

how to mobilise the union membership in active struggle for the implementation of Left policies.

The policy decisions at Blackpool will help this: to sharpen the fight against the Tory onslaught on living standards, social services and democratic rights; to press demands on the next Labour government to ensure it does not go down the way of its predecessors. Yet it will be to the extent to which a union movement, fighting for progressive policies is

developed now that will also decide whether a Labour government, committed to the policies of the movement, is returned. Such a movement can also force concessions from the Tories and bring them to a speedier General Election.

The TUC this year is expected to take great steps forward in two major policy areas. It will call for withdrawal from the Common Market, with no 'ifs' and 'buts' or procedural delays. This will place it in a politically more advanced position than the trade union movement of any other major member of the Common Market.

The TUC could also commit itself to campaign for Britain to take unilateral action for nuclear disarmament. Such a decision would also place the British trade union movement in the forefront of the fight for detente and disarmament.

Both these decisions are demonstrative of the advanced political position of the British trade union movement, and follow significant gains for left policies made within individual trade unions over recent years. The Communist Party, alone among parties in

### **THE TUC**

The key question facing the trade union movement, following the debates and discussions of the annual TUC this September, is

Britain, has consistently campaigned for withdrawal from the Market and for unilateral disarmament and has played an important part in securing advances for these positions.

Four related questions debated at this year's TUC deserve particular mention. One is the importance of further broad-based demonstrative actions through which the organisations of the working class can draw into activity not only their own membership but many others (such as the churches, organisations of black people, women and youth). Here the Peoples March for Jobs serves as an example of what can be done. Another is making the TUC's growing number of centres for the unemployed into campaigning foci which will provide organisation and cohesion for the unemployed themselves, alongside the trade union movement. The third, and very difficult question at a time of economic slump, is how to drive home the lesson taught by the miners, that only united and determined action can stop sackings. The fourth related question is that of winning clarity on policy, and specifically on the inter-relationship of the demands of the alternative economic policy and struggle for them.

Here we come up against the most entrenched of right wing ideas — 'planning' (low) incomes for workers. The crucial

ideological debate at Congress was once again around this. The right wing will still argue that low wages can save jobs. Its view that wages must be 'planned' downwards is in line with that of the employers and their Tory government. The Communists and others on the Left will fight to win understanding that without mobilisation of the mass of workers in defence of living standards nothing else will be won. Without greater purchasing power the other elements of the alternative economic strategy will become as unrealisable as did the control of rising prices under the Heath government (or the present one, for that matter) and the promised goodies under the 'social contract'.

No issue meets with greater resistance from the capitalist class than the demand for higher wages. This is only natural, as it is what the class struggle is grounded on. Incomes policies are designed to maintain the status quo, whatever the right wing in the trade union movement might hope for.

The TUC General Council went to Congress this year with some important achievements under its belt. These include the work put in to produce the Charter for Black Workers' Rights in employment and the unions, with which Ken Gill, as Chairman of the TUC's Equal Rights Committee, is very much associated. There is also

the programme for the development of the inner cities; the discussions on the level of services provided by the TUC to its affiliate-unions and to the unemployed; the multitude of campaigning material issued within the Campaign for Economic and Social Advance. All point to the greater political depth of the trade union movement. Moreover, following last year's successful May 14 Day of Action, this year's April week of Activities and the Peoples March for Jobs have led to the TUC and its regional machinery 'coming of age'. These point to the development of a more effective campaigning role for the TUC.

As the battle sharpens between right and left in the labour movement as a whole, the communists are making a greater contribution to winning understanding of the nature of the present crisis and of the role of the working class in defeating the present right offensive, alongside the fight for longer term change. This role is being increasingly recognised, not only during the Peoples March for Jobs but on a continuing basis, as the trade unions play a growing positive role in the battle for greater democracy within the Labour Party itself.

*Contributors:* **John Fairley, Gunter Minnerup, Louis Eaks, Mick Costello.**

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*Details from:*

**John Kelly, Department of Industrial Relations  
London School of Economics  
Houghton St, London WC2A 2AE  
Tel: 01-405 7886**