

# Russia after the elections

Boris Kagarlitsky, a long-standing socialist activist and author who was jailed under the Brezhnev regime for his work on an oppositional journal, spoke to *Workers' Liberty* about the current situation in Russia. He is a leader of the Russian Party of Labour. Boris Kagarlitsky's books include *The Thinking Reed* and *Dialectics of Change*.



Kagarlitsky

## COULD you explain the situation in Russia in the aftermath of the recent Duma elections?

The elections in Russia mark the beginning of a new period in Russian politics.

Firstly there is a new parliament which will be dominated by the Communist Party, as the largest party. Together with the Agrarians [their satellite], the Communists are about a dozen seats short of an absolute majority.

This grouping, together with people who are clearly leftists, has about 217 seats to the right's 200. In addition there are a number of newcomers whose politics are unclear. There is a possibility of the Duma moving slowly to the left.

Second: if the issue of constitutional reform is considered the pro-reform forces have a two-thirds majority. That means that there is some real possibility of democratisation of Russian politics — at the moment politics is controlled by the Executive, by the president.

Thirdly, Russian politics can no longer be seen as being totally fragmented. There are now four big political formations which dominate — we will probably end up with five of six — rather than several dozen.

Finally the presidential campaign has already begun and with it the real struggle for power.

## Why do you consider the "Communist" Party part of the left?

Of course they are very different from the non-Stalinist left. The Communist party is not only conservative and traditional but it is also corporatist, placing their hopes not in the self-organisation of the working class but in the vertical, corporatist organisations.

Nevertheless they should be considered part of the left for a number of reasons.

They represent some of the authentic left-wing traditions in our country.

Secondly, although there is little independent organisation of the working class in Russia today, within the corporatist structures the Communists represent some sort of labour-orientated corporatism

against the state-orientated corporatism of Victor Chernomyrdin and the right.

Third they represent the traditional concerns of the left — defence of the poor and of the wage workers.

The Communist Party is a very strange animal, very much like your Labour Party. It includes all sorts of elements. There are traditional Stalinist groups. There are pragmatists who are at best — right-wing Social Democrats. And there are nationalists and populists. There are also people who are very close to us, the new left.

**But the British Labour Party was created by the British trade union movement. The Russian "Communist" Party is a creation of Stalin — although a creation now warped by the defeat of Stalinism in Eastern Europe and the pressure of capitalism. It is the party of the old ruling class.**

It was created by Lenin, actually.

**No it wasn't. Stalin murdered and destroyed Lenin's Party, creating something new and fundamentally anti-working-class — which was just called the Communist Party.**

But people see it as a Party created by Lenin. And the character of a party is very much to do with the sort of people it attracts.

For example, if Blair leads the Labour Party for ten years you will see the creation of a yuppie party.

## What about the Party of Labour? What are your perspectives now?

You must understand that the leadership of the Russian trade unions is politically bankrupt. The traditional trade unions have declined, becoming a strange mixture of US-style business unionism with Soviet-style state unionism.

What is lacking is class unionism.

The unions launched their own list in the elections, together with the industrialists. This list failed completely.

The left was asked to participate but no-one of any profile agreed to run on this list. Even the Social Democrats could see

the betrayal.

So the original idea of our Party of Labour, developed between 1991 and 1993 — to develop with the unions — will not now work. In fact the period since 1993 can be characterised as a period of the defeat of the non-Stalinist, class-based left. We have been through a very hard time indeed because the class movement itself failed to develop.

We are now ghettoised in three or four major cities where the left has a base.

Despite these problems we got one of our members elected to the Duma.

## What were the main elements of your programme?

We concentrated on three main issues: healthcare, education and the need for self-organisation.

We also spoke of renationalisation of certain key industries. But it is clear that we alone can not do this, so we focused on issues that we can organise around now — things on which we can achieve immediate concrete results.

And we said to people: don't just vote, organise permanent local organisations which can act as the basis for future struggles.

## What do the Party of Labour say on the national question?

The dominant trend in the Party of Labour is neo-Luxemburgism. We are very suspicious of the slogan of the right of nations to self-determination. On the other hand we are opposed to any imperialism. Our main emphasis is on social policy.

Take the case of Chechnia. We are in agreement with the Communist Party on this issue. In fact they picked up our resolution and used it as their own position.

We opposed the actions of the Russian government, but not because we back Dudayev. And we are neither for nor against Chechnian independence, as half the population are for it and half against.

We say: remove the Russian troops and let the people decide in free elections. In such elections we would back union with



Communists are enjoying a revival

Russia, but only on the basis of free choice. Without free choice we have to defend the Chechnian fighters.

We also can see that a defeat for the Russian government in Chechnia is also a victory for us — not because we particularly support their cause, but because it weakens the Russian government.

**What will the Party of Labour say during the run-up to the presidential elections?**

There is a real chance of a pro-Yeltsin, right-wing coup to stop the presidential elections and a Yeltsin defeat. If that happens it will simplify political decisions — we just oppose the coup!

The elite must either stop the elections or domesticate the Communist Party. This is possible given some of the existing tendencies inside the Communist Party.

However, for us life becomes more complex if the elections go ahead. It is not yet clear who we will vote for.

In the first round we will either support an independent left-wing candidate or back the candidate put forward by the Communists. The decision will rest on what programme the Communists put forward.

In the second round the choice is obviously not yet clear. If the option is either [the Communist leader] Zyuganov or [the far-right] Zhirinovskiy we will have to back Zyuganov.

If Zyuganov faces someone like Chernomyrdin [Our Home Is Russia] we will again probably back Zyuganov.

The issue in this instance is what type of conditions we will put forward on the Communist candidate. The issue for the future is would the Communist Party deliver on pre-election promises. But during the campaign the question is what will they promise. If they fail to commit themselves to anything substantial we will have to abstain.

**You seem to have abandoned the attempt at independent working-class politics and are now looking towards a backward-looking "lesser evil", the Communist Party.**

No. There is a misconception about the Communist Party held not only in the West but in our country too: the problem with the Communist Party is precisely not that it is backward-looking. It looks forwards, but towards becoming like the Hungarian Socialist Party or the Polish Social Democrats.

They can get moral inspiration from the past, but that's it.

The other big issue is that they are corporatist. And we are totally on the side of those in the Communist Party who are trying to put forward a class perspective inside the Party. These people are not even necessarily a minority of the rank and file. The question is: can they dominate the decision-making process?

This is the big question and it is the reason that we are not trying "entryism" in the Russian Communist Party. ■

# Hopes and fears in Bosnia

By Chris Reynolds

"THE occupiers of a country are never popular, either those who want to stay forever or those who are dying to get back home". Janet Flanner was writing about the American occupation of France in 1945, which, having helped free the country from Nazi terror, had a better chance of popularity than most. The occupation of Bosnia by 60,000 NATO troops, mostly US, French and British, has fewer advantages.

Probably for most people in Bosnia *any* peace that gives them and their community some secure territory is preferable to continuation of the atrocious four-year war, unleashed by Serbian imperialism, which turned over half the country's people into refugees and killed maybe one in ten. But all the communities are likely to clash with the occupation troops.

"NATO officials" have already let the press know that they "privately" agree with the US colonel who was publicly ticked off for calling the Bosnian Croats "racist motherfuckers" and making it clear he



Sarajevans celebrate the reuniting of their city

thought no better of the Bosnian Muslims (Bosniacs) and Serbs. The arrogance built into imperialist military machines will be one cause of conflict. Hundreds of thousands of refugees on all sides, uprooted, traumatised, and bitter, will be another.

The Croat-Muslim federation, set up in March 1994, is a foundation-stone of the new order in Bosnia, but over the two years since 1994 the Bosnian-Croat leaders have made it clear that they prefer to grab as much territory as they can rather than operate this federation loyally. In the Bosnian-Serb territories, it is not clear that NATO will be able to find any effective and cooperative local agency of government with which to work. And some newspapers have suggested that the first clash will be with the Bosniacs, as the NATO troops move to suppress the freelance Muslim militias.

A classic historical study, Robinson and Gallagher's *Africa and the Victorians*, showed that Britain's 19th-century colony-grabbing in Africa was as much pull — Britain being dragged in directly when the local ruling groups on which it had preferred to rely for informal domination crumbled — as push. Some of the chief factors operating then do not operate now in Bosnia, notably the contradiction between trying to rely on pre-capitalistic elites while simultaneously extending capitalist economic relations. But the NATO troops look likely to be in Bosnia much longer than the year they have scheduled.

Progress depends on socialists in the Bosniac, Croat and Serb communities establishing links and uniting workers round social demands (public works at trade-union rates of pay and under trade-union control, for example) and a consistently democratic programme (free federation; full individual rights for all residents, regardless of nationality and religion, everywhere). Their hope must be that disgust at the bloody fiasco of the last five years will soon lead to the Milosevic tyranny falling in Serbia and new working-class politics being able to emerge there. Their fear must be that the huge military machine occupying their country will stamp hard on any working-class or democratic organisation. ■

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# Oppose the Asylum Bill!

By Dale Street

ONLY a month after Social Security Minister Peter Lilly announced proposals to deprive most asylum-seekers of the right to claim welfare benefits, the Tories published their new Immigration and Asylum Bill (IAB) last November.

The IAB marks a new stage in the Tories' attacks on asylum-seekers in particular and Black people in general.

The Bill gives the Home Secretary the powers to create a so-called "white list" of "safe countries". Asylum-seekers from those countries will automatically be assumed to be bogus, and will be dealt with under an accelerated application procedure.

Most asylum-seekers — not just those on the "white list" — will also be subject to a special "fast-track" appeals system, leaving them with insufficient time to prepare their case.

In addition, most asylum-seekers will also lose the right to a second appeal which they enjoy under the current appeals system.

One category of asylum-seekers — those who travel to this country through a safe country (such as any member-state of the European Union) — will lose their right to appeal in this country completely.

Instead, they will be deported to the country through which they travelled and will have to appeal from there — even though the IAB makes no mention of any mechanism to make this possible.

The IAB also introduces a series of new criminal offences.

Obtaining, or seeking to obtain, leave to enter this country by deception becomes a criminal offence. But, almost by definition, asylum-seekers are unable to approach their own authorities for correct documentation and are therefore obliged to travel illegally.

Assisting anyone to enter, or to attempt to enter, this country by deception also becomes a criminal offence. This is aimed at the network of agents who, for whatever reason, assist asylum-seekers to flee their country.

Employing someone who has no immigration entitlement to work in this country likewise becomes a criminal offence. The employer's only defence is that they took "adequate steps" to check up on the immigration status of their employees. In other words, employers are transformed into immigration officers.

In order to enforce these new laws, the police and immigration officers are given new powers of search and arrest by the IAB.

They will have the right to arrest, without a warrant, anyone they suspect of illegal entry or breaching the conditions of their visa. They will also have the right to search the homes of suspected illegal immigrants and remove them by force.

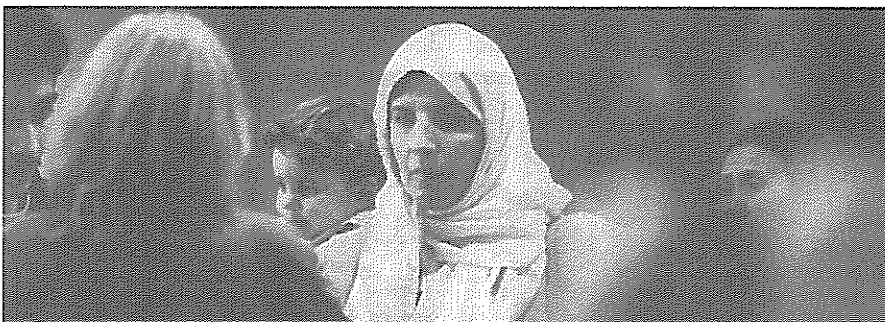
(As the killing of Joyce Gardiner showed, the police already do this anyway. But now

the IAB allows them to do it legally.)

Finally, the IAB complements Lilley's new social security regulation. It scraps the eligibility of asylum-seekers for public housing, and also removes their right to claim Child Benefit.

The Tories have been forced to postpone the introduction of the new social security regulations, largely because of a backlash from local authorities, including Tory-controlled ones.

The regulations scrap the right of asylum-seekers to Housing Benefit. But local authorities would be left to pick up the bill: until the IAB becomes law, they would still



## Who backs Scargill's SLP?

By Tom Willis

THE main grouping involved in the preliminary discussions to form Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party [see page 5] is a loose alliance of former members of the International Marxist Group (now Socialist Outlook), individuals in and around the left wing of the Communist Party of Britain (*Morning Star*), and assorted minor labour movement dignitaries, including some radical lawyers and journalists.

This loose alliance operates under the name of the "Corresponding Society". The driving force in it is a small group of ex-IMG friends led by Brian Heron, Patrick Sikorski, and Carolyn Sikorski.

The day-to-day work of Heron/Sikorski from the late 1980s onwards, focussed on two things — justifying the record of Patrick Sikorski as a trade union leader on the London Underground (he has voted to call off more strikes than he has led) and preventing the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee (of which Carolyn Sikorski was secretary) from doing anything of substance.

In particular, Sikorski/Heron opposed and sabotaged all attempts to get the SMTUC to act as a coordinating centre that could link together all the forces of the trade union left and make steps towards a cross-industry rank-and-file movement. Believe it or not, they even sabotaged an

have a legal obligation to give accommodation to asylum-seekers with families.

Tory-controlled Westminster Council — no friend of asylum-seekers — is therefore taking the government to court over the new regulations.

But the Tories have not yet encountered any such problems in pushing the IAB through Parliament.

Although Labour imposed a three-line whip when the Bill received its second reading in December, the Party leadership is still pleading with the Tories to make legislation "a genuine consensus exercise".

Instead of offering to co-operate with the Tories in attacking the rights of asylum-seekers and black people, Labour should be opposing the IAB without qualification, and should link up with the campaigns which have sprung up across the country in opposition to the Tories' racist legislation. ☐

attempt to organise a solidarity conference for the ambulance workers' strike of 1989-90. Against such efforts, they counterposed the idea of "developing the politics of trade unionism", whatever that meant.

Now we can expect the new SLP to be as big a success as the last SLP, the Scottish Labour Party of the late 1970s. Led by two Labour MPs and the journalist Neal Ascherson, this was a Scottish nationalist breakaway from the Labour Party. The IMG in Scotland got stuck in.

They were soon expelled, if not en masse then en gaggle, but the SLP, a premature birth, was already dying. The leader of the IMG raiding party was... Brian Heron, who has now bestowed himself and his friends on the new SLP.

Heron and his friends soon went on to even more glorious deeds. For the 1979 election — the one in which Thatcher won power for the first time — the IMG cobbled together an alliance of odds and sods to stand candidates against Labour. This was "Socialist Unity". They stood a few candidates, did very badly, and collapsed into the Labour Party soon after. Some of Socialist Unity's best-known people became Kinnockites and Blairites — Paul Thompson for example, then a soft Maoist, now chair of the witchhunting Labour Co-ordinating Committee. Heron and his friends remain what they were.

With friends like this, Arthur Scargill does not need any enemies.

# Stalemate in N. Ireland: why?

By John O'Brien

WHAT is the significance of the logjam in the Northern Ireland peace process? The British government insists it is the failure of the Provisional IRA to give up their weapons which is the main block to talks. Sinn Fein insist even more loudly that the British are being obstructive, that they are demanding an IRA surrender and renege on commitments given before the ceasefire. Socialists should examine these claims with an independent and critical eye because both are superficial explanations of the real situation.

Superficial, because there is partial truth in both versions. The IRA will not give up their arms in advance of talks and it should not be impossible for anyone, even the most pro-republican socialist, to see why that might be the entire Protestant community anxious and suspicious and, more to the point, unwilling to sit down to talks with them. But the Catholic community is anxious too, and in terms of population figures and numbers of armed, trained killers (RUC, RIR), they have more reason to be fearful. No-one is talking of decommissioning RUC arms because, once again, the British government's position takes no account of the relationship most Catholics have to the Northern Ireland state.

Equally, the British government appears to be renegeing on an understanding that talks involving all parties including Sinn Fein would follow a ceasefire which proved to be durable. The demand for decommissioning, in advance, given the delicate situation inside the Provisionals and given most examples of similar peace processes, seems almost calculated to offend republicans.

To see only this in the British position, however, is to miss the point. The British government has no inherent interest in delaying or sabotaging the Irish peace process. Quite the opposite. John Major has to fight a general election within the next eighteen months, with very little in the way of policy successes to boost his chances. Northern Ireland will never be a key issue in a British election, but the Tories exploited to the limit Major's role in the ceasefire and will be keen to play the same tune again in the general election. A failed peace process would be a disaster for them.

The Tories' failure to call all-party talks stems from one basic reality. They could not get the representatives of the Protestant/Unionist community to attend. They would not be all-party talks and so nothing could be resolved.

The Sinn Fein reaction to this reality, for they recognise it even if they avoid talking about it, is bizarre when you think about it. The trouble is that most of the left refuse to think about it.

Sinn Fein demand that the British government convene the talks anyway and let the Unionists decide whether to turn up. If they don't the talks should go ahead with full UK and Irish government participation and presumably any agreement should be presented

as a new agreed settlement of the Irish questions. This is a policy which, for all its superficial reasonableness, is deeply anti-republican and anti-democratic.

Republicanism in Ireland is, in essence, the project of uniting the people of the island across the religious/communal divide to win political democracy, of which independence from Britain was only one part. It was born out of the events surrounding the French and American revolutions as a modernist, rational movement. Understandably bitter at the undemocratic partition of the island in 1921, modern-day "republicans" have long since abandoned that tradition. Righting the wrongs done to the Catholics and getting the Brits out have been the central ideas driving the republicans for the last 30 years.

The real problem, of which even partition is only a symptom, is the chronic communal division within the island; the real republican programme should be to undercut and destroy that division. Since at least 1921 that had to mean communal compromise on the national question; above all, a programme which recognised fully the rights of majority and minority populations in any political settlement. The Provisionals have, however, evolved into a narrow communal organisation completely incapable of grasping the real nature of the problem.

Hence they organise activist campaigns and lobby the great and good in Dublin and America with demands which are entirely beside the point. The British should talk; the British

should release all of *our* prisoners (not loyalists); the British should pull out of *our* country. The people republicans really need to talk to are represented by a difficult, truculent, suspicious leadership, a leadership who are being obstructive. But these people, the Protestant/Unionist Irish, are not even being seriously addressed by the modern followers of Wolfe Tone.

Nearly every new act by Sinn Fein seems calculated to drive them into the hands of Paisley and Trimble. This happens not because Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness act in bad faith, but because they are politicians shaped entirely by their environment, bourgeois nationalists who believe that uniting the island of Ireland is somehow separate from and more important than uniting the people of Ireland. They can sustain this fantasy only because they believe that the key to uniting Ireland lies not with the Irish working class, Protestant and Catholic, but with the British government.

The present logjam reflects the depth of division and mistrust after 25 years of sectarian conflict and a pointless military campaign. The Republican movement have decided to pursue the same political objectives with a different strategy. Socialists should reject the strategy of Sinn Fein and refuse to give it credence. We look to the Irish working class to develop a democratic settlement of the national question. We judge any other settlement by the standards of full democracy, including minority rights; and we place no confidence in Major, Clinton and Bruton. ☐

## Defend Nigeria's workers!

By Mark Sandell

THE killing by the Nigerian state of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists from the Ogoni people's movement was a savage act by a paranoid military regime.

Abacha, the military ruler of Nigeria, needed to act against the entire leadership of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People to crush the direct action and mass protest movement of the Ogoni people against the environmental destruction and economic exploitation carried out by the oil companies. Oil is the life-blood of the Nigerian state and the military; over 70% of state income comes from oil.

Oil companies like Shell had asked for state "protection" from Ogoni campaigners. The state responded with a killing spree. Over 1,000 Ogonis were killed and 30,000 driven from their homes. The Ogoni people are a small and isolated group; it is vital that the labour movement supports them against Abacha's terror, but the real power to bring down the military junta lies in the hands of the Nigerian workers who have faced Abacha's repression without the

international outcry over Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution.

Frank Kakori, the General Secretary of the Nigerian oil workers' union NUPENG, has been in jail since the 1994 oil workers' strike that shook the Nigerian military regime to its roots. The oil workers were joined by other workers in their strike and even the government-friendly leadership of the Nigerian Labour Congress (like our TUC) were forced to call a general strike, which they later, shamefully, called off.

The strike's central demand was recognition of the 1993 elections and democratic rights. The military regime of Abacha, facing its most serious threat, arrested the leadership of both major oil unions, shut down all Nigerian trade unions and imposed an administrator to run the unions and the Nigerian Labour Congress.

In response to these attacks the Campaign for Independent Unionism (CIU) was set up and now has an office in London. It is vital that the British labour movement helps the CIU to build solidarity with Nigerian workers. Invite a speaker to your union, Labour Party or campaign. Raise money or donate equipment. Contact the CIU c/o PO Box 256, London SE11 5TH. Telephone: 0181 202 6292.

# Blackboard jungles: why school violence?

By Robert Booth

"WALK away from any situation in which you are threatened. Walk away — you are not paid to deal with that, you're not responsible. I am."

So said my headteacher at the Monday morning briefing just days after the tragic stabbing of Philip Lawrence. Half consolation to a shell-shocked staff, half bravado which characterises the man, it nevertheless gave the lie to the immediate issue behind this terrible death: teachers — not just headteachers — are now held responsible for, and expected to deal with, all kinds of social ills, crime and violence included, even at the risk of their own lives.

Tory education policy blames parents and teachers for the conduct of young people, bemoans the lack of discipline of youth, their absence of morality, their unfitness for work. Whole schools are "failing" — and child behaviour is now a key part of official inspections — and teachers are "incompetent" or plain "bad" if they do not "keep order" or "control the class."

One of the results is a daily ritual at the end of school when heads, deputies and other teachers stand on duty to police the evacuation of the site. Walkie talkies crackle as incidents are reported in and detachments of staff rush to the scene. The end of term presents its own problems, and the whole teaching body are usually roped in — standing on street corners, by subways and near shops to deter the flour, eggs and sprays which sometimes make an appearance.

That a whole range of activities from high-spirited play to fighting go on at school or involve children of school age is not new, indeed it has been a feature of British life for decades. Rather, it is the saddling of teachers with responsibility for dealing with it by the government which is novel. And when a brave and committed teacher like Philip Lawrence is killed trying to protect one of "his" children from the violence of another youth, the usual response is framed in policing terms — more security, more cameras, special passes and so on.

But this is no solution — it fails to address the root causes of the problem and we should not be tempted by knee-jerk reactions. Beneath the Tory response lies an essentially child-hating mentality, a fear of youth which goes beyond an incident like this and takes us away from the complex issues of violence in schools and society in general. Such an attitude is reminiscent of instructions to Methodist school teachers in the 1790s, an attitude to which many a Tory (and increasingly Labour Party) Education Spokesperson would subscribe:

"Tame the ferocity of their unsubdued passions — to repress the excess rudeness of their manners — to chasten the disgusting and demoralising obscenity of their language — to subdue the stubborn rebel-



Philip Lawrence died because the school system fails students

lion of their wills — to render them honest, obedient, courteous, industrious, submissive and orderly..." (from E P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*).

Of course, there is a strong element of free will and individual responsibility in any act of violence, and this is important for day to day relations of any kind. But the causes of Philip Lawrence's death do not lie simply on this level but also with the very society we live in today. To try to explain why violence occurs is not the same as justifying it.

Rather, we should begin from the actual reality around us. Aggression and violence are always with us, from the brutal savagery of armed conflicts beamed into our living rooms — like the Gulf War coverage which trivialised the murder of ordinary Iraqis into virtually a video game — to the domestic situation of millions of women and children who suffer abuse on a daily basis. With "competition" the supreme virtue of the age, what is more violent than the simple struggle for existence — unemployment and low benefits and poor housing for some and overwork, low pay and indebtedness for others?

The Tories want us to forget issues like jobs, housing and making ends meet because they underpin any explanation of social activity, both virtuous and deplorable, and because their policies aggravate and worsen them. It is their system that gives workers ultimately only their own labour power to sell on the market and which demands an education system which prepares young people for their allotted role, physically, technically and morally, as wage slaves until their deaths.

Many youth rightly ask, "What is the point?" Regimented by uniforms and strict routines, by attendance and punctuality figures, by tests and exams and league tables they are judged fit for certain kinds of work that probably won't be there when they're deemed old enough to get it. And what can teachers offer without even the basic resources like books to teach with, crammed into overcrowded classrooms with little hope of attending to individual needs, worn out by paperwork and harassed by inspectors?

These are just some of the issues which should be addressed in the light of yet more

violence in and around schools. Both the very purpose of education, and the actual conditions in schools, which should preoccupy us in drawing lessons from this death. And these are issues on which teachers and students have a common cause — to make the whole process worthwhile for all involved — and which raise the possibility of campaigning to change the existing situation. Fighting for a better education system would also be a fitting tribute to teachers like Philip Lawrence. ■

## The Candidate

We knew him once, when his soul was young,  
And candour flowed from his eager tongue;  
His brow was lofty, his spirit high,  
And courage danced in his glowing eye,  
Like forks of lightning his sallies flashed,  
And snob and sweater and priest he lashed,  
And deep the feeling his efforts woke  
For heart touched heart in the words he spoke.

We knew him later, when youth had waned,  
With hope abated and ardour chained:  
He talked of "ethics" in sermons dry,  
And waxed sublime on the marriage tie.  
"The plan to cling to is this," said he,  
"Historical continuity."  
And lest his projects should all get wrecked,  
His bearing was fiercely circumspect.

And now we know him, so soon grown grey,  
He wears a beak like a bird of prey;  
His young ideals abandoned long,  
He hastens always to help the strong.  
A dewdrop putrid, a perfume stunk;  
A bridal robe to a dishcloth sunk;  
A quick-change artist of countless coats,  
The creature cringes and craves our votes.

Jim Connell