

No time for fighting crime



PHOTO: DYLAN QUINNELL

BOOBS ON THE BEAT: The coercive arm of the state overseeing Steve Crow's Boobs on Bikes parade.

By Belinda Moore



My car was stolen more than a month ago and I don't seriously expect to get it back.

This is Auckland after all and stolen cars are a dime a dozen.

I did, however, receive a victim support letter from the police. Very thoughtful when you consider how stretched they are saving people's lives and keeping us safe.

Oh, and also lining Auckland's city streets for the Boobs on Bikes parade last week.

While hundreds of police officers "kept watch" over legions of sweaty-browed, salivating men (and the occasional post-feminist woman), Auckland thieves were having a field-day.

I watched the parade from a safe distance — 15 floors up, where even the most voluminous double-D's were reduced to deflated prunes. Watching from that high, I got a pretty good feel for where the majority of central Auckland's police officers were for a few hours.

I counted more than fifty police in the short 100 metres between Aotea Square and the Civic. That's roughly one cop for every two metres.

I bet social workers in South Auckland would kill for that kind of coverage in their neck of the woods.

So how the heck does a man who runs a pornography show get so many resources and time thrown at his feet?

We are, after all, in the midst of a child abuse crisis. Or was that yesterday's news? Perhaps looking at boobs and being told to "lighten up" Steve Crow-style will help solve the problem.

Obviously what we've been doing up to now hasn't worked.

Surely there's cause to run this sort of parade in traditional Maori regions as well. Crow could do a North Island-wide parade, taking in Northland, Gisborne, and the Bay of Plenty.

Steve Crow believes we all need to be saved from our prudish selves. The cynic in me says it's all a ruse for his mayoral campaign.

Yes, don't laugh; Crow is on

the campaign trail. He says he'll give Auckland City better services, less bureaucracy and better transport through the CBD.

Now excuse me if I'm being slightly facetious here, but wasn't he the one holding up traffic for hours on end last Wednesday? Not to mention dragging valuable police resources into the entire heinous spectacle.

I know. I'm sounding like a prude, or anti-boobs. Truth is I couldn't care less what people flaunt in their own time and place. Just take a walk around any suburban shopping mall these days and you'll get an eyeful of mammary glands from teenage girls yet to learn the art of subtlety.

It's when taxpayer-funded police resources are dragged in that I start getting, well, pissed off.

The whole thing is a ridiculous stunt that caused disruption and chaos to the city centre and for what? So Steve Crow can get more abject souls to his sleazy Erotica Expo.

Yes, Auckland needs an injection of life now and again. But keep the police out of it. They've got better things to do — like finding my stolen car.

"The cynic in me says it's all a ruse for his mayoral campaign."

Battle in the blogosphere

By Justin Henehan



Like his leader Rodney Hide, ACT Party vice-president Trevor Loudon has a blog. On it he describes his ideal society: "government is slashed to the bone and people are free to reach their potential" — unless, it seems, you're to the left of the political spectrum.

In his latest "Socialist Academic Profile" he's targeted AUT journalism curriculum leader and self-confessed pinko, Dr Martin Hirst.

The blog battle was fierce: depths were plumbed, accusations were levelled and pasts were delved into.

Then the name calling began and, once again, it's Communists versus Nazis in the blogosphere.

But it seems all Loudon's smear campaign has uncovered is Hirst's membership with some lefty political groups.

But Hirst's political leanings are never concealed from anyone who bothers to speak with him. Indeed, he wears his politics on his sleeve. In my experience, he does this to provoke intelligent debate.

This is very unlike Loudon's murky and downright weird ultra-right wing connections.

This from a *New Zealand Herald* story (20/06/1983) posted on the Aotearoa Independent Media Centre website last year:

"One of New Zealand's small but active ultra-conservative groups has expelled 'Nazi elements' and other extreme right-wingers to improve its image.

"The group, New Force, has also expelled sympathisers of two Christchurch-based organisations, Zenith Applied Philosophy and Trim, the Tax Reduction

Integrity Movement.

"New Force, one of about a dozen groups active on the far right wing of New Zealand politics, was founded about 1980 after earlier unsuccessful attempts to form a local version of the British National Front."

According to Greens co-leader Russel Norman, Loudon was a member of Zenith Applied Philosophy (ZAP) as recently as last year — he certainly was in 1983.

ZAP is a pseudo-religious combination of Scientology, eastern mysticism and 'reds-under-the-bed', McCarthyist style paranoia.

So now we've clarified Hirst was a Trotskyite and Loudon was (and may still be) a Zapper we can pay attention to the collateral grumbles.

What's really annoyed journalism students here at AUT is Loudon's implication that we're simply blank slates for lecturers to inscribe their ideologies upon.

Here's one of the more irritating passages from Loudon: "Dr Hirst will be influencing the course content for hundreds of New Zealand's student journalists. He will be in a position to influence the way they think and most importantly, how they write."

I agree with Dr Hirst on many points, but I also disagree with him on many others. This is the vital point — I can and do.

Having my politics challenged helps me crystallise them.

If Loudon had been the curriculum leader, I'm sure my politics would've been cemented just the same, albeit in a more reactionary way.

This clarity is the pedagogical result of almost any conversation and the reason many talk politics.

I wonder how many "Socialist Academic Profiles" Loudon needs to do and how many "closet Trotskyites" he needs to uncover before he's clear on his own.

And then she said, 'Nice kuffiyeh.'

By Jessica Harkins



We ban headscarves in our courtrooms. French schools have banned all religious symbols from being worn in class.

Where, then, do we Westerners get off creating a fashion statement out of a Palestinian cultural symbol?

The kuffiyeh has been used to make a fashion statement since the time of Lawrence of Arabia, and has recurred throughout the decades as prominently as neon

and geo prints. The most recent recreation of the scarf in New Zealand has been amongst scenesters and fashionistas alike. But how many of them know the meaning behind the black and white checked pattern?

Apart from being commonly referred to as "hate-scarves" amongst right-wing circles in the United States, the kuffiyeh represents support for Palestine against Israel. Red and white versions can signify the Bedouin tribes of Palestine, and the workers' movement. Both types have also been commonly associated with the Vietnam War.

Now the scarf has succumbed to the shallow but wonderful world of fashion, reincarnated in a rainbow of colours, splashed across magazine spreads and on the catwalk of some of the

world's biggest designers and stacked on the shelves of cheap chain stores that disseminate the catwalk trends to the masses.

A friend of mine works at one of the little mainstream clothing stores that now sell versions of the kuffiyeh for \$20. She says people never ask about the meanings associated with the cotton scarves. I would hazard a guess that they wouldn't understand any political affiliation they may be inadvertently promoting.

Call it inspired, call it trashy,

call it what you will. But the people wearing them are unlikely to care, neither are the people selling them.

"The kuffiyeh is both a political symbol for supporters of Palestine and a burgeoning talisman for the commodification of cultural icons."

Mass produced "culture in a can", the kuffiyeh is both a political symbol for supporters of Palestine and a burgeoning talisman for the commodification of cultural icons.

It seems absurd that the symbol of Arab masculinity is sold in a shop for girl's clothes, but any real significance in the threads flew out the door when the first person decided that it looked rad with their torn Ksubi jeans and ballet flats.

Metro recently laid out the latest Auckland stereotypes for the rest of the country to ridicule us about. One featured a teenaged girl wearing a kuffiyeh with said Ksubis and ballet flats.

The article made reference to travel and preferences for mixing designer gear with "souvenirs" from overseas rampages. There was nothing about mixing their designer threads with cheap crap from a copy-cat shop with no originality. Or about wearing the opposite of their rich parents' political affiliation around their neck.

It seems that there will always be room in fashion for the odd cultural symbol, whether the culture we take them from likes it or not.

But if we are what we eat, are we what we wear?