Column/Simson L. Garfinkel

Freshmen deserve to choose housing

The opening of this term finds some 400 freshmen crowded into rooms and still more in otherwise undesirable housing, a problem certainly unique to MIT. There is, however, no excuse for this practice.

Crowded housing poses severe problems for both those actually overcrowded and dormitory support personnel. Under ideal circumstances, a student's room is merely a place to sleep and perhaps study; it is a personal universe. A student effectively has the choice of doing whatever he wishes in his or her room; many of these choices are restricted when a room must be shared with another.

Given there may be some advantages to living with a roommate, or even in an overcrowded room, but the decision to live with another person must be based on personal choice, not dictated.

The Institute would have me believe the only way to meet people is with another. I am told I will meet people through my roommate, and I am told to have the freedom to live with people I am even to tell living in a crowded room "just really that bad" and I can get used to anything.

I haven't had problems meeting people for the last 18 years, and don't expect them now. I'll never again be forced to live with a roommate involuntarily, and frankly, I don't want to get used to it.

It is deplorable that the most expensive college in the country cannot provide adequate housing for its freshmen. If MIT maintains that freshmen have to live in one of its approved living groups, then the least it could do is provide them with something available to live in.

The Institute should at least give freshmen more choice in their living arrangements, permitting them the option of finding their own housing or living in Institute housing. Freshmen should be the masters of their fate, rather than pawns in an arbitrary house lottery.

That present system of housing assignments is simply unacceptable. It may not be all bad, but it needs major changes. Students - people - in the dormitories - must be allowed to choose their living environments.

Volume 103, Number 34  Tuesday, September 13, 1983

Column/Mark Templar

Bloody knife, shattered mask

The screams of an outraged world are subdued. The United Nations is back to its usual day-to-day quibbling. The media are getting tired of the story. But that does not change the fact that for these last few days, we have gotten a glimpse of the Soviet Union in its natural state, unclothed and stumbling about the world stage, with a bloody knife in one hand and a shattered mask in the other.

The Soviet Union's recent attack on an unarmed South Korean jumbo jet has been greeted with universal condemnation and disgust. The Soviets' subsequent twisted attempts to explain their actions have been met with further outrage and indignation. The Soviet Union has shown the world its true colors.

There are few who would dispute the facts of the tragedy. The South Korean jetliner was headed to Seoul from New York when the pilot reportedly made an error in entering his longitude and latitude into a computer that controlled his flight path. The plane subsequently went off course northeast of Japan when it wandered into Soviet airspace. The Soviets tracked the plane by radar for over two hours, and then ignored it with fighters stationed at a military air base in the USSR

According to intercepted radio transmissions, the attacking pilot reported to his controller that the plane was a South Korean 747. He specifically mentioned the plane's blinking navigation lights. He then started a huffing and puffing missile and announced "target destroyed." The plane disappeared from radar about 10 minutes later.

All 269 passengers aboard perished, including 51 Americans. Among them was Larry McDonald, chairman of the patriotic John Birch Society. We can only imagine how they must have died, but the shredded torso of a child recently found in the Sea of Japan gives us some indication.

The Soviet Union has tried to explain its actions with all the finesse of an unpolished tube. At first, the Soviets claimed the jumbo jet must have been lost. Later they changed their story, saying an "unidentified aircraft" violated Soviet airspace and that Soviet fighters were sent to help it land. Still later, they claimed that they fired warning shots at the South Korean plane, after which it disappeared. They also said the flight was part of a CIA plot to spy on the Soviet Union using civilian aircraft. Finally, a few days ago the Soviets admitted that yes, they shot down the plane, and they do not regret it. In fact, they have blamed President Reagan for the tragedy and called him an "ignoramus."

The Soviets' actions in this massacre prove that the Soviets are willing to sacrifice their own citizens in an attempt to save face or maintain their imperialist dreams.

To The Editor:
The cartoon on page 4 of The Tech [Sept. 9] was disgusting anti-Semitism. I don't know what motivates Mr. Begin in his personal decisions, but the implication that Jews run away from responsibilities and flock to Miami Beach offends me thoroughly. I would hope that those individuals who will be making decisions on the inclusion of editorial cartoons in The Tech this year will weigh each decision carefully, as news service cartoons such as this one seem to be one of the main ways that newspapers have managed to put anti-Semitic, racist and sexist material into their newspapers, presumably under the justification that this is OK in the "humorous" context of a cartoon. There is nothing humorous or justifiable about stereotypes and bigotry.

Maida Titchen

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