

MayDay, London - Beware old wine in new bottles

THE TRADITIONAL May Day rally was held by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, on May 1.

The Party Chairman, Reg Birch, commenting on the fact that the meeting was taking place in the closing stages of the general election in which there had been so much empty rhetoric said: "In Britain the talking time is fast evaporating. The solution to Britain's problems about which so much hot air has been expended is resident solely in the people, in the working class which is the source of all advance.

"Britain is presented to the world as the most stable democracy but it is their democracy, the bourgeoisie's, not ours. They ask us to vote for them. They ought to vote for us. If it were a real democracy, if it were our democracy, we would say to them: here is our programme. Are you for it? If not, get out! That is democracy.

"The election has been a diversion, turning the working class away from what it must do. Now that it's finished it's "as you were". We'll not be

pushed off course. We the workers are the power in the land. Can anybody imagine that we will go on letting our affairs be managed for us by a turn-and-turn-about, Labour-Tory government, personified most recently by the Darby and Joan, split-in-public agree-in-private marriage of Jim and Maggie?

"For more than 30 years now, ever since 1945, whatever the name of the capitalist government in power, there has been constant battle waged by the working class over wages, how to pay the rent. It seems so simple but all of politics is in that struggle.

"We despise that reality because it is so simple. We turn to those who write with long words and propound elaborate theories. But Marx did not write or think that way. He wrote about those simple things--about enclosures and a Countess of Sutherland driving people off the land; he wrote about the Paris Commune and the workers' first attempt at governing themselves. Those who came after him, dressed



The Concordat: 'I had to ask - did Murray say 'milestone' or 'millstone'?' (Photos: The Worker)

it up in various ways and used their cleverness to try to cheat us.

"Just as in a real democracy we would make them vote for us, so in dealing with unemployment we should put them on the dole instead of letting them put us on the dole. We have done that too.

Workers in 1945 discarded the great Marlborough. He had to go off to the US for an audience where he made his war-mongering Fulton speech.

"The wages fight may seem a very simple thing, but all the capitalist governments since that time have been obsessed with it. Cripps a leftist urged us "Don't ask for wages"; Selwyn Lloyd tried to sell us 'the pay pause' which was to be more like a full stop; and George Brown had his 'solemn and binding agreement on prices and incomes'. I remember challenging him on that policy and being told that I was endangering the Labour Government. Now George Brown votes against Labour. Lord Robens, he also urged wage restraint in the interests of Labour and now he says he won't vote for Labour. Well, neither will I!

"We've had Heath and IRA --which was also a kind of terrorism and which the workers defused. And we've had Jim and his 5 per cent. And still they try to patch up

a Concordat! I was at the meeting in No. 10 when Len Murray was presenting it to us as a great milestone, but he didn't speak distinctly enough and I had to ask what he had just said. 'Did he say it was a great mill-stone?'

"Now we shall have a code on picketing. There'll be Thatcher's martial law and curfew.

"What's it all about? Just one thing. It's about putting all class struggle to bed. If we let that happen, we'll be right back where we started and we'll have it all to do again. So let's get back to the job. And let's remember that we can only prevent the decline of the proletarian movement in other places to the extent that we emancipate ourselves. We are fighting for socialism in China and the USSR as well as in Britain. Their decay and falling away is in our fear and hesitancy and refusal to face up to our working class mission.

"That is our May Day message to workers every where." The meeting ended with the singing of the Internationale.



"The solution to Britain's problems is resident solely in the people, the working class."