On structural reform

If the commission on the Nature and Purpose of the MIT situation is to take anything more than a superficial look at the Institute in the field of structural problems, it will have to examine the underlying assumptions of the current structure of the Institute. Although there have been a number of changes made in several fields, the most important of which have been of the very basic nature which we feel must be contemplated by this commission.

Specifically, basic structures of the Institute which we feel have not been seriously questioned this year are:

1. "The Corporation. The Corporation is the supreme governing body of the MIT for purposes of organization, acts, suits, etc. It is also, in theory, the highest decision-making body, though it exerts little apparent day-to-day influence save through Chairman Killian and the Executive Committee. A necessary condition for appointment to the Corporation seems to be a high position in industry. Is this right? Does it matter? Should this be changed?

2. The Academic, Faculty, and Administrative Councils. These bodies comprise the highest faculty and administrative officials in various combinations. They meet behind closed doors without student representatives present to discuss important policies. Are they decision-making bodies, sounding boards for new programs, or forums for discussion of all or any of these, or what? What should their role be? We have felt for some time that many Institute policies ought to be determined by some "Institute Senate," which would be permanently and broadly representative of the community at any existing body.

3. The departments. Here, the record has been spotty. First, we feel the departments should be more responsive to the needs of students and junior staff, and that others have it here that decisions are made on faculty tenure, course requirements (except under the Academic Senate Act), and somewhat at any rate on student disciplinary policy. How is the department decision-making structure set up? How should it be? Can our great institutions of science and learning be anything more than a series of departments with no overall direction or policy?

Letters to The Tech

Aungy Almansi

Ed. Note: The following is the response to the annual letter from the MIT Alumni Fund. The letter was released to Tech by the Alumni Office.

To the Editor:

For the past fifteen years, I have withheld all support of MIT-financially, emotionally, and spiritually. The reason for this is simple: the Institute Board of Trustees has never had a meeting in my lifetime to discuss the future of the Public Relations Office, but that a professional journalist remain as its existence is practically a necessity to the student. How many times does a new book, used books purchased for a science distribution, and even a bookshelf, come to a second-hand store, and are we less responsible to needed change than they ought to be?

It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of topics which philosophy in our present era, but we feel that no re-examination of the MIT policy apparatus is meaningful unless it is done in this depth.

Backlash-Il

Backlash is brewing in Washington.

In response to student unrest and other political resources, Congress is considering a bill which would withdraw all federal funds from any institution which did not follow certain standards in preventing and dealing with demonstrations. The provisions of the bill are such that it is virtually impossible for any administration to prevent students from initiating some of the actions which require the cutoff of funds. If this bill becomes law, it will be a powerful blackmail weapon in the hands of any extremist group, right or left. They can demand certain concessions under threat of action which will require the loss to the institution of all federal funds. Yet it is typical of the hysterical reaction in Washington which may cause the nation legislatures to go after a fly with a sledgehammer.

Less directly related to student actions is the attempted by Senators Thurmond, Dukakis, and Eastland to set up a new body under the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Administration for Executive Department. The bill even permits the Chairman of the Subversive Activities Control Board to hold the post of chair of the new body, a provision which some have suggested was specifically designed for Otto Otepa, who was dropped from the top position security post in the State Department by the Administration. This move has been helped along by fears of "communists on campus, it seems to be part of a new effort to find evil under every nearbedrock.

Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas has resigned, presumably to avoid a possible censure by the Senate. At least until President Nixon appoints a successor, the newspaper spanglers of a scandal and a scandal are widespread. In the wake of all of this, America has lost one of its most brilliant judges and one of its foremost experts on the law.

Apparently this is to be considered a victory for those conserva- tive and muckrakers who drove him from office, but in point of fact, their gain is, in all probability, America's loss. Let us examine the actual facts, disregarding the political and sensational evidence, of the Fortas case.

Prior to his Supreme Court appointment, Fortas, as a founding partner in the law firm of Arnold, Fortas, and Porter, used to handle contracts for Mr. Louis Wolfson, an industrialist who also played the stock market and who had made use of his influence to help Wolfson to defend himself. When it became possible to seek to avoid a possible conflict of interest, Fortas terminated all connections he had with the firm.

This was not quite the case, however. As everyone at MIT knows, the Library and the MIT Education is to take anything more than a guess at any financial sacrifice. If the commission on the Nature and Purpose of the MIT situation is to take anything more than a superficial look at the Institute in the field of structural problems, it will have to examine the underlying assumptions of the current structure of the Institute. Although there have been a number of changes made in several fields, the most important of which have been of the very basic nature which we feel must be contemplated by this commission.

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