Another new beginning

At the beginning of each new volume of *The Tech*, tradition and the need for change dictate that the new Editorial Board’s vision of the coming year be set down in print. In this manner, the community is presented with a preview of our goals, and the staff with a set of ideals.

As we approach the end of *The Tech’s* first century of publication on November 16, 1981, the weight of tradition will necessarily play an important role in shaping the newspaper’s direction. Tradition builds upon itself, and it is essential that the current staff both accept the responsibilities and maintain the ideals first conceived by the paper’s founders, and perpetuated by many others over the years.

A primary responsibility is the provision of an open forum for the diverse viewpoints and perspectives of the members of the MIT community. Although the disputes among the administration, faculty and student body, and the staff with a set of ideals, the paper itself must be consistent in its purview. Rather than siding with a particular party in the ongoing policy disputes among the administration, faculty and student body, The Tech will strive to advocate the position we feel is right—and stick with it.

Above all, however, *The Tech* is a newspaper, obligated to provide a representative, accurate and thorough coverage of issues and events of importance to the MIT community. Although the most pressing, this last burden is also the most difficult to shoulder. But let us not forget that we, the met, will have left a fitting legacy for the next century of *The Tech* boards which is sure to follow.

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After spending a few hours in the crowds, I was happily able to conclude that this was so. The thousands of people who filled Washington’s streets last Tuesday, ranging from elementary school students to elderly couples carrying lawn chairs, truly wanted to greet the hostages. But, more importantly, they wanted to show the freed Americans—and themselves and the world—that America was all right, that the time had come once again for this nation to assume its rightful place in the world.

Americans, so the current media analysis goes, are using the returns hostages as a focus for national catharsis, a release of all the frustration built up during the captivity. The patriotism elicits part of the country’s emotional outputting in the defeat kind which challenges the world to try to understand us just one more time... It seems likely that the new spirit of nationalism will be with us for some time, along with the politics of international importance from which it sprang.

So patriotism is “in” for the Reagan administration, along with tight budgets and mink stoles. The nation is currently experiencing the kind of patriotism that makes crowds break into spontaneous renditions of “God Bless America,” but it is also the kind of patriotism that dictates “my country, right or wrong.”

The dangerous part of this new patriotism was best demonstrated by people’s reaction to Reagan’s promise of “swift and effective retribution” for future terrorist incidents. The crowd behind the South Lawn roared its approval. I stood and looked around, suddenly fearful of the applause and cheer which surrounded me. Instead of the varied crowd standing outside the South Lawn, I saw “crows”—18 and 20 and 21 and 20 years old who Reagan might have to draft to fulfill the promise he was making. And, instead of being glad for the hostages safe return, I was, very, very scared.