

Think what might be???

by Brian Gifford

Remember the obscure ad in last week's GAZETTE: "Think what might be — ask why not — and find out why — Dal SUB — March 26"? Here is the rest of it:

- Walk to school walk to work
- take a bus join a car pool ride a train
- don't buy it use it again
- fight the SST don't use DDT
- turn off a light turn off a faucet
- put a brick in your toilet buy a small car
- use sand instead of salt watch a bird
- watch an MP watch an MLA write him
- write him again ask for answers
- call the mayor call your alderman clean up
- clean up a park create a park
- give a damn join a group start one
- learn the facts SUPPORT LIFE know your rights
- change the laws complain to the company
- boycott its products plant a tree
- plant a thought stop at two
- learn the facts about birth control adopt the
- third think about abortion laws think
- return your empties vote for sewers
- return your paper talk to your friends

- compost your garbage ride a bike
- compost it do not burn it write the editor
- smell a flower feel the bark
- listen to insects consider your grandchildren
- dip your feet in the brook get the lead out
- complain about what bugs you don't believe simple answers
- ask how ask when keep a record
- vote accordingly inhale lovely sulphur dioxide
- wipe your eyes get mad stop erosion
- boycott alligator products don't wear seal
- remember Boat Harbour boycott Scott Paper
- don't wear leopard think what might be
- ask why not and find out why

A somewhat different version of this was printed in the Montreal Star, "courtesy of the US Dept. of Education and the University of Victoria's 'Environment Tomorrow' magazine".

Friday, March 26 (today) a display demonstrating what individuals can do to become more "ecologically sound" in their daily lives will be set up in the SUB lobby. The above quips contain the gist of the message. The display is being created by a Dal experimental class in ecology.

During the year, the class of 18 people looked at the "environmental question" from the points of view of several disciplines, trying to prepare its members to be active in changing our society (especially here in Halifax-Dartmouth) from one which spews its wastes and its poisons freely on to the land and into the ocean

and the air; to change our society from one that mindlessly subordinates its human members to industrial efficiency to one which reuses its wastes and creates a flexibly human environment.

"Environment" means good public amenities like air, water, transportation, wilderness, recreational facilities, as well as good private amenities like homes, clothing, food, etc. All of these are at once public and private. Their availability depends on public social conditions, yet their impact is felt by the individual. It is my life and your life which is in question. "Environmental action" therefore demands collective as well as individual action.

From the beginning, the experimental ecology course intended to have as part of its content some practical experience with public action. One member, Jim Haggarty, has become very involved with the anti 2-4-5-T herbicide campaign which appears to be getting results.

Some other members are now helping to prepare the display already mentioned. It will be mobile and will tour Halifax — Dartmouth, if it is effective at Dal. It will consist of four parts: 1) what "ecology" is all about; 2) consumer power; 3) disposal - recycling; 4) political action. Films will be shown in the Green Room.

Look over the ideas in the display, make comments and then do what you can.

SUB LOBBY FRIDAY, MARCH 26

Crisis in Marxist academia

by Harvey Schwartz

It all happened about five months ago. We'd been lured by the hope for intellectual and theoretical substance to radical currents surging forward in the past few years.

The First Telos International Conference on 'The New Marxism' had promised to rescue Marxist theory and notions of its practice from encrusted Russian journals, and serve up a variety of Marxist trends which had been fermenting in radical enclaves for over thirty years. They failed to deliver.

Telos, a new left journal put out by graduate philosophy students at State University of New York at Buffalo, began about three years ago when the spontaneous mass movements in the U.S. and around the world had peaked. In the interlude which followed, Telos joined a number of other radical journals in getting the movement's theoretical head together.

Their conference last fall was more or less an attempt to bring together a number of disparate individuals who had been left inactive by the fractionalization of the mass movements. Telos sought to re-insert itself into a politics of practice.

The nature of the journal should have given sufficient warning that the conference would not address itself to specifically current problems. Its orientation is not strategic but rather aims towards a redevelopment of Marxist theory. Its main thrust has been to conjoin the intellectual traditions of phenomenology and Marxism and elaborate a theoretical synthesis which would serve as the basis of a revolutionary strategy.

Confused? Well, walking into the conference was very much like interrupting a debate at that level.

Three main trends were discernible, but only by their names: structuralism, Hegelian Leninism, and phenomenological Marxism (whew!).

It's not that such analyses don't have anything to offer radicals. On the contrary, Telos has been able to effectively dissolve much of the empiricist basis for bourgeois theory and refute much of the dogma that passes for Marxist theory. However, it remains at the level of academic discourse. Its ontological (theory of being) and epistemological (theory of knowing) concerns and its terminology are sufficiently 'removed' from the everyday practice of militants that its contributions have been minimized.

After the first day the conference effectively broke down. Most of the participants were lulled into passivity by presentations they didn't understand. After the second session most people drifted off to private discussions in the pub. The minor challenges to the organizers about the relevance of the conference were fended off in confusion as the participants and the organizers were obviously at cross purposes.

On top of all of this the conference was poorly organized — very few of the papers had been printed up before the conference and none during. It is now five months after the conference was held and having written no less than four requests for copies of the papers that were presented, only dim memories remain.

Although this review may seem dated the problem remains timely.

Telos had not only failed to address itself to the radical strategic problems that most of the aimless were confronted with, but were unable to communicate what wisdom they had to offer.

