MIT should eject ROTC from campus

 Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is intolerable at MIT. The decision that violates this principle should be allowed to remain on campus. The Reserve Officers' Training Corps adheres to the military's policy of banning homosexuals and should therefore be removed.

 ROTC disenrolled Robert L. Bettker '90 because of his homosexual sexuality and is now seeking to have him repatriate his scholarship funds to the government. This action is reprehensible. Bettker wants to serve in the Navy, and there is no reason why he should not be allowed to do so. The Department of Defense has provided no legitimate explanation of why he or other homosexuals are unfit for military service, and for this reason it is grossly unfair of ROTC to expect repayment.

 The Bettker case raises the question of why MIT retains its affiliation with a program that treats one of its students so poorly and does not allow a substantial part of the student body to participate. While ROTC does provide important benefits to many students, it denies them entirely to homosexual students. The Institute would certainly cut its ties with an organization that treated blacks or women in such a way; homosexuals deserve equal consideration.

 Rather than forcing ROTC off immediately, MIT should tell the military that it will eject the training corps from campuses if homosexual students are not allowed full participation with a fixed time frame of four or five years. Such an arrangement would lessen the impact on students currently enrolled in ROTC and those who will be entering next year. It would also allow MIT time to seek support from other colleges and universities. Perhaps if a large number of them decided to withdraw their sponsorship of and against discrimination, then the armed services would be forced to reassess their ban on homosexuals.

 If at the end of the time frame, the military had still not changed its stance on homosexuals, MIT should cut its affiliation with ROTC. Such a move would undoubtedly be hard on some students, but this is one instance where MIT has no choice but to do what is right. The symbolic implications of such an action would be in line with MIT's democratic values.

 Less than a month ago, the military had finally agreed to a fixed time frame for homosexuals. If the military had not agreed to this compromise, MIT could have forced the armed services to resign to its position. Unlike MIT, ROTC allows its policy to have no impact on homosexuals, it has no place on this campus.

 DISSENT

 ROTC should not be forced out

 The Reserve Officers' Training Corps' refusal to allow homosexual students to participate in its programs is deplorable, and students removed from the program for homosexuality should not be forced to refund scholarships. But forcing ROTC off the MIT campus is not the answer.

 If MIT were to break its ties with ROTC, it would be shirking its responsibility as a member of the democratic system. ROTC is not an independent group, free to discriminate and terrorize as it will. It is a part of the American armed forces, and as such it is the responsibility of and responsible to all American citizens. If the members of a democratic society refuse to temper the calumny of their government, let them pay the price.

 The military's policy of banning homosexuals and their supporters from MIT does not pass the test of justice and democracy. It denies the students' right to choose which universities and colleges they wish to attend. The military's policy of privacy does not apply in this instance.

 Arrests should not be part of the process of expressing disagreement with the military. Such arrests are unnecessary and will not solve the problems at hand. The administration must find a way to peacefully resolve the issue at hand.

 MIT wrong to crack down

 Part of the function of a university is to foster an atmosphere of learning and to provide a place to foster a debate and protest in democratic society. MIT failed in that aspect of its mission when it arrested 23 of its own students at Friday's protest rally and six others at Monday's rally.

 On Friday, the students had erected a small shanty in a roped-off section of lawn near the Institute of Applied Science. The shanty was meant to symbolize the students' solidarity with South African blacks and to be a focal point for discussion on the divestment issue. The structure was not obstructing normal activities, nor was it in any way dangerous. What the administration did provide a legitimate way for the students to express their opposition to MIT's investments in companies doing business in South Africa. In erecting the shanty, the students were acting within the best of America's democratic ideals.

 In arresting the students and tearing down the shanty, the administration should have known it needs a lesson in how democracy operates. True, the students had not asked permission before they built the shanty, but the structure created nothing more than an inconvenience. It would have been a small matter for MIT to allow the demonstration to proceed unhindered. As an educational institution, MIT should respect the freedom of speech and encourage political debate, especially when its own students are involved.

 Only demonstrators who were the victims of MIT's police action. In an almost random act of aggression, Metropolitan Shanty Commission Police arrested Sean M. Doobsgrey '93, a photographer who was covering yesterday's demonstration. Arriving at the scene of the protest, the officers ignored MIT's request to end the demonstration, which it was tantamount to arresting the students...

 Reacting to legitimate, peaceful protest with arrests undermines MIT's position as a institution that should exist between the administration and the student body. The more violent and capricious MIT becomes, the more student support for its goals will dissipate. The administration must find a way to handle the problem of student demonstrations more peacefully and less violently.

 Arrests reveal intolerance

 Column by Andrew L. Fish

 Four years ago, Senior Vice President William R. Dickson '54 ordered the arrest of eight MIT students and the dismantling of a "shantytown" at a peaceful anti-apartheid protest on Kresge Oval. The arrests were in response to demonstrations. The fact that the administration learned nothing in the past five years. When the Coalition Against Apartheid erected a shanty at a peaceful protest on Friday afternoon, Dickson again ordered arrests—the time 26 protesters were arrested. Two students being a black South African, were taken to prison for protesting MIT's investments in companies doing business in South Africa. The students were arrested without a warrant, without probable cause, and without any reasonable suspicion of guilt.

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