

Empty space

To the editor,

In his bold efforts to read between the lines of letters from SDI critics, (*The Gazette*, Feb. 6), Jamie Glazov has found himself stumbling in empty space. His version of the anti-SDI argument is that, "if one side acquires an effective defense against enemy missiles, it can attack the other side with impunity, making its adversary paranoid and creating a destabilizing situation."

This misses the major anti-Star Wars criticism entirely. The simple fact of the matter is that, when one speaks of nuclear weaponry, a defence system can only be "effective" if it is 100 per cent effective. His estimation of SDI's effectiveness is only 95 per cent (*The Gazette*, Jan. 23). The remaining five per cent of a first-strike is quite sufficient to ensure the "success" of that attack. Star Wars simply would never provide the protection Mr. Glazov holds it would.

Mr. Glazov seems worried that, without SDI, the West will be vulnerable to a first strike from the Soviet Union. However, if the USSR attempted such an action it would be consigning itself to tragedy, as well. Even in NATO did not reply to a nuclear first strike when it became aware that one was taking place, the Soviet Union would be sealing its own fate. If we consider a Soviet first strike of 10,000 megatons (800,000 times the explosive force of the Hiroshima bomb), the amount of dust and ash polluting the atmosphere, due to ground-bursts and subsequent fires, would block out vital solar radiation. This would lower the ambient temperature of continental North America by as much as 35 degrees centigrade for up to a year or more and would

result in a significant decrease in the temperature over the Soviet Union, whose agricultural system has not yet recovered from the Khrushchev era. Combined with the spectre of long-range fallout carried around the globe high in the atmosphere and the admission of ultraviolet radiation due to ozone layer depletion, which would accompany a series of intense nuclear explosions, this nuclear winter would have devastating and irrevocable effects on the Northern Hemisphere and possibly the Southern.

Mr. Glazov apparently enjoys trivializing critics of SDI by attributing to them simplistic slogans ("We want peace."), yet he fails to realize that all talk of a defence against a nuclear attack is the grossest and most irresponsible of over-simplifications.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Hymers
Dal Physics '85

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D. J.'s TANNERY

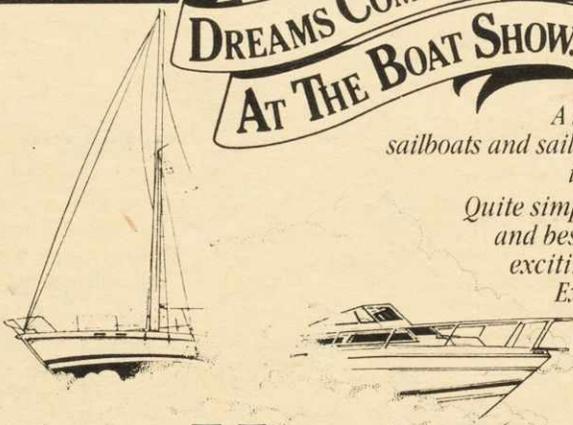
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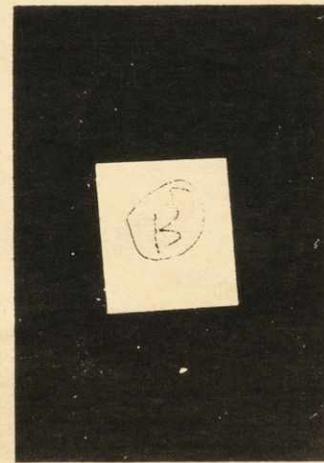
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