

Foot hails the 'historic turning point' for his party

# Last chance for Benn and Labour

THE remarkable "peace treaty" that emerged last night from Labour's conference at Bishop's Stortford seems hard to believe. Almost too good to be true.

Yet the remarkable does seem to have happened. Tony Benn made it clear in private that he will not contest again this year for Denis Healey's job as deputy leader—and maybe not again before the next General Election.

Nods and winks were exchanged between the trade union chiefs and Mr. Benn—something that would have been unthinkable even a few weeks ago.

The union leaders on their side have nodded and winked about not pressing for any "witch hunt" against the Left.

## Fund

And even more crucial to Labour's prospects, the unions have pledged to provide the party with the funds it must have over the next two years.

Without the cash, Labour would have no sinews to fight another election campaign.

The unions have agreed to fund a new propaganda campaign to publicise Labour's "socialist alternative policies" and to finance the re-organisation of the party's broken-down machine.

All this will mean at least £2 million to £3 million over the next two years in the run up to the General Election.

So the Labour summit



by **GEOFFREY GOODMAN**  
Mirror Industrial Editor

at the country college of Clive Jenkins's union, ASTMS, has produced an extraordinary degree of amity between the top brass of the party and the trade unions.

Michael Foot told me last night: "I genuinely believe that we have seen a historic turning point for Labour."

## Tone

"I know a lot of people thought we would come here and get deeper into the mire. That hasn't happened—quite the opposite."

"Some people will remain sceptical. But all I can say is that something quite dramatic seems to have started at this conference." One of the most unexpected aspects was



**BASNETT:** Success from the conference that he inspired.



**FOOT:** "Something dramatic seems to have started."

the pacific tone and role played by Tony Benn.

He appears to have persuaded everyone, including Mr. Foot and Mr. Healey, that he will not repeat his challenge to

the party's leadership. And he made an unusually warm and constructive speech yesterday, even to the unions. This followed a colourful appeal for unity from Bill

Keys, the leader of the SOGAT print union.

He said that the Labour party and the unions in the last year "reached the edge of Dante's Inferno, peered into it and have now pulled back in horror at what they saw."

Can the peace treaty last? And more important, can it be sustained to convince the electorate?

## Answer

The next few months and Mr. Benn must provide the answer.

But last night all the participants to the summit, even the most sceptical, were unusually optimistic.

Certainly they foresee several hiccups ahead. But they base their optimism on the belief that this is Labour's last chance to pull itself together if it is to stand any real hope of winning the next General Election.

# Truce in the civil war

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genuine feeling at the meeting that something new and unexpected had happened.

As well as the promise of unity in Labour's divided ranks, the meeting produced something just as important—hard cash.

The unions are to give a

cash boost amounting to more than £2 million to the party in the run up to the General Election.

They will pay for an immediate nationwide campaign to put over Labour's policies, sponsoring TV time meetings in every constituency and twenty-four major rallies.

The unions will also pay for a finance director to

help to get the party's cash crisis under control.

But the question which could not be answered last night was how effective the truce would be in the party as a whole.

Mr. Foot is already committed to an inquiry into the far Left and is still under pressure from moderate MPs for a purge on extremists.

## MirrorComment

# Asking for justice

**NOTHING** can change the hitch-hike rape trial sentence, but it would help if the judge admitted he was wrong to fine a rapist instead of sending him to prison.

Rape is an appalling crime. To a great many women it is a kind of murder, except that the victim lives.

Judge Bertrand Richards's comment that the 17-year-old who was raped was "guilty of a great deal of contributory negligence" could only have been made by a man.

A former judge, Sir Melford Stevenson—whose own retirement was greeted with relief—has put it more bluntly.

A girl who hitch-hiked late at night, he said yesterday, was "asking for it."



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That is not true. The only thing a car driver—or a judge—is entitled to think a hitch-hiker is asking for is a lift.

Any woman, virgin or prostitute, has the right to the full protection of the law against the assault of rape.

And full protection doesn't mean a fine for the rapist, who may well be able to pay it. It means prison.

This irresponsible sentence may now encourage potential rapists to think they will get off lightly if they are caught.

And it may make women fear that they can never ask for help or for a lift from any man.

Not even a judge.



# TOP AWARD FOR BL SYSTEMS CRYSTAL BALL COMPUTER.

The British Computer Society's 1981 technical award has been won by a BL Systems team of engineers for their work on "See Why."

"See Why" is a remarkable simulation and graphics package that was originally developed for the highly automated

Metro production line.

It allows the user to foresee how a production line will work, while it is still on the drawing board.

In this way bottlenecks and other potential breakdowns can be avoided at the design stage.

**BL Fighting back**

## Strikers will halt ferries

A STRIKE will halt all British Sealink ferries today.

Officers will refuse to sail them in protest over the ending of BR's Newhaven-Dieppe route.

The crew of the ferry Senlac are stopping other ferries using the Sussex port with a sit-in after being told they are to be sacked and the boat taken out of service.

FORD'S 54,000 shop-floor workers look set for pay peace.

Half had already accepted the company's 7.4 per cent offer by last night.

RAIL chiefs are planning to axe thousands of jobs and 3,000 miles of track if the train drivers stage a long strike.

THE threat of a water strike grew after NUPE workers voted strongly against a 9.1 per cent pay offer.

EDUCATION Secretary Sir Keith Joseph warned that poor teachers must go, to ensure high learning standards.



WORRIED: Beaumont-Dark

## Quote of the day

—By Tory MP Anthony Beaumont-Dark on the size of the lifeboat disaster fund:

"Riches can destroy people and communities more than poverty. People will buy cars and have holidays while others struggle"

# briefing Penlee aid flows again

CASH for the families of the drowned Penlee lifeboat crew began flooding in again yesterday.

Well-wishers had withheld donations during a wrangle over the disaster fund. But the dispute ended in victory for the relatives, who will get all of the money.

Now the official fund, which stood at £2,100,000 yesterday, will be distributed as quickly as possible.

The widow of one of the eight victims, who all lived in the Cornish village of Mousehole, hit back yesterday at the comments of Tory MP Anthony Beaumont-Dark on the dangers of the money.

"He does not know our people," said Mrs Mary Greenhaugh. "We have always helped each other and always will."

**GEOFFREY LAKEMAN**  
Close-up—Page Six.

## Ulster boost

AN economic lift for Ulster was announced yesterday by Secretary of State James Prior. He said public spending in the province would go up by £90 million to £3,510 million and this would create 9,000 new jobs and 4,500 new houses.

## Snow chaos

SNOW and floods brought more misery to Britain yesterday.

The snow spread to parts of mid-Wales and the West, and weathermen warned that further falls are on the way.

Roads in the South, especially in Essex and Kent, were expected to become dangerous.

In Scotland snow and ice continued to block many major roads. The City of York faced a third night of flooding.

The Yorkshire town of Selby was on standby for a mass evacuation. Forty elderly patients were moved to York from a Selby hospital threatened by floodwater.

**SIMON FERRARI**

## WEATHER

TODAY: Mainly dry with sunny intervals. Snow in some places. Very cold. Max. temp. 10 (34F).

TOMORROW: Snow showers with sunny intervals and freezing fog patches. Very cold.

LIGHTS: London 4.38.

**JANET DAILEY**  
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