By Laura Fishlev

“The Christmas tree incident exposed a lot of organizational flaws,” said Markham '81. The Undergraduate Association General Assembly has been severely criticized for the way it handled the situation, and some GA officers have started to attempt to change some of the by-laws of the organization.
The criticism first became vocal after the vote at the November 29 meeting approving a proposal which opposed the placing of a Christmas tree and wreaths, and urged MIT not to put up any Christmas decorations at all. An emergency meeting on December 3, called by a petition of GA members, the original resolution was overturned.

Another critic, Markham '81, had the large number of representatives, 19, who were required to sign a petition in order to recall the vote of the GA on November 29. According to Article II, Section 7 of the GA Constitution, either 1/4 of the GA or 10 percent of the student body are required to sign a petition to call for an emergency meeting. Upon looking over the by-laws, Markham commented that while in 1969 the students were eager to sign a petition, “10 percent of the undergraduate student body is a ridiculous high number in 1979. Two hundred, let’s say, should have recall.”

Another complaint, brought up by New House President Ken Turkewitz '80, was the lack of publicity of the December 3 meeting. He said that he himself was notified of the meeting twenty minutes before its commencement and that most of the GA representatives in New House he contacted had not known about the meeting. Turkewitz complained that many of the complaints were also being directed toward the undergraduate body. He also added that the meeting had signed the petition against the original action as Scott Silber, President of BU, for his actions concerning the Christmas tree affair.

By Jim Wingo and David Linglebahc

December 7- The Boston University has experienced a mini-Blackstone crisis, as students and faculty alike protested to the BU administration about what they felt were the numerous violations of academic freedom. The protest was directed primarily at Dr. John Silber, President of BU, for his alleged “purges.” BU media were “gagged,” and for his efforts to break the Faculty Union. Both students and the faculty claim that he had become a “dictator,” destroying the democratic structures that permit student and faculty feedback into the administrative process.
The faculty and student protests were brought about when about fifty BU professors, attaining in support of a BU clerical workers strike, refused to cross picket lines and held classes outdoors on the BU campus. According to the Red Paper, five of the fifty firemen in full gear were ordered by Silber for disciplinary action by Silber, based on their prior leadership of the picketing BU faculty. Silber based his action on Articles 10 and 21 of the contract, citing the professors for participating in a “sympathy strike” and for “gross neglect of duties.”

What has clouded the entire public debate, aside from the lack of evidence to support the allegations, is the all too close cooperation with the local media and the American Civil Liberties Union by senior BU administration officials.

The Boston University academic freedom issue is more than an internal BU affair, though. According to Murray Levin, one of the five professors facing disciplinary action, “It’s the first missile attack on tenure in the history of the United States.” Professors at MIT and Harvard, led by Milton's Nobel Prize-winning professor, Salvatord Luria, have circulated a petition among the eighty best Boston-area colleges calling for Silber's resignation. The Undergraduate Student Association of University Professors (AAUP) has been gathering strength for the coming battle and the New York Times has published several articles dealing with the academic freedom issue.

Perhaps the most influential organization to have involved itself in the BU affair is the American Civil Liberties Union. Last Thursday the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts filed suit in the state superior court in the case of the American Civil Liberties Union, a state body, against the BU. ACLU, released a report summarizing its investigation into the Boston University academic freedom affair. CLMU gathered information which it claims “constituted reason to believe that certain actions and practices of the BU administration were inimical to the principles of freedom of thought and speech and control to the concept of academic freedom.”

The alleged violations were centered in five major areas: censorship of students publications; prohibitions of the screening of the New York Times without prior notice and grounds; restriction of professors freedom of speech by ordering them not to engage in research or teaching and certain dormitories during the faculty strike last spring to discuss the strike; proposals for the administration during contract negotiations with the final intention to eliminate the tenured system and to enable the BU Board of Trustees to screen textbooks for BU courses; and elimination of WBUR, the BU radio station.

The CLMU report has aroused considerable interest in the both. President Silber released a letter to national and local media on the day as the release of the CLMU report, indicating that he had become a “dictator,” destroying the democratic structures that permit student and faculty feedback into the administrative process.

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By Aaron Rapoport

Shimon Peres, current chairman of Israel's Opposition Labor Party, met with students from MIT and several nearby colleges on Saturday, December 1. The symposium was hastily arranged by members of the New England Zionist Organization and the MIT Piloted foundation when Peres' willingness to speak with area students became known. Peres was primarily in Boston to speak at a dinner sponsored by the Jewish student group.

Peres' present standing as chairman of the primary opposition party in Knesset, the Israeli parliament, and a potential candidate for the Prime Ministry, shrewdly positioned Labor Party, alone or in a coalition, top� Begbin's Likud government in upcoming elections.

Emigrating from Lithuania in 1935, Peres moved to Palestine to Knesset soon after Israel achieved statehood in 1948. In subsequent years, Peres served as Director of the Ministry of Defense, first as a Director, then as Deputy Chief. In 1955 he helped found (and is present-day Labor Party. Before assuming his current office in 1978, Peres served as minister of defense in the cabinet of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

As leader of an opposition party, often the blunt remarks that Peres directed at the members and policies of Israel's current Conservative government were frequent and not unexpected. When questions concerning Israeli policies in the West Bank were raised, Peres severely cen dered Begin's reaction to critical and unprophetic remarks made by a PLO West Bank, mayor recently.

Peres claimed that the government should not have published the official's statements and have generally ignored them. In further contrast to Begin's West Bank policies, Peres supported the right of self-determination for the Arab living there. Both criticized several of the same students, he continues to oppose Israeli annexation of the territory, noting that the logistics associated with governing 1.2 million resistant Arabs would be expensive and ethically unjustifiable. Later in the session, Peres expressed strong dissatisfaction with the American public's lack of understanding of the complex problems.

But Peres' policies did not detract from his efforts to speak about Israel and its state-wide, as opposed to party-specific concerns. Politically, he spoke about Israel's essential role as a stabilizing force in the turbulent Middle East, using the Iranian crisis to exemplify its volatility. He also explained that Israeli had to offer a young American wishing to live there, that he not only enjoy and the opportunity to participate in "the amazing society of this country's enrichment of the land," and nothing less than a chance to take part in "one of the most unique attempts to mold ancient history into a modern society."

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