**A parting word**

This issue brings Volume 89 of The Tech to a close. While it is in transition and renewal, the newspaper as new editors with new ideas take over, the Institute whose events we have covered for the past year remain essential. In the wake of the nation—searching for the self confidence and sense of purpose which have been eroded by the war and our increasing recognition of the gap between the nation’s professional principles and its actions.

The principles which formed the basis for the sense of purpose which united the Institute in the forties and fifties were a belief in a traditional form of academic freedom, service to the nation, and professional education. Service to the nation and following the wishes of the government seemed normal.

Today we are witnessing a disintegration of that consensus. Not only has a generation learned from the Vietnam war that it cannot trust its own country; it has also learned from experiencing affluence that it can do without it. Consequently, more and more undergraduates have become disenchanted with the Institute’s emphasis on professional education at the undergraduate level which seems to fit only one to be an acquisitive, hyper-efficient cog in a machine that he can’t control and MIT’s complicity in multinationals like IBM.

Members of this community who worry about principles and issues are now looking in a battle to determine the principles and upon which the war and the Institute is to be based. Recent political actions by a variety of groups may be looked upon as probes to determine what these principles now are and open them to question. Ironically, in their search for the bedrock of principles on which the Institute is based, alien groups (though they won’t admit it for their own reasons) have found that there are none.

What does this mean? It means that out of conclusion or announcement recognition that the Institute’s basic sense or purpose is shaky, the administration has consistently based its actions on the need to minimize conflict rather than upon any basic articles of faith. The war and the Institute group seeking solutions has been granted something in the hopes of preventing reactive conflict. This policy of reactive involvement and pressure on each squeaky wheel will only work as a stopgap measure. If continued indefinitely, the result will be an invisible fragmentation of the institution, with each interest group finding that this is the way to get things done. As long as this philosophy motivates Institute policies, what constitutes purpose exists between groups will diminish.

What will it take to prevent fragmentation of the Institute and (in a similar way) the entire country? It will take a concerted effort to redefine the principles and sense of purpose which have held the campus together in previous years. We detest little of this going on now, partly because everyone seems to be busily putting out brush fires and partly because the confusion within the community about the WW-II/Cold War concept of service to the nation which now masquerades as academic freedom and recently-popularized concepts of responsibility to humanity.

It may be that the Institute will remain in its present state of confusion because whenever we can put its house in order and tell the Silent Majority that our national task at this point in time is to attain social justice, save the environment, and reduce the arms race the Silent Majority takes its orders from whoever gives them, this should restore our sanity and sense of purpose. If the Institute is to survive as an entity at all, however, we must begin now to search for some philosophical foundations on which we can rebuild our sense of purpose and confidence in the future of the Institute.

**Behind the scenes**

Well, the latest NASA cuts in personnel and projects seem to have dispelled any somewhat forgotten fact about the Nixon Administration—its Republicanism. Here we are, all, to the age of the balanced-budget.

Balanced, that is to say, in more ways than one. Take NASA as a case in point. Space money is supposed to be really expensive! Yet the most recent budget proposal has the cuts currently being announced by Thomas O. Paine in Washingtonpeg the reduction for the next fiscal year. But when you look at the list of projects which will be funded, that doesn’t seem right at all.

NASA is stretching out the Agency program all right, but they are also asking for funding for a top which can run to the hundred million mark. These figures are a little over the line. It appears that the regression which the nation now must masquerades as academic freedom and recently-popularized concepts of responsibility to humanity.

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