EMOTIONAL CRISSES NOT UNIQUE TO MIT

By William Lasser

MIT is present in the grip of a race-relations controversy which threaten to destroy both the spirit and the campus between blacks and whites, between students and administration. It began innocently enough, with the suggestion that the Technoiogy Contnuity Association publish a picture of Grogo, the University's mascot, in the Freshman Pimurtual. However, after a week of charges and countercharges, calls for apologies and demands for action, the matter of uproar which is beginning to rival last spring's Thurmond fracas.

There are two incidents between the two occasions which lead one to look for characteristics of MIT which could have led to them. What is that makes tensions flare so rapidly here?

Both began with an act of publication which was subsequently called "in-sensitive" and which, in its charged environment, violated the standards of the MIT community. In both cases, a large number of students reacted initially with nothing more than a shrug, however, as the implications of using real names for Negro students living in Africa were pointed out, then grew, and finally, elaborately small number of people contacted the administration with the President and others responsible.

Several characteristics common to these two events deserve mention: both students provided a medium for the release of pent-up emotional issues; both created immediate demands for apologies and both produced the most common reaction of most students at MIT both last spring and this fall. Whether or not the incidents were to be tolerated, they were charged. Violated the standards of the MIT community. Both involved high emotional issues. First sex. then race along with the MIT community. In both cases, a

perspectives

Grogo raises vital issues

By David B. Kornetz

The controversy surrounding the publication in the Freshman Pimurtual of the Technoiogy Contnuity Association mascot Grogo is not unique to the African homeland of polarized students more than any issue has since the program ended about six years ago. Behind the uproar are several questions affecting every student at MIT.

The first problem is the basic question of racism. The perpents responsible for the item were not aware that it would be interpreted as a racial slur — it was normal for them to assume that grogo comes from Africa and most people

Reprint, Racist, Due

would realize it. Black students and staff saw it differently, and the sense of insensitivity inherent in minority group members, raised strongly.

Many feel that the entire issue has been blown out of proportion; these people feel that since there was no offense intended, none should be taken. For the same reason that TCA could not appreciate the problem, these people cannot either. And the problem is simple to state, but impossible to correct. They do not fully understand that members of a minority group that have been subjected to generations of oppression, insults and degradation can be inherently sensitive sometimes almost to a point of paranoia. This can be particularly true for blacks, Jews, American Indians, and even Irish Catholics. The smallest gesture of insensitivity against any of these minorities is often met defensively. But what if TCA, by some stretch of imagination, did intend the picture of Grogo? Kampala, Uganda as a racist slur? Does the Committee on Discipline have the right to summarily expel a student for such action? Although freedoms of expression are not necessarily guaranteed by the Constitution to the employees and students of the institution, the growth of academic freedom during the last quarter-decade has brought free speech and a press on campuses closer to realization than ever before. And although it might be argued that TCA's publication was an official statement of MIT, the censoring of any publication is legitimate only to the degree that the institution of g l IT, the censor.t~np

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"...how can MIT condemn a student for what could be construed as no more than a weak racial joke?"

By Mark J. Murkowsky '79 — Chairman

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The Tech welcomes Letters to the Editor, which should be typewritten and no more than 200 words. Unsigned letters will not be published. All letters should be signed and include your daytime telephone number.

Opposition to the black student boycott

Black students at Harvard, Brown, Yale, MIT and other schools have been involved in a series of events during the past five years, including the formation of the National Network of Black Student Boycotts. In 1968, the black students at Harvard University staged a sit-in at the administration building in protest against the admission of a white student. The same year, the black students at MIT also staged a sit-in at the administration building in protest against the admission of a white student. The same year, the black students at MIT also staged a sit-in at the administration building...

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The only students who have been consistently ignored by the administration are the black students. In 1970, the black students at MIT staged a sit-in at the administration building in protest against the admission of a white student. The same year, the black students at MIT also staged a sit-in at the administration building in protest against the admission of a white student. The same year, the black students at MIT also staged a sit-in at the administration building...

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