Editorial

"Not a Love Story" not well-timed.

The Office of the Dean for Student Affairs and the Lecture Series Committee will tonight jointly present a pornographic film and hold an open forum discussion. The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has recently noted the examination of the issue of pornography both at MIT and in the larger community. The Dean's Office and the Lecture Series Committee should be commended for attempting to contribute to the dialogue on, and potential understanding of, the issues involved with pornography.

Although the timing of this event has again demonstrated the ignorance of the interests of the students by scheduling the program during the last week of classes, just six days before the last examinations begin. Many concerned students will be forced to yield to end-of-term demands, sacrificing this opportunity for the more immediate requirements of their school work.

But then, the ill-timed scheduling of "Not a Love Story" hardly comes as a surprise. The Institute has made a habit of scheduling events purportedly for the students' benefit at times clearly inconvenient to students.

The MIT Corporation Visiting Committee on Student Affairs arrived on Friday a week before the end of classes in May 1981. "The prospect," The Tech editorial [May 8, 1981] stated, "should not divert the Committee from probing student concerns by listening carefully to student leaders and those who do not wish to air their complaints." Approximately 60 students attended the Visiting Committee's open meeting that night.

The Dean's Office scheduled an open forum on tuition increases for the last Thursday of classes in December 1981. "Although the timing is inconvenient," The Tech's editorial [Dec. 8, 1981] urged, "students should make every effort to attend." Some 40 students attended.

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) held a meeting May 6, 1982, to solicit student opinion on freshman grading. "Although the CEP members claim they are interested in student opinion," The Tech's editorial [May 4, 1982], changed, "they are presenting their final proposal at the end of the term.

"Not a Love Story" is a pornographic film on board. The Department of Engineering and Applied Sciences (EAPS) has recently presented a pornographic film, helping members of this community to understand the issues involved with pornography.

Many people have looked at this country's economic problems and have generated emotional and political responses. They have decided that more government controls are the answer. Calls to protect American industry from imports are increasingly common. Subsidies and bailouts for failing businesses are once again offered up in rhetoric about an "industrial policy." Politicians in Washington have already voted to hike taxes on small businesses by increasing the payroll tax for the self-employed. And here in Massachusetts, there is growing support for "plant closing legislation," which would require firms to give substantial advance notice of layoffs and plant closings.

Plant closing legislation is not a new issue and already has many law suit. The bills being discussed by the Massachusetts legislature would force employers to give workers a graduated notice of plant shutdowns. This advance notice would range from one month for companies with 50 employees all the way up to one year for firms with 10,000 employees.

Labor unions and librarians heartily support these bills. They argue that plant shutdowns can be devastating to workers and their communities. They argue that workers should be notified long in advance of planned layoffs so they can try to save their companies or find new jobs.

The liberals' good intentions, however, are motivated by good laws. Requiring advance notice of a plant shutdown will not prevent plant closures. Plant closures are not profitable, it will not be able to stay open. Workers will in many cases work where workers had advance notice that a shutdown was imminent. They refused to give wage concessions to keep their firms alive. Two years in Kentucky, for example, shut down in 1990 after workers voted overwhelmingly against a freeze in wages and benefits that already total $19 per hour. Union workers at a Schlitz brewery in Milwaukee also refused to adjust their wages, resulting in layoffs in 1981 to save their plant and one on strike. The plant was shut down soon thereafter.

There are hundreds of stories like these. The lesson is that advance notice of layoffs will not stop many plant closings. Plant closing legislation will also not help many workers: Plant shutdowns caused 7,500 layoffs in Massachusetts last year, only 0.3 percent of the workforce.

Rщик_terminal will not save many jobs, what will they do? Unfortunately, they will face plant closures for new jobs. They will impose unrealistic requirements on companies already struggling to survive. As one business executive has said, a plant closing law would be like putting a sign along Massachusetts' borders saying: "No investment wanted."

Advocates of plant closing laws should ask themselves: Who would want to start a business in a place that will not allow expansion and relocation on short notice? This is an especially important consideration for Massachusetts' high technology companies, which are growing and relocating at a rapid, unpredictable pace, creating many new jobs. And it is new jobs that make the difference for economic growth. Compromise and there will be new jobs for everyone.

Column/Mark Templar

Plant closing law a gimmick

One does not have to look too far in America today to recognize that our economy is in trouble. Unemployment is up over 10 percent. The ranks of the homeless are swelling. Millions have lost their businesses, their farms, their jobs, and everything they ever earned. The economic downturn has caused a great deal of pain for many of us.

Many people have looked at this country's economic problems and have generated emotional and political responses. They have decided that more government controls are the answer. Calls to protect American industry from imports are increasingly common. Subsidies and bailouts for failing businesses are once again offered up in rhetoric about an "industrial policy." Politicians in Washington have already voted to hike taxes on small businesses by increasing the payroll tax for the self-employed. And here in Massachusetts, there is growing support for "plant closing legislation," which would require firms to give substantial advance notice of layoffs and plant closings.

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Column/Jim Vlcek

"The little brother in Latin America"

"As a Nicaraguan might say, "he's a sonofabitch, but he's ours."

— President Franklin D. Roo-
sevell in 1936, describing Anasta-
siu (Tacho) Somoza, then head of the Nica-
raguan Guardia Na-
tional, and father of the recently deposed dictator Anastasio To-
chis) Somoza Debayle.

While President Reagan, once a Democrat and still known to quote FDR on occasion, has long since swapped parties and ideology, he still retains the spirit of Roosevelt's Latin American policy. In El Salvador, the United States finds itself once again supporting a rightist government, which is, if not without major flaws, at least 1000 years old. The president views El Salva-

dor as the United States' little brother, under attack by the radical and the Soviet Union, the neighbor-

dom's problem. The United States, that, has no choice in its course of action. It has a moral duty to defend this fledgling dem-
ocracy so near its borders.

Based on his "nice-guy" image, however, the president hides a "nice-guy-finish-last" attitude. Reagan seeks to maintain United States influence in Latin America, regardless of the means neces-
sary to that end. His policy is one of goahead diplomacy, mili-

tary aid to friendly dictators and a blanket denunciation as "com-
munist" of any movement not in line with his desires.

Given the history of the United States' Latin American policy, rich with strong-arm rulers and periodic invasions by the Ma-

rines, Reagan's policy is in no sense new. Successful re
tuitions friendly to the United States as Soviet or Cuban merce-

naries. In El Salvador, for example, the president's portrayal of any/non-Soviet action is construed as aggression by the United States and all popular uprising in na-

tions friendly to the United States as Soviet or Cuban merce-

naries.

Reagan's depiction of the Sal-

vadoran government as a democ-

racy under attack would be farc-

cical were it not tragic. An entire
group of the political spectrum is denied participation in elec-
tions by right-wing death squads which summarily execute any who can be identified as — and many merely under suspicion of — being leftist. Estimates of the civilian casualties in El Salvador since the 1979 coup approach 30,000, of which are attrib-
uted to the military or rightist vigilantes. This horrendous stat-
istics remind the president in the pre-

cident's recent address to Con-

gress on Latin America. Reagan touched the abuses of human rights committed in El Salvador and the response was moderate. He said: "Yes, there are still major prob-

lems regarding human rights, the criminal justice system, and vio-

lence against noncombatants."

These problems are to be ad-

ressed, presumably, by sending more arms to the military that to US Ambassador to the United Na-

tions Jeanne Kirkpatrick ar-

armed "good guys in every sense the word."

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