By Julian West

James Roosevelt Jr. and Assistant Professor of Urban Studies Melvin H. King, two candidates for the Democratic nomination in the 8th Congressional District, spoke at a Wednesday rally against the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). They were followed by the Socialist Workers’ Party candidate, Jon Hillson.

Alone among the six candidates speaking this week, Roosevelt advocated “basic research” into SDI technology. But the United States should pursue arms control, rather than space weapons, he said.

Roosevelt, speaking directly to students — 540 of whom were expected — also condemned Reagan’s push for a “comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty and a treaty limiting anti-ballistic missile” systems.

“Under the President and Senate,” he said, “we are pursuing an arms race in space.”

Specifically, Roosevelt continued, the United States should “proceed with basic research” in SDI and “act to eliminate” the SDI “requirement for violation of existing treaties and so underwrite international law,” he added.

He called on scientists to find other areas of research, such as cures for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and cancer. We need to “design cities in which the handicapped have access to all the resources,” he said.

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Hillson said he intended to “approach the question of SDI from a different perspective,” saying the militarization of space has “undermined the militarization of the earth. Superpowers use their nuclear weaponry to intimidate smaller countries, he claimed, pointing to the United States in the Gulf of Sidra and the United Kingdom in the Falkland Islands as examples.

“Proposition with SDI was causing people to "mis what is happening in front of our eyes," Hillson said. Nicaragua had recently suffered 20 times the number of casualties per capita as the United States had in the Vietnam war, he explained. The Reagan administration promoted "the big lie" about Nicaragua, but Democratic leaders had "bought into" it as well, he said.

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