Taxing our food

The poor budgetary condition of the Commonwealth of Massa-
chusetts has led the state Corporation and Taxation Depart-
ment to impose a tax on contract meals plans at colleges and
universities. This tax on meals, which traditionally
have been subject to the state’s meals tax, are now being taxed
which applies to meals in restaurants and
the retail food-service outlets. To an MIT student on a Commons
plan, that tax represents a cost of up to $55 added to the more
than $2,000 he or she may already be paying each year for
his or her meals.

The justification for the meals tax is that it is a luxury tax, a
luxury tax for the state without imposing upon the
worthiness of life, a way of preventing a high-gestalt sales tax rate.

The tax was first imposed in 1974, it was said, that it applied only to restaurants and “luxury” food service.

For this reason, and exemption for meals costing $1 or less
excluded in the tax legislation. Student meals originally fell
within the rubric of this $1 exemption, meals on contract plans
were not cost less than $1, and therefore were eligible for
exemption.

Now the state seems to have forgotten about the luxury
impact of this tax. Claiming that student meal costs more than $1
are not subject to the meal tax, the taxation officials seem to be arguing that
one can actually buy a “non-luxury” meal anywhere in these inflated
prices. Some people have pointed out.

Claiming that the $1 is the level of “luxury” is just an excuse; in 1974, these
people that want to equate Commons food with that of fine restaurants
say that it is as much a taxable luxury to eat hamburger in
three weeks as it is to eat eating in a luxury hotel. Even if the
state is said as a standard for the luxury argument, the simple
case that the state does not make contract meal plans a luxury-
ized tax for the state the state is willing to say that eating in and out of
the state is not a luxury tax.

For a student in Baker House, Senior House or East
House, or with no legal means of cooking regular, nourishing hot
meals, taxation for eating out to Commons food, to
take the only regular source of meals on campus? For a
working 60-hour week and studying, of course, it is not a luxury but to have to cook for himself.
300 more people live in the same building with
student who lives, who is not designed to allow any of them to cook for themselves — it is
primary to provide a centralized meal plan for them? The obvious
answer is:

The Tech has always supported the right of MIT dormitory
rooms were not to be forced to take Commons meals plans. We have
read cases that the tax did not like Commons food, which
we did not agree with that of the dining halls, which objected
of Commons or who wanted to cook for himself, so should be given the right to take Commons, of taking care of himself.
not make the student at MIT. Commons is an important, useful,
valuable service. We feel it is no more fair to tax those students
who may have been forced to take Commons, and we resent the state’s attempts to do
something about it.

The Tech urges the MIT administration to continue to fight
the taxation of contract meal plans for students. This fight can
profit from several fronts: by supporting the suit brought by other
student groups which seek a chance for a fair hearing of their
case do not make contract meals plans a luxury — that
is, taxing: by educating the public to the meaning of this
taxation; by aiding legislation exempting such
contract meals plans at colleges and universities, which traditionally
are subject to the state’s meals tax, are now being taxed.

By Philip G. Hampton, II.
I am gratified to be receiving correspondence on the subject of the
Black Side after only two col-

umns, for it shows that people are ready to take up the cudgels at MIT. (See letters on this page.)

It is the purpose of the Black Side, to lessen the overall ignor-
ance about Black people that I have found prevalent in the MIT community.

I am equally appalled, however, by the horridous misin-
terpretation and misrepresent-
ing of my previous letter (see opposite page) in full be-
cause they are so blatantly ridic-
ulous, but a few points must be emphasized.

First of all, Mr. Abraham implies that I was suggesting
the misplacement of blacks in an
institution of unqualified blacks.
Neither I, nor the Black Stu-
dents’ Union, ever sug-
grated that unskilled students of
any race be seen as less qualified.
Notice, too, that I did not sug-

gest that MIT lower its academic
standards. I simply pointed out that
MIT keeps its doors open to students of
all races who have demonstr-
ated potential, but lack cer-
tain math or science skills,
which is a far cry from advocating
the admission of inferior high school
students. Such non-mat-
turenpeople be denied ad-
misions to MIT, and thereby
the American society as a
whole turn its back on potential
contributors to society because
of race, class, or environment?
Mr. Abraham’s accusation that
students of color who have
denied entrance to qualified
whites is beyond belief.
First, MIT has never admitted un-
skilled persons of any race. Third,
MIT has always had to de-
respect the quality of
applications because of space
limitations. I only request that
one of the qualified applicants
be given the same kind of
admission to MIT desired by
Black students.

The letter written by Jesse Abraham
is published in full because it
steers away from what I believe to be a
more innocuous interpretation.
In fact, I believe that it is unfair to IMI
students.

To both Ms. Kayton and Ms.
Jesse Abraham

To the Editors:
The tune of the column in The Tech last Friday (October 17) about Black admissions policy really put me off. The author felt that Black people deserved special treatment in admissions and special allowances in ac-
ademic. What he stated as “con-
cern for equality” is in fact a “concern for equality.” He feels that MIT is enjoined to overcompensate for society’s in-
equities through the allocation of a disproportionate amount of its resources to this select group and through adopting a quota system for their admission.

To seek these persons out, contribute that they want to attend MIT and to try to “patch up” their background to put
them at the level of the rest of the class takes resources away from others but, more importantly, changes the philo-
dence of the admissions office from one of across the board equality to special treatment for
some, that infringes on the rights and opportunities of the major-
ity. This selective treatment (by virtue of its very existence) denies some-
one entrance who wants to be quali-
fied. The author goes on to say that the student is not to blame but that MIT is.

To the Editor:
In last Friday’s The Tech side column, the author con-
cludes on the lack of “con-
cern for equality” at MIT and asks why blacks don’t
get more special treatment. Does he know that it’s against the law to
discriminate?

If you, the editors, would be to really liberal minded then why not have a column about American Indian students,
left-handed Lithuanians, Asian American, Africans, Europeans, the po-
ibilites are infinite.

The author goes on to claim that MIT students spend more
money should be spent to
case size class. This does not
be to good economics. A
average cost of living is.

Also mentioned in the arts
is a new black frat, K&P. I do
understand how some people
et about what’s going on, but equal policies and to

The whole point is to

Africans, Europeans, the po-

The whole point is to