

Mount Gravatt College of Advanced Education

P O BOX 82, MOUNT GRAVATT,
QUEENSLAND,
AUSTRALIA 4122



MESSINES RIDGE ROAD,
MOUNT GRAVATT,
PHONE 349 7033

REF: DM:JGW

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Mr. John McLaren,
Head, Department of Humanities,
Footscray Institute of Technology,
Post Office Box 64,
FOOTSCRAY. VIC.. 3001.

Dear John,

I write simply to say how much I enjoyed your "Letter from Cambridge" in the May issue of Overland. Most of all I was impressed by its balance in analysing some of the problems of the British Labour Party.

The dynamic of Marxism does now seem to be dated, and its analysis of society's ills while once so powerful was hardly impartial. Labour parties have to shuffle off the bonds of the past, even the immediate past of high economic growth rates, and face up to a quite different social/economic order - particularly, of course, in Britain.

I also agree with you that Labour parties have to reflect the quite wide range of opinions of members rather than that of a faction which currently happens to hold power. You are perfectly correct when you say that even a majority group is, in broader and more worthy perspective, a minority.

To me the most chilling part of your article was the comment that the British Prime Minister is not only moving against employee groups but also British industry and that the legacy of her doctrinaire monetarist policies is likely to lead to Francoist Spanish type of society even under a mildly reformist Tory government. The terrible riots over the past few weeks are an indication of the depth of Britain's social problems and the government's responses so far could hardly be said to be constructive.

I spent June in Britain and found it a rather depressing experience. The cost of living was awful, there was an air of hopelessness about and those who were supposed to be aware of what was wrong were sometimes almost dottily unaware or their priorities seemed outrageous. I also spent a fortnight in Paris - the mood there was very different following Mitterand's victory.

I am sorry that we are so far away from each other that we cannot have a yarn. However I did want to write and say have very worthwhile I thought your article was.

Best wishes,

David Mahony.