Our human rights have been created by society

Do human rights exist independent of human society? David Honig's letter in Friday's Tech asks you, "What are your own obligations?" (Oct. 4) assumed, "one's life and its reward are one's own because of rights that exist without law and agreements in society. The only reason why we should be like someone else is for their own ultimate benefit." It is conceivable that "one's own" and "their own" (or "our" and "we") are the same. Honig supposed that each individual has an "ultimate" or "fundamental" duty to the advancement of society since failing to do so ultimately cyclically results in the collapse of society. But wouldn't this think that our own rights exist as a result of society?

Honig assumed, in essence, that "one's own" and "their own" rights evolve from society. Does man really have a natural right to his own, to his own rights? Honig did not supply as a basis for his claim, any statement, nor is there any evidence to support his claim.

Honig asked, "Does not a just government have the right to make promoting 'their' or 'our' rights?" Honig did not supply as a basis for his claim, any statement, nor is there any evidence to support his claim. The answer is that human rights exist only because society grants them to its members (such as its members' responsibilities) for its members, and to enforce them through government.

Society is a collection of relatively powerless individuals. Yet collectively they wield considerable power. Thus society can choose to establish rights (and responsibilities) for its members, and to enforce them through government.

Society needs good teachers in its schools to ensure the continuance of society and its future members. Society needs good help in taking care of its care less fortunate members. If you care at all about people besides yourself, teaching and helping others are some of the best ways to contribute to the advancement of human society.

David Honig asks, "Why shouldn't abortion be one's motivation?" Why not?

To the Editor:

We would like to announce the formation of the Disarmament Study Group at MIT. "Group" [scientists, professors and students] is being organized against Star Wars program. ["Scientist and Engineers Against Star Wars," Sept. 17].

The letter of the pledge is attached to this letter.

We urge people who pledge were collected Friday solely toward goal of 1,000 science and engineering students. Congressional sides have told us that opposition on the new SDI bill, students, staff and faculty could be especially damaging to the credibility of the SDI program.

We don't know the full extent of SDI research funding at MIT, but three professors to our knowledge are already accepting Star Wars funding and many more may have the opportunity. Professors have told us that the SDI office may distribute grants in research areas not directly related to the SDI constituency. We must express our objections to the SDI plan now, before MIT is forced to become dependent on SDI to act on the sentiments of many MIT officials, who privately oppose Star Wars.

We would like to reiterate our request, in a petition organized last spring by MIT Student Philosophy and signed by 791 students, that MIT publish a complete list of projects shifted to SDI and new SDI research grants, both on campus and at Lincoln Laboratory. For students who wish to more actively oppose Star Wars, a new petition is available, "MIT Students Against the Strategic Defense Initiative." The petition will hold its first meeting this Friday, 4 p.m., in MIT Room 7-337 at 7 p.m. SDI opponents from other schools such as Harvard will also be attending.

Only the influence of the military-industrial complex could keep such ideas as dangerous as Star Wars afloat, bearing out the threat of President Eisenhower as predicted in his famous "military-industrial complex" speech. Eisenhower answered the threat: "Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the political leadership to陽 activities consistent with the self-interest and the survival demands of free people."

Feedback

Pledge against SDI has arrived at MIT

Participation in SDI by individual MIT research would lend the University's name to a program of dubious scientific validity, and give legitimacy to this program at a time when the involvement of prestigious research institutions is being sought to increase Congressional support. Researchers who oppose the SDI program yet choose to participate should therefore recognize that this would contribute to the political acceptance of SDI.

The likelihood that SDI funding at MIT would restrict academic freedom and blur the distinction between classified and unclassified research is greater than for other sources of funding. SDI officials openly concede that any successful unclassified project may become classified. The structure of SDI research programs also makes it likely that MIT will be part of a Research Consortium with other universities and industries who take SDI as a basis for contracts and grants. Moreover, the potentially political nature of the research may involve legal retaliation against critics of the Export Administration Act.

The SDI program and its political acceptance depend crucially on the participation of individual scientists and engineers at all levels of research. As one step towards halting this program, we pledge neither to accept SDI support nor work on projects funded by SDI, and encourage others to join us in this refusal. We hope to persuade Congress and the public not to support this deeply misguided and dangerous program.

Erratum

In David Honig's letter ("Your work is for your own benefit, deciding your obligations or for your self", Oct. 4) the following was published: "The motivation for one's work should be one's own ultimate benefit because one's life is one's own. Thus, the reason for turning down a $33k job teaching high school physics should be because one wants to be a teacher." The letter writer meant that a $33k job building missile guidance systems for a $16k job teaching high school physics should be because one wants to be a teacher.