

LOOSE CANNON

Log of the month

EVERYONE'S A GREENIE now. Well, everyone except the man who sets the tone for the ACTU's environment stance: Bob Richardson, industrial officer responsible for the logging industry.

His office in Swanston Street, Melbourne, is decorated with photos showing heroic proletarian loggers and the stumps of once-great trees. He spends working hours fulminating against 'middle class trendies', but after a hard week flying a desk at the ACTU he takes his four wheel drive up to his bush retreat outside Melbourne.

Bob has been busy too, organising demos on the NSW far south coast defending logging. A pity he didn't do the same for the Cockatoo Island workers.

Defence industries are part of his brief. He struck trouble, however, in the recent tussle over whether maternity leave provisions should disappear from Australian Defence Industries factories. "The feminist mafia", as he calls his sisters in the union movement, jacked up when he supported ditching the leave provision.

Once more, it seems, he backed a loser.

Ideological prisons

A **NEW** leftwing party has been formed. But will it really be new? Will it, for instance, adopt the usual left policy on law and order?

Most on the left know that prisons are brutalising institutions, established to cater for society's desire for revenge.

But, when the left comes to articulate a policy on prisons, that's all we hear. That's why the right constantly creams any progressive policies and, with popular support, portrays the left and Labor reform moves as soft-headed and do-gooding.

However, to be truly new, a new left party should scrutinise some of the cosy orthodoxies in its own ranks. One beautiful throwaway line is: 'Well, you realise, of course, that sixty percent (or whatever) of prisoners are inside for property crimes'.

This we use to great effect when we feel others are labouring under the misapprehension that all crimes are violent. The unspoken assumption, however, is that 'property crimes don't matter'; or, 'this shows that under capitalism property crimes are more serious than crimes against the person'; or, at its most cloud-cuckoo, that 'crimes are basically just well-meaning property-redistributors, like us'.

Yet property crimes like car theft and burglary probably do more to fuel popular wrath and provide political support for the stupidities indulged in by the likes of NSW's Minister for Prisons Michael Yabsley.

The left's sorry record of failing to grapple with the populist politics of law and order - and instead limiting ourselves to being advocates for prisoners - follow a pattern.

Support for the public sector often means turning a blind eye to the stupidities of some public servants, although these are keenly felt by consumers of public sector services. Thus, because prisoners are brutalised in prisons, we gloss over the criminal's actions against ordinary people.

When supporters of the new left party sit down to draft policy, let's hope they do more than repeat the usual clichés about prisons and 'law and order', and say nothing about the victims of crime.

Their satanic majesties request

PLAYED ANY records backwards lately? How about walking backwards?

The Christian Right is a happy hunting ground for malicious gossips such as Loose Cannon. Take Stop the Rock (SAE to PO Box 1416, Chatswood, 2067) and its pamphlet Rock Music and Satanism:

"You may have heard about backmasking, which refers to subliminal messages found on many records and tapes. In his book on black magic (Aleister) Crowley gives us a key to this practice in his directions to would-be students of the black arts:

- learn to write backwards with either hand;
- learn to walk backwards;
- watch cinematograph films and listen to phonograph records reversed;
- practice speaking backwards; thus for 'I am he' let him say 'eh ma I'.

While on the Big Beat, Stop the Rock said: "Even if you can't hear the lyrics, you can feel the beat - often from 100m away! - the steady beat of the drum, just like its native cousin, voodoo."

(Voodoo, of course, is not a drum, but we'll let that pass.)

"The 'anapestic' beat also has a weakening effect on the muscles, being rather the opposite to the waltz beat which is similar to the body's natural rhythms."

Natas selur KO?

Or is it, KO selur natas?

War crimes

AN HISTORIC split is looming between sections of the traditional right and the Jewish community, over recent war crimes legislation.

Bitterly opposing the legislation are: B. A. Santamaria, Frank Knopfmacher, Quadrant editor Robert Manne, the Age's Michael Barnard and the Captive Nations' Council of Victoria. Supporters include the Executive Council of Australian Jewry president Isi Leibler and Professor Bill Rubinstein from the Jewish Community Council.

The battle has been fought out in the pages of the right's long-time intellectual flagship, *Quadrant*, which is going through its own internal crisis after a boardroom coup late last year.

Jewish leaders are irritated that Santamaria is lining up with the Captive Nations' Council, from whose ranks a number of anti-semitic war criminals are likely to be drawn.

The controversy was sparked by an article by Manne in *Quadrant* which pointed out that while the legislation was being drawn up, the government sent a representative to Emperor Hirohito's funeral. This drew a savage reply from Professor Rubinstein who said this was "one of the most obscene false analogies ever to appear in *Quadrant*"; indeed one would have to turn to a racist journal of the neo-fascist extreme right to find a similar point in print."

As for *Quadrant's* internal crisis: earlier this year editor Roger Sandall was deposed by one wing of the editorial board led by Anthony McAdam. According to McAdam, Sandall had turned the mag into "an academic wank", publishing "quite nice, tame and probably quite boring critique pieces about *Jane Eyre*".

Jane Eyre, of course, would be a suitable topic for a magazine funded to the tune of almost \$30,000 a year by the federal government as a literary magazine. But *Quadrant's* real role (and the reason it was originally funded by the CIA for over ten years) was as an ideological combat magazine.

Sic transit Sandall.