

Feature

MIT Course precept for movie

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create a solution in which all parts were interdependent."

The team of 21 students first considered the various mission possibilities which included: landing rockets on Icarus which would perturb the asteroid from its collision course, detonating a nuclear explosive charge beneath the surface of Icarus to break the asteroid into small pieces which would either miss the earth or burn up when passing through the atmosphere, disintegrating the asteroid by hydrogen bombs delivered at high closing speed, and perturbation of the asteroid's course by bombs.

After considering the possibilities, they decided on the latter two — essentially to send six Saturn V's armed with hydrogen bombs with the intention of destroying the asteroid and deflecting it from its collision course. Every last detail had to be considered, including the effects of nuclear detonation and interaction, launch systems, guidance and control of the "Icarus spacecraft," communications, and finally the impacts on management and the economy.

Seven specialty groups emerged, and the students quickly realized the complexity of a systems project and the absolute need for close coordination and cooperation.

The project was completed in May 1967 and a student presentation was given to the MIT community and representatives of government and industry. The MIT Press published a report (and has recently reprinted another edition) on "Project Icarus," and the Office of Public Relations sent out a new release. All told, the project received widespread publicity — front-page coverage in the *Boston Globe*, an article in the "Science" section of *Time* magazine, stories in at least 30 newspapers across the US, and even a discussion on WCAS radio. It was from this publicity that the film's producers learned of an MIT student systems project that later inspired their plot of the motion picture *Meteor*.

The member of the team who edited the MIT Press report on the project, Louis A. Kleiman '65, now works for HH Aerospace Design in Virginia. He was delighted to see that the work of all those involved in the project was mentioned in the movie, and he commented that "much of the technical data was derived from the project."

An intellectually astute audience such as the MIT community will find a number of flaws in *Meteor*, such as selective and uni-directional tidal waves, defensive intercontinental ballistic missiles — orbiting in space, defiance of centre-of-mass laws, and an American scientist who has the accent of a native

Scotsman. Nevertheless, the movie is a good disaster thriller. In addition, the MIT community is rewarded not only by the fact that the idea for *Meteor* was suggested by an MIT course, but also by the fact that the American scientist (played by Sean Connery) is an MIT professor, and at the end of the movie, the follow-

ing legend appears:

In 1968, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a plan was designed to deal with the possibility of a giant meteor on a collision course with earth. This plan is named Project Icarus.



A scene from *Meteor*, a movie based on a study done by a group of MIT students in 1967.



PRI ERETZ ZVI
FRUIT FROM THE LAND OF BEAUTY



OCT. 31-NOV. 7, 1979 MIT

ART EXHIBIT

Israeli Graphics, Furnished by the Pucker-Safrai Gallery of Boston

Wed., Oct. 31 10 AM-5 PM
Thurs., Nov. 1 10 AM-9 PM

Explanatory Lecture & Slide Show
by Mr. Bernard Pucker

Thurs., Nov. 1 7:30 PM
Room 10-105 (Bush Room), MIT
SALE FOLLOWING EXHIBIT

CONCERT

Israeli & Jewish Music, Performed by
the Enel Akiva Choir

Fri., Nov. 2 12 Noon
Lobby 7

COFFEE HOUSE

Israeli, American, & Chassidic Music
by Yechiam & Sarah, Voice & Accordion

Felafel and other Israeli Foods
Sat. Nov. 3 9 PM
Mezzanine Lounge, Student Center
Adm. \$2.00 (Hillel members \$1.75)

SYMPOSIUM

"The New American Attitude
Towards Israel"

"American Press & Israel" Leonard Zakim, ADL
"Whither American Policy?" Philip Baran, JCC

Sun. Nov. 4 1-5 PM
Mezzanine Lounge, Student Center

WORKSHOP

"Students, Politics, and Israel"

with Scott Shere,
American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee

Wed. Nov. 7 4 PM
Room 26-414 (Kolker Room)

Sponsored by:
MIT Hillel, Hamagshimim & Enel Akiva at MIT, Israeli Students' Organization, ISFI
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