Column/Simson L. Garfinkel

MIT honor-bound to accept protests

Spring has finally arrived. The grass is growing, and the sun is shining. And the Campus Police are arresting MIT students for protesting what our beliefs are. The thrashing of ideas and political drama which results from these actions clarifies and defines our stands. Indeed, in many cases we are not even aware of the issues until they have been brought to light by protest.

Universities are safer places for protests and political demonstrations than society at large. Universities can tolerate levels of protest which would avoid the Campus Police tests define for us, as a society, the university is free to live in a world with no lack of is. The university administration experience. The university administration is honor-bound to accept protest on campus. The university is free to or not to the demands of the protesters if the protesters feel justified, but the students’ right to protest cannot be denied. Protest has become an essential part of the university experience.

The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to think for himself. To say to himself that this is black and this is white. But societies really, ideally, want a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society. One of the paradoxes of society is that precisely at the point when you begin to develop a conscience, you must find yourself at war with your society. The function of education is to help you think for yourself and change society if you think yourself as an educated person.

The process of discussions, political demonstrations and protests define for us, as a society, what our beliefs are. The thrashing of ideas and political drama which results from these actions clarifies and defines our stands. Indeed, in many cases we are not even aware of the issues until they have been brought to light by protest.

The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to think for himself. To say to himself that this is black and this is white. But societies really, ideally, want a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society. One of the paradoxes of society is that precisely at the point when you begin to develop a conscience, you must find yourself at war with your society. The function of education is to help you think for yourself and change society if you think yourself as an educated person.

Letters to the Editor are welcome. They should be addressed to The Tech, PO Box 29, MIT, Cambridge, MA 02218, or by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. Letters should be typed and bear the authors’ signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. The Tech reserves the right to edit or condense letters. We regret we cannot mark these letters as such and print them in a distinctive format.

Letters to the Editor are welcome. They should be addressed to The Tech, PO Box 29, MIT, Cambridge, MA 02218, or by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. Letters should be typed and bear the authors’ signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. The Tech reserves the right to edit or condense letters. We regret we cannot mark these letters as such and print them in a distinctive format.