

THE ZARNETT ZONE



By MARTIN ZARNETT

This is the first of a regular series of columns by Martin Zarnett, an Osgoode student who has had wide experience in York student politics since he came here four years ago, including two years as a student representative on the Board of Governors. Since nobody else would listen to Martin's outlandish ideas, he came to us. Martin told us "there are dynamics which are not easily visible from the surface" here at York. "Good enough Martin" we said, and off he went, paper and pencil in hand. The following is the first of Martin's "underlying dynamics."

It has been observed by more than one visitor to the York campus that our University in the winter looks more like an Arctic weather station than an institution of higher learning. Others have commented that the fields at the southeast portion of the campus give the University the distinction of having the most productive pasture land next to the refineries across Keele Street. In fact, a group at York a number of years ago seriously proposed that in order to alleviate student unemployment the empty fields at York could be farmed. The one thing I remember from my old days in Geography is that York University sits on some of the best farmland in Southern Ontario.

Farming aside, what I am writing about is the aesthetic quality of the York campus and how trees and other plants would vastly improve the appearance of some of the monoliths which we call buildings at York. As I will briefly explain below, my travels as a student member of the Board of Governors led me to sit on the Arboretum Committee. This body allowed me to voice my concerns with others who shared my views; that York University would be vastly improved if it undertook to establish and implement a long term program of forestation. This would include the planting of trees, shrubs and other flora on the York University campus.

I became a member of the committee largely because my predecessor on the Board, John Weston, was committed to improving life at York by planting trees. As a graduate of Harvard University, John clearly understood that part of the atmosphere at Cambridge was literally "rooted" in its trees. A walk through Harvard Yard would confirm this point.

York University lacks old and majestic trees where groups of students, faculty and staff can go to sit and relax, study or read. An old weeping willow and a magnificent maple outside the Scott Library would certainly have quite an attraction at this time of the year. At the University of Pennsylvania, the only other University which I have attended, Locust Walk, the focal point of campus, was lined with 100 year old locust trees which inspired among other things study, thought and conversation.

To be fair, this is only York's twenty-fifth year. It's a bit too early for big trees. However the present situation should not deter those who want to plant trees now. It has been said, and I concur, that to plant a tree today is one of the most charitable pursuits that one could undertake, because the person who plants the tree does it for future generations to enjoy.

John Weston had a number of ideas which I believe should be shared with the entire campus. He proposed a long term plan of action, with financial support from the administration and other sources which would give York the type of environment which it deserves. This forestation would be an integral part of the overall plan of physical development on campus.

John proposed to generate interest among alumni, many of whom maintain little or no connections with the campus after graduation. The University would establish a program whereby alumni could donate trees to York. This type of program would serve three purposes. The first purpose would be to link the donor with the University. Secondly, funds not normally forthcoming to York could be obtained. Thirdly, and most importantly, the campus would be the beneficiary of this program of forestation.

John's concerns were with aesthetics. However, in addition to a general beautification, tree planting would assist in breaking the harsh winds which whip through our campus.

Potential donors of trees are not just students and former students. Staff and faculty who spend a great deal of time on campus would also be potential donors. Other ideas include the establishment of "real" corporate parks, where large corporations could donate specific trees to be planted within specific areas. Not only would the corporation be identified but goodwill and the potential for future donations and other activities would be established.

This plan would require funds, resources and leadership. While the Arboretum Committee has a handle on the scientific aspects of tree planting it needs a member of the upper administration or Board of Governors to lead it through the maze of red tape and internal jockeying that goes on for scarce funds.

A candidate for this position clearly would be Philip A. Lapp, the author of "Physical Planning Requirements at York University" better known as the Lapp Report. His expertise and experience would serve this committee well. While a topic as seemingly mundane as trees was not mentioned specifically in the Lapp Report, Mr. Lapp as well as President Arthurs understand that this campus is in need of some type of development, including physical development, in order to fulfill its potential.

Fuentes book sheds light on Latin American conflict

by GARY SYMONS

Latin America: At War With The Past
by Carlos Fuentes
Published by CBC Enterprises, 1985

When most politicians, scholars or novelists delve into the complex problems facing Latin America in the 20th Century, the result is often a one-sided affair, written from the perspective of the author's particular discipline. The famed Mexican scholar, diplomat, and award winning novelist Carlos Fuentes is not, however, bound by any such limitations. The latest product of Fuentes' broad and penetrating intellect is *Latin America: At War With The Past*, a concise, insightful synthesis of the political, historical and social factors that transformed 16th Century Spanish America into the Latin America of today.

Published by CBC Enterprises from last year's Massey Lecture series of the same name, *At War With The Past* is far too brief to give a thorough overview of Latin America's problems, past and present, but Fuentes does manage to succinctly outline the historical roots of the present crisis in the region, and to suggest practical solutions for an insane situation. Fuentes deals particularly well with the historical relationship between Latin America and the United States, and the book acquires more importance for the rare breath of sanity it brings to issues that have ignited bloody wars and revolutions throughout the region, and stymied U.S. policy makers since the bungled Bay of Pigs operation. Amid the waves of hypocrit-

ical, irrational rhetoric pouring from Washington since Castro's rise to power, *At War With The Past* is a plea for reason, a defence of Latin America's sovereignty, as much as an analysis of the politicians' lack of reason and the interventionist policies of Imperial Spain and Imperialist America. Indeed, the title *At War With The Past* is almost a misnomer, for it becomes clear fairly early on that Fuentes considers Latin America to be in the midst of a long standing struggle with the 'manifest destiny' of the U.S. as much as with its own autocratic tradition; the tradition of the 'caudillo,' or strongman dictators that have dominated the Latin American political scene since the days of the conquistadors.

Basically, Fuentes charges that the longstanding U.S. doctrine of Manifest Destiny has transformed the land of the free into a "democratic empire." He also claims that Washington, conveniently forgetting the intervention of the Bourbon Kings in the American Revolution, has hypocritically denounced revolutions in Latin America as being instigated by a foreign (ie. Soviet) power hostile to the U.S., and that it is the "national independence of the countries to the south of the United States that bothers the governments of the United States; more than ideological (ie. Marxist-Leninist) tags it can certainly live with."

In Fuentes' view, the world has been dominated by bi-polarism—"the dual hegemony of the United States and the Soviet Union"—with each super power carving out its own "sphere of influence" which, in pre-Second World War terms, would have been called empires. It is this bi-polar system, he says that has caused every revolution or move-

ment for social reform in either of the superpowers' spheres to be branded as foreign inspired, organized or instigated. But, as Fuentes points out, no revolution that is artificially instigated, that is without popular support, can succeed. "It was not Louis XVI who imposed revolution on the Thirteen Colonies," he writes, "and it is not the Soviet Union who can impose revolution on Latin America...movements without a true indigenous base fail, out of their own artificiality."

Fuentes does more than diagnose the political illness from which Latin America suffers; he also prescribes a system of reform that would benefit not only the nations of South and Central America, but also the United States and the other industrialized nations of the northern hemisphere. Most of the ideas for reform that Fuentes discusses are not, of course, of his own invention—he borrows heavily from the Contadora Peace Initiative and from other experts on Third World development such as Lord Harold Lever of Britain—but Fuentes' ability to communicate these ideas coherently and succinctly makes *At War With The Past* vital reading for anyone who wants to know more of the Latin America that lies smoldering behind the headlines.

At War With The Past also comes at a time when an understanding of Latin American politics is essential. With the United States trembling on the brink of another Vietnam, with the debt crisis giving the international banking fraternity their worst nightmares since 1929, with revolutions pending in Chile, Peru, El Salvador, Nicaragua and elsewhere, an ignorance of those lands far to south of our own neutral borders is not only foolish, it could be dangerous.

While most people on campus were involved in the convocation ceremonies last week, this enterprising young man got the best seat among the branches of one of York University's few trees. From his perch high above the Ross Building, our lookout man observed the movement of unusual cloud formations. Tree branch pruning remains one of the few pastimes not yet affected by the video age.



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