**Opinion**

Steve Solnick

**The need to talk**

"To become equal, perhaps we must first recognize that we are different."

First, there is a racial problem at MIT to be solved. If this article, as in the previous two, will you focus on black-white relations even though there are other very wide-ranging and important ethnic groups on campus? One member of the Deans' Office commented that the Oriental situation at MIT was "even more acute."

While students, if asked, this question, would probably say, "Yes, there is too much separation between the two groups." There is certainly no question that it is necessary to solve this. Numerous predominantly black living environments (PBLE's) exist in the housing system among them "Chocoo City in New House and the Alpha Delta Kappa Alpha sorority located in McCord. Black students are underrepresented in the fraternity system, in the view of many, from Deans to the Chancellor.

Black and white students often form dyads within their classes and associate largely with them in the dining halls and social scenes.

Black students, if asked whether there was a problem, generally confess that one exists. The problem, though, is not the existence of predominantly black living environments or of racially exclusive cliques, but rather the lack of interaction outside these social scenes. While black students can be found throughout the housing system, and white students can be found in Chocolate City, the problem at MIT is that at Princeton or Harvard who is taking the initia- tion for extensive interactions?

Black students will also point to various cases of overt personal racism which they encounter at MIT. Meeting instructors who instuctive to blacks, or that they cannot handle the course work at MIT, in the view of Black Student Union co-chairman Sam Katz, may cause them to become alienated.

Another concern, while quick to point out that there are "institutionally sanctioned" unattractive areas at MIT, say it is true that "certain patterns of segregation have emerged from the voluntary ele- ments in the housing system." Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Mike Hopme summed up the virtually unanimous view of administrators: "If they (blacks or foreign students) choose to live together, they should be able to live together."

It is probably this point of ad- ministration policy which is most misunderstood by white students. The facts are simple, though: in the view of many, predominantly black living environments are not detrimental to the MIT environ- ment but are necessary for the black community.

Assistant Dean Rob Randolph explained that, "Blacks are under- sulin other blacks to, where they would drive me crazy and those wanting to help." He added that predominantly black living en- vironments are "a needed support group: a place where they can be themselves."

Assistant Dean Donny Kellerman underscored the need for black students to have an effective sup- port group: "It is the affect of be- ing a minority in a hostile en- vironment.

Numerous people interviewed cited the "special needs" of black students in a white dominated en- vironment. Many students who opted out of segregation in the housing system will comment that if predominantly black living en- vironments are maintained they should also allow for living groups which are predominantly Jewish or Latin. The answer, it seems, can only come from a rotational evaluation of just what the "needs" of black stu- dents are. Just as something, each of us must do for itself.

Hopme has said the problem of racial tension arises from "in- dividual perceptions."

A "Human Awareness Group" in the Deans' Office has been trying to explore these prejudices in a "non-blasoning atmosphere." People need to learn to deal with their own feelings.

What about segregation in the Dining Halls? Well, it seems we may already be encountering the problem of viewing the racial situation on this campus with racially blinded eyes. A view that

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