

opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Question 1 threatens Cambridge grad housing

The supply of off-campus housing is threatened by a Cambridge referendum on Nov. 7, referendum Question 1.

Thousands of MIT students and staff live in apartments built before 1969, which are protected by the city's rent control laws. If Question 1 on the ballot passes, all of these apartments could be converted into condominiums, which would no longer be available to students.

This means that thousands of graduate students from Harvard and MIT could be squeezed into surrounding towns and newer, market-rate housing. According to one estimate by a member of the Cambridge Tenants Union, student-shared apartments that now run from \$250 to \$450 a month would cost \$400 to \$650 per person per month after Ques-

tion 1 took effect. This would easily add \$1000 to a student's yearly housing bill.

It would take three or four new graduate dormitories to offset the effects of Question 1. So please help out by registering to vote in Cambridge by Oct. 17 and by urging the Graduate Student Council to get people registered to vote "no" on Question 1. The new taxation of graduate assistantships was bad enough. We actually might have the votes to influence this question.

If you live in Cambridge, you may get a letter from the real estate industry urging a "yes" vote for "choice to buy a condo" on Question 1. These letters do not mention what happened when a similar measure passed in Brookline: landlords harassed poor people, elderly tenants, and stu-

dents to move out so that they could sell off the apartments to wealthier tenants. The question may mean huge profits for the landlords who are sponsoring it. They have tried to trick people by claiming in Question 1 that the new tax revenues generated will be given to the poor. But according to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Question 1 may actually decrease tax revenues.

Cambridge uses a voting system where a voter can rank as many people as he or she wants and nine councillors get elected. Find out the candidates' positions on Proposition 1-2-3 before you vote.

Steven Farber G
Mark Engel G
Mike Grossberg G
David Hersovici G

Columnist ignores desires of Third World citizenry

I suppose I'm just a disgruntled leftist intellectual. Here's why: I found Pankaj Vaish's column ["Third World countries edging towards freer markets," Sept. 22] frightening. Vaish, in his lengthy piece, expresses enthusiasm for Third World countries edging towards freer markets. This, in itself, is not disturbing.

What is disturbing is that the people of these countries are never mentioned. The encouraging results that Vaish presents include, *inter alia*, Mexico's concessions to its "First World" creditors and her adoption of "union busting," African countries forgoing sovereignty so as to please the International Monetary Fund, and Venezuelan austerity measures. Sadly, none of these are likely to improve the lives of or-

dinary Africans, Mexicans, or Venezuelans.

But even if that were not the case, even if these measures were to prove beneficial to the average citizens of these "less-developed countries," it would still be de-

pressing at best, and frightening at worst, that Vaish does not seem to care. I guess nowadays only leftist intellectuals worry about such trifles as *people*. More's the pity.

Robert J. Stainton G

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Letters to the Editor are welcome. They should be typed, double spaced and addressed to *The Tech*, PO Box 29, MIT Branch, Cambridge MA 02139, or by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483.

Letters and cartoons must bear the authors' signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. No letter or cartoon will be printed anonymously without express prior approval of *The Tech*.

The Tech reserves the right to edit or condense letters. Shorter letters will be given higher priority. We regret that we cannot publish all of the letters we receive.

Free markets do not insure political freedom

We write to take issue with Pankaj Vaish's recent column ["Third World countries edging toward freer markets," Sept. 22]. Vaish implies that recent world history has been shaped by a struggle between two economic systems, that of "capitalism" and that of "socialism." His analysis is flawed by an inability to separate economic from political issues.

For example, Vaish cites the Tiananmen Square massacre as evidence that "the big communist giants" might not yet be converted to the free market. On the contrary, although the pace of its economic reform has slowed, China is by no means reverting to a completely centralized economy and has, as Vaish himself points out, sought to "convey a sense of normalcy to those foreign investors." In 1980 the government of South Korea killed perhaps thousands of citizens in the "Kwangju incident," yet that nation has committed itself to the course of corporate capitalism. One must surmise that "free markets" are no guarantee of political freedom or human rights.

Vaish's account of the rise of Third World socialist movements is vague. "The origins of these [socialist] policies," he writes, "perhaps lie in the historic experiences of these former colonies." Indeed, the colonials' experience was quite uniform: that capitalism unflinchingly allied itself with the imperialistic policies of the Western powers. Although he rightly criticizes Third World independence movements for putting in place "stiffing" Leninist "bureaucracies," he fails to acknowledge the historical context

in which these movements developed; namely, that many moderate reform movements were crushed by greater or colonial powers.

Consider for example the claim that, "although involuntarily at times, many less developed countries... have gradually trudged along the path towards freer markets throughout this decade." Absent from this analysis is the history of US political hegemony in, say, Latin America during the latter half-century. The examples of Chile and Guatemala serve as an indicator perhaps of what the author deceptively refers to as "arm twisting."

In 1973 the popularly-elected president of Chile, Salvadore Allende, was assassinated during a coup largely funded by the Central Intelligence Agency, International Telephone and Telegraph, and Anaconda Copper. It should be noted that attempts to instigate a popularly-supported coup in Chile by destroying the Chilean economy were unsuccessful but not for want of effort. The Nixon Administration's National Security Decision Memorandum 93 outlined the plan to bring Chile to its knees by crippling the country's economy. Having isolated Chile internationally and completed the near destruction of its economy but failing to reach its goal of inciting a popular coup, the United States, in the guise of the CIA and free market giant ITT, did what has become the rule when dealing with less-developed countries. They turned to the military. The rest is painful history.

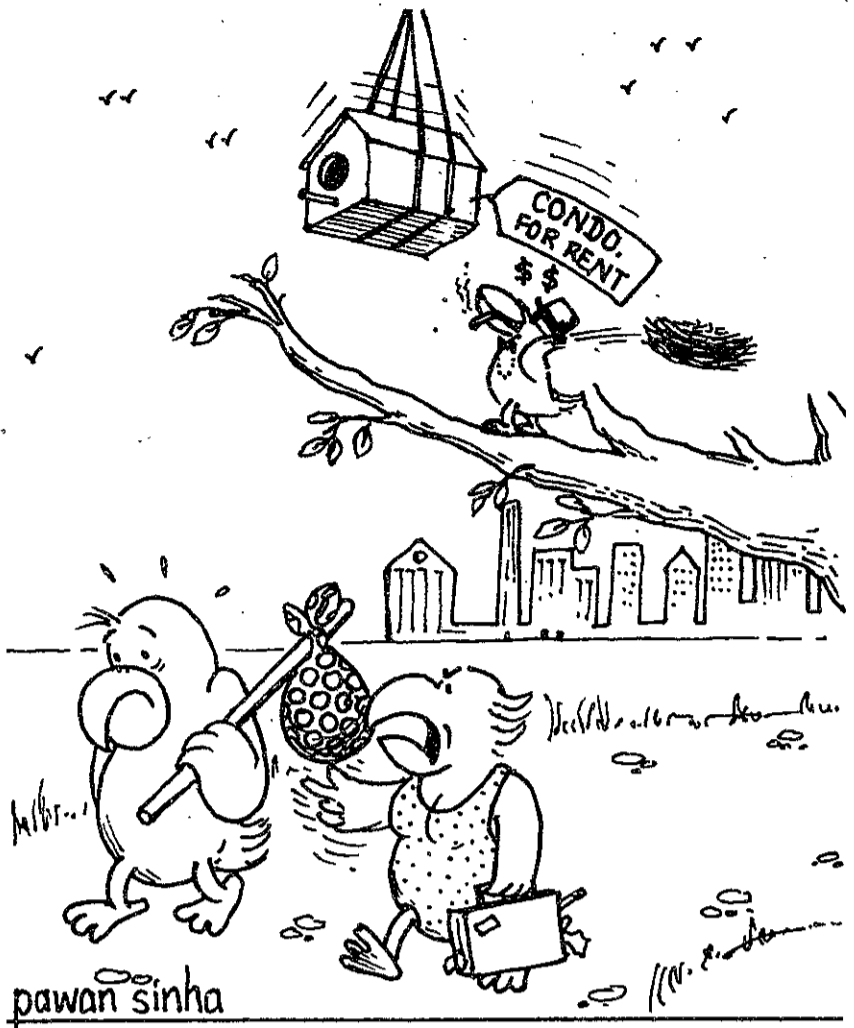
A similar situation occurred in 1954 in Guatemala when the pop-

ularly-elected President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán instituted a land reform program. Guatemala seized land owned by the United Fruit Company. However, none of the seized land was cultivated, and United Fruit was compensated at the rate it had assessed the land for tax purposes. United Fruit, incensed by Arbenz's "bad faith" turned to US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother Allen Dulles, director of the CIA. The United States removed Arbenz by resorting to psychological warfare, attacks from the air, and by mounting a small invasion from neighboring Honduras. The net result of this intervention was a succession of military dictatorships, civil war, and an estimated 80,000 deaths (most victims of right-wing terror).

These two examples illustrate what has become the *modus operandis* of the right wing in US politics: paint any democratic attempt at social reform in developing nations as a blatant move towards Stalinistic dictatorship.

Vaish's analysis of Third World political economy can be reduced to the following: they are beginning to realize the error of their ways and should have listened to the wiser powers that be long ago. While we welcome any liberalization of Third World markets which will ultimately lead to their prosperity, we believe that any fair examination of the historical facts demonstrates that the Third World has been listening closely all along and has acted in a manner which reflects what it has heard.

Stephen J. Fromm G
Patrick McDonald G



pawan sinha
"I warned you Fred, ... don't tell me I didn't. I said, 'Fred dear, don't vote yes on Question 1.' But you didn't listen, did you? What's wrong with you? You stupid or something?... Ma told me not to marry an irresponsible oaf like you..."

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