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Aneurin Bevan

Bitterness he could show, but it was transient. At the centre of his vision was a National Health Service, and sixty years on his NHS — by surviving, growing and adapting to technological and demographic change — remains at the centre of the life of our nation as a uniquely British creation, and still a uniquely powerful engine of social justice. Aneurin Bevan was appointed Minister of Labour in January 1951, but he resigned in April of the same year because of a disagreement with Hugh Gaitskell over the intention to start levying charges in the health service.

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In his last years, however, Bevan and Gaitskell united to argue against the Conservative handling of the Suez crisis. He returned to his Buckinghamshire home Ashridge Farm to recuperate, with every expectation to resuming a role in politics, but recovery was painfully slow. He was elected as Deputy Leader of the Labour Party in 1959.

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He was plagued by financial and material shortages and refused to compromise quality. Foot captures these wonderfully, because he shared Bevan's views and as he is still alive in his late nineties some of Bevan's charisma. Further Reading on Aneurin Bevan A comprehensive two volume biography is Michael Foot's Aneurin Bevan 1962, 1973.

Aneurin Bevan: A Biography: Volume 2: 1945

Into Cabinet — and founding the National Health Service On 26 July 1945 the results of the general election held earlier that month were declared. It is the most significant and lasting reform in the history of the Labour party and it was achieved by one man.

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