If it's Thursday this must be Geneva

ACTU president Simon Crean is becoming a rare sight at HQ in Swanson Street. Whiling away the hours before the elections of Hotham call on him to represent them in Canberra, Simon's diary is full of overseas trips. So far this year the tally reads Europe (twice) with excursions to Tel Aviv and Moscow, the USA, Fiji and Singapore.

About the time you read this, he will be in either Geneva (ILO meeting) or Brussels (ICFTU). A sudden election may see a reprise of his retreat from Moscow for the Hotham pre-selection.

But the ACTU's international connections are important. Especially to the Right, which assiduously cultivates Israel's Histadrut and the US's AFL-CIO.

One fragment of the Byzantine deals struck at Congress involves ACTU international officer, the Right's Michael McLeod, reporting to the Right's assistant secretary Bill Mansfield rather than to presidential successor Martin Ferguson.

But the real problem for the Right these days is that the Left is not only winning the debate but also the numbers. Both News Weekly and its soulmate Social Action noted that the Sydney venue for the congress (which traditionally favours the Right), was of no avail in bucking this trend.

Come 1991, the venue will be Melbourne - which favours the Left. Pundits are tipping that the Left will ask for more than just two positions in the top five of president, secretary and three assistant secretaries.

The smart money would have to favour a Left woman to end the boys' domination. Contenders include Jennie George, Cassandra Parkinson and Anna Booth.

But who will it be? Stay tuned.

Kroger's two candidates for Goldstein

The dumping of large and small 'l' liberal Ian Macphee for the seat of Goldstein grabbed headlines. Less publicized is the campaign being run by the endorsed Labor candidate Mr Michael Danby. Apparently Michael is trying to present himself as the inheritor of Macphee liberalism. Assuming there is a core of genuine liberals in Goldstein, Loose Cannon presents a potted history of Michael Danby, born-again liberal.

His biggest problem is his enduring ties with two of Australia's most conservative publications: Quadrant and the Institute of Public Affairs.

While the former has some pretensions to being a cultural journal, the IPA Journal is produced by Australia's first 'think tank' and post-war progenitor of the Liberal Party.

In a recent edition of the IPA Journal Danby outlines the "trail of disinformation" about the Fiji coup, i.e. "the left wing fantasy which sees the CIA presence every time a neutralist or anti-American government loses office". (Bavandra didn't so much "lose office" as have it untimely ripped from his hands, but let that pass...)

The article appears well-researched. It shows how the "left wing fantasy" of CIA involvement popped up in many newspapers and radio stations around the world in the days following the May 1987 coup.

It is well researched. But not by Danby. In fact, a good half of the article is lifted from US State Department press releases. How else would Danby be able to quote 'disinformation' by the Press Trust of India, radio broadcasts from Moscow's world and domestic service, and the West Samoa Observer (for Chriseake!)?

Danby's use of State Department handouts was demonstrated by Owen Wilkes' Wellington Pacific Report which compared his article with State Department cables.

Using State Department info is OK if you acknowledge it. But Danby didn't. Instead, he gave us a self-righteous lecture which included: "To be successful, disinformation requires the concealment of sources".

Early in 1987 Danby contributed another article to the IPA Journal on "Moscow's South Pacific Push". In it he spoke of the danger of the Fijian Labor Party winning office and attacked the Lange government's nuclear ships policy.

"Vanuatu's rationalisation will only be halted by firm action," he said, "otherwise we may well have another Grenada on our doorstep."

The irony for today is that the IPA Journal was also favoured with articles by Professor David Kramer, Danby's Liberal-endorsed opponent for Goldstein, in its Autumn 1984 and Winter 1986 editions.

Michael has also been a contributor to Quadrant, edited by failed NSW Liberal leader Peter Coleman. As well as his contributions in the July and August '85 editions, Danby paid tribute to Quadrant's founder Richard Krygier in November 1986.

Who was Krygier? Ask Humphrey McQueen who outlines Krygier's long list of begging letters to the Congress for Cultural Freedom in From Gallipoli to Petrov. In 1966 the CCF was exposed as a conduit for CIA money. Other testimonials to Krygier came from Sir Anton Krygierin November 1986.

The book, incidentally, was published by Australia's first 'think tank' and post-war progenitor of the Liberal Party.

In May 1986, the Sydney Morning Herald reported that Danby was one of five consultants for Exchange, a rightwing information-sharing service. His fellow editors were: Richard Krygier, B.A. Santamaria, rightwing medico John Whitehall, and Australian journalist Greg Sheridan.

In March 1987 The Age reported that Michael had popped up at the Hoover Institute's "Red Orchestra" conference on Soviets in the Pacific.

This time his bedfellows were former Liberal staffers Gerard Henderson, 'freelance hang-ranger' Anthony McAdam, another Lib staffer, Colin Rubinstein, the aforementioned John Whitehall and Australian writer John Wheeldon.

Just for balance, the 'Rambo Right' as The Age dubbed them, included Michael Easson, secretary of the NSW Labor Council.

All of which explains the joke doing the rounds of Melbourne: that Liberal state president Michael Kroger has two candidates in Goldstein.

The whacky world of Geoff McDonald

The defeat of the Building Workers Industrial Union's recent vote on amalgamation with the FEDFA saw some strange bedfellows, among them lefties from the BLF and one Geoff McDonald.

McDonald, a hoist driver and FED member, has an interesting history for someone who passes himself off as a rank-and-file unionist.

Just after the election of the Labor government in 1983, McDonald was busily promoting his book Red Over Black in rural Australia. The book describes itself as "chilling and almost unbelievable (sic) story of the marxist manipulation of the Aboriginal 'land rights' movement"

According to Amanda Buckley in the Sydney Morning Herald he "has played a part in the intensified campaign organised by the Australian League of Rights against government Aboriginal policies and Asian immigration". Buckley's interview with McDonald reported at length his conspiracy theories about Aborigines forming a separate state and army and "inviting in North Korea".

His whacky world view got him into trouble when he gave evidence in the 1971 federal ALP intervention in Victoria.

Clyde Cameron recalled "McDonald played a key role in nearly buggering it up for us" because of his wildly conspiratorial evidence against the left state ALP.

In the 'eighties, however, McDonald felt quite at home with the Libs. The Pilbara Times (4.8.84) reported his tour of Western Australia "accompanied by Liberal Party Kalgoorlie division executive officer Joe Kerekes".

Red Over Black praises Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the Victorian RSL's Bruce Ruxton.

The book, incidentally, was published by Veritas Publishing of Bullsbrook, Western Australia. Veritas promotes books on "raciology" with the aim of assisting it to take "its place among the sciences".

No prizes for guessing the conclusion of The Testing of Negro Intelligence.