ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND COMMUNISM

The statement made by Mr. Killian of Institute policy is reprinted from the May, 1949 issue of "The Technology Review."

Recent reports in the public press call for a statement of the Institute's attitude toward Communism and toward freedom of thought and investigation.

The Institute is unequivocally opposed to Communism; it is also sternly opposed to the Communist method of dictating to scholars the opinions they must have and the doctrines they must teach. M.I.T. seeks first a Faculty and staff of thoroughly competent and of high integrity. Assuming this competence and integrity, it believes that its Faculty, as long as its members abide by the law and maintain the dignity of their profession, must be free to inquire, to challenge, and to doubt in their search for what is true and good. They must be free to examine controversial matters, to reach conclusions of their own, to criticize and be criticized. Only through such unqualified freedom of thought and investigation can an educational institution, especially one dealing with science, perform its function of seeking truth.

It is to be hoped that no office staff be intended for advocating the violent overthrow of the American Government or other criminal acts, or if the evidence of such acts were incontrovertible, immediate action will be taken which would protect the Institute, and, at the same time, preserve his rights. If this staff member should be convicted of such a charge, he would be discharged.

The Institute also wishes to make clear that it believes that the teacher, as a teacher, must be free of doctrinaire control originating outside his own mind. He must be free to be critical and independent, to question, and above all, to have the task of making the clear daylight without hidden allegiances or obligations which require him to distort his research or teaching in accord with dictates from without. If a teacher were found to be subject to improper outside control in his teaching, the Institute would regard him as incompetent.

The Institute believes that one of the greatest dangers of the present cold war and the present fear of Communism is the danger that they will cause America to relinquish or distort or weaken basic civil rights. This is a danger that is more serious than the social implications of a Communist.