forces at work in the Philippines, possibly because the author himself has neither been exposed to Philippine society, nor developed a familiarity with recent international scholarship concerning it.

I regret, of course, that Professor Levinson

does not attempt to defend his books, or to reply to my opinions upon them, opinions which I have supported with quotations and citations in a lengthy review. Naturally I remain open to, even eager for, discourse with our Russian colleagues.

THEODORE FRIEND