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MICHAEL FOOT ON ANEURIN BEVAN

D. B. SMITH

Secretary.

On 27th October, 1973, the Society was addressed by Michael Foot who recently published Vol. II of his life of Aneurin Bevan. The lecture, held in conjunction with the Coalfield History Project at Swansea, was the culmination of a week in celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the South Wales' Miners Federation. Professor Gwyn A. Williams of York University (from October 1974 to be Professor at Cardiff) introduced Michael Foot in a manner that managed to dissect his own past, the Foot family and the needs of Welsh Labour History, almost simultaneously, and certainly with a crackling magic that danced from anecdote to myth with a Dowlais man's historical understanding of both. Afterwards, in a theatre whose every wall was draped with the banners of the N.U.M., Dai Francis presented Michael Foot with two appropriate long-playing records, one of Paul Robeson singing to the 1957 Miners' Eisteddfod and the other of Max Boyce singing his own ballads. In turn he received, on behalf of the South Wales Miners' Library (opened in that week in Swansea), an inscribed copy of the second volume of Aneurin Bevan's life.

It was felt that a wider audience than those present should be able to enjoy something of the oratory of that evening and so the following has been prepared. The editing has been strictly concerned with presenting a readable version of what was, essentially, a night of the spoken word.

Chairman—Professor Gwyn A. Williams.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades and Friends, brothers and sisters, annwyl frodyr a chwiorydd, and that should cover just about everybody, we meet tonight, surrounded by these banners, to hear Michael Foot talk about Aneurin Bevan under the auspices of *Llafur*, the Welsh Labour History Society. Clearly we are instantly transformed into a communion of saints in full apostolic succession. And, it seems to me, to open such a sacramental ceremony one has to quote from holy writ, so I will quote from a Welsh Calvinistic Methodist minister; and what could be more holy than that. Preaching in the 1830's he said: "Samaria?" "Beth oedd Samaria?" "Samaria? what was Samaria? Samaria was this ash tip, an ash tip on which they threw all their stecks and rubbish, a hot bed of paganism and heresy and everything. Samaria was the Merthyr Tydfil of the land of Canaan." Now if you translate that into political rebellion, political radicalism, you will agree I think that South Wales has had a Samarian image for quite some time now, and in good Marxist fashion, nature has imitated art, an idea, a myth, has acquired flesh. I mean I can actually remember the day when I first saw a Conservative. The shock was all the greater because it tended to coincide with the crisis of puberty. To be a Conservative in Merthyr in the thirties was contrary to nature, like a sermon in English or a joke in Welsh. I ought to have realised that things weren't quite so simple because Nye Bevan once said that "Tories don't have horns growing out their heads; politics would be much simpler if they did." Tradition is never simple. It is complex and, I

think, dialectically complex. Why one of my grandfathers, a countryman from Cilycwm wouldn't ever vote for Keir Hardie. "Beth," he used to say, "Yr hen Scotchyn na. Fox Davies a'r rector bach i mi." "Tory I am" he used to say, "Tory I am, me first, first, you first after." Then one of my grandmothers came from Amlwch in Anglesey, they left the Mynydd Parys works and came to the Dowlais Works. Rumour had it that they walked the whole way, certainly the whole family have had flat feet ever since. And whenever she saw me reading a newspaper she would explode and tear the paper from me, "What's the world to you boy." Now there you had the twin demons of the deference vote and militant apathy. But more serious was my other grandfather who was I assume the last honest Liberal in South Wales—Alf Williams, named Alf Gordon after General Gordon, who died at Khartoum. He used to go off to Board of Guardians Meetings with a gold topped cane with the whole of Dowlais cheering in the streets as he passed through. And then every Christmas we had to drink toasts in dandelion and burdock, of course, since my grandmother was dead nuts against the drink. We used to drink toasts to the Queen; we were living under a King at the time, but that was no matter. We used to drink toasts to the Queen. The American Republic and the British Navy, under the illusion that these three were Liberal institutions. Lloyd George did not know my father; I'm rather glad he didn't know my mother; but he was a living presence in my grandfather, and on election nights the Labour Party used to come round the house. If they had won the local election they would content themselves with "The Red Flag," but if they had lost they tried to bust the door in, and my grandfather used to stand by with his sons armed with pick-handles to beat them off. Now his younger son was the first one to go to the dogs, as it were, but he was a playwright anyway and worked for the young Welsh B.B.C. and so he was a semi-samaritan to begin with, and in 1919 they said, "Mae Leyshon wedi mynd Bolshi", Leyshon has gone Bolshevik", which meant of course joining the Labour Party, in 1919. And then my father who for most of his life was a staunch Labour man, with the odd local vote for Plaid Cymru, naturally—I mean, its the principle of the thing isn't it? Well he was a staunch Labour man nearly all his life but he didn't join the Labour Party until 1931. It was a good year to join, showing the family's impeccable sense of timing.

The point I am making is that the history of the Welsh working class movement is **not** simple; it is complex and, at long last, in the presence of a whole new generation of Welsh Labour and popular historians we are groping to the root of it. We are beginning to feel as another Welshman put it, "Where the corn is green," because South Wales was Samaria in another sense too. English history ignored us except for the handful of Labour historians whose perspective was naturally external. The rising new discipline of Welsh National history often ignored us too, because it was steeped in that Nonconformist Radical tradition, that Welsh Whiggery which is only partly relevant to our experience. Treveleyan you remember called social history, "History with the politics left out." Toynbee's history has been called history with the history left out. Well, for too long Welsh history was Welsh history with the Welsh left out. Those dark ages are now over, we don't need myths anymore, we can stand on our feet now even in Samaria, and what is interesting is, in this new history that is being

written in these days, Samaria dwindles, the myth of the permanent Welsh militant dwindles. I have been struck by articles I have read recently which range from Chartism all the way up through the Liberal movement, to the Lib-Labs, into the Labour movement which tend to stress continuity in leadership, or at least in leadership style. They argue that in every period the kind of men who assume leadership were broadly similar in character, and I suspect that they could prove the same about the Communists we have produced in more recent times. Certainly *Cyffro*, the Journal of the Communist Party in Wales, with all due respect, sometimes does sound to me surprisingly like *Seren Gomer*. Now, the builder, the architect, tends to displace the rebel, the romantic rebel or the romanticised rebel. This is a significant truth and we have to keep a grip on it, but alone, clearly, it will not do, because whatever qualities of leadership may have remained permanent the context changed; after all Dai Francis is not Mabon. And two other articles I have read—on the anthracite troubles in 1925 and on the struggles against Company Unionism in the 1930's—do at least suggest that on a clear day you can still see Samaria. But what this enterprise, of which *Llafur* is a symbol, suggests is that these are at least two of the key factors in the South Wales conjuncture, rebellion and creation or, if you like, creative rebellion. Even in 1831 when crowds were shouting at the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders outside the Castle Inn in Merthyr, when they were shouting "Caws gyda bara," "Cheese with the bread," what they were actually saying was that men don't live by bread alone, and it seems to me that Aneurin Bevan personified, summed up those contradictions, that complexity, mastered it, transformed it into an instrument with which he exploded into British society, to give British Socialists a bite and ambition, a tonality and a style which has been rare in British Socialism. The Welsh generally exploded into British Society from the 1880's; after all that was when we began to colonise the English educational system. We had been shaped, we had been structured by our non-conformity and by our Liberalism and we broke with both, as we broke into modern society, came of age, registered as a people, even if our grip on our potential nationhood fumbled. It was an explosive dual crisis, a crisis of growth, of human aspiration in Wales and a crisis of national identity in Wales. Through those two crises we are still living. And it was this explosion I think which propelled Lloyd George and Aneurin Bevan, two very different men, two very different rebel statesmen, yet I think visibly stepbrothers, propelled them into world stature. Now I have read that Nye, talking about the fall of Hugh Dalton, once said and I quote, "There is no immaculate conception of disaster." That is a splendid Nye Bevan phrase obviously, but neither is there an immaculate conception of genius. If we could penetrate to the centre of mystery of Aneurin Bevan we could penetrate to a centre of mystery in the history of the Welsh people, and who knows to the mystery of creating Socialism, and a fully human society.

And there is no one better qualified to begin the job than our guest this evening. To me, Michael Foot has always seemed to be the quintessential, the original free-born Englishman. He has written history, he has lived it, he is now making it. To me there has always been a certain 17th century thunder around his head, I don't mean the Welsh 17th century, I mean the good seed, the English 17th century, which taught kings that they had a bone in their necks and that

the 'poorest he' in England had rights along with 'the richest he'. He is a tradition in himself and, of course, in his dynasty which as you know, by collateral descent, has now colonised that new Samaria of the **Socialist Worker**; and he treats tradition as it ought to be treated, as an instrument used to transcend itself, and to create something new. We know what his name stands for, it stands for integrity, it stands for intelligence, and for humanity and for creative achievement all the more striking because it is an achievement in terms of the spirit; and it stands for courage, because he is now as we all know engaged on the most courageously herculean enterprise of his life—he means to convert the Labour Party to Socialism. Well, all I can do is call up that motto which was the favourite motto of the Aneurin Bevan of Italian Socialism, Antonio Gramsci, who came from an Italian Samaria and who gave Marxism a human face in the hope of building a society which would transcend all Samarias; and he took his motto from the French writer Romain Rolland—"Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will". "Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will". That is a good motto, I think, for historians and for socialists, and as historians or socialists, or conceivably even both, we want to hear from Michael Foot, this free born Englishman, who in his marriage with the people of Ebbw Vale has become a better Welshman than many of us are. And so, brothers and sisters, Britain and Wales' most distinguished Socialist, Mr. Michael Foot.

Michael Foot, M.P. :

Mr. Chairman and comrades and friends, I am sure that you would have wished that speech that you have just been listening to, to go on for the rest of the proceedings, certainly I would have loved to have done so. I am most grateful to Professor Williams for the kind things he said about me but I would have very much preferred if he had continued in the general vein, and I was hoping that before he came to the end of the introduction he would have answered the question for me and not left me with the difficulty of analysing how we are to transform the Labour Party into something that can be dignified with the word Socialist. However, I thank you very much indeed for asking me to come here this evening even though, as perhaps I may mention, it does happen that twenty-four hours ago I was speaking at a meeting in Calcutta, on the other side of the world, and it is only by a series of lucky accidents that I have been able to fulfil the engagement here this evening. So, if I am not as immaculately dressed as I should be and if I am not as fully prepared as I ought to be for such an opportunity, I hope you will accept my apologies.

When I was in Calcutta, and I have been in India for three weeks, overwhelmed as I think anybody who saw what I have seen during that period must be, I wished I'd had that phrase that Professor Williams has just quoted to us from Gramsci, "Pessimism of the intelligence and optimism of the will", because, in a sense, that is exactly what I have been seeing in India during this period. Nobody who can be there and witness the poverty and the hunger and the horror which they have to overcome, can fail to be overwhelmed. But I must confess to you that despite going with those kind of forebodings that when I got there, to my amazement, much more striking was the vitality and the buoyance, and the

intelligence, and the foresight, and the dedication of dozens of Indians that I met, whether they were ministers in the government or members of the opposition parties, or civil servants, or industrialists, or people running nationalised industries who actually believed in nationalisation—astonishing scenes I've witnessed in India. And despite the immensity of the problems that they face, I came away with this feeling, which I had to convey to you, because it is not possible, I believe, for anybody to go and see what is happening there, without being inspired with the idea of democratic socialism in which I believe, and I think, most people in Wales believe. Indeed, there is a kinship I am sure between Wales and India, and a kinship even in the arguments about the language. Although I am only an honorary Welshman, even so I am a strong supporter of the Welsh language, I am all in favour of sustaining Wales' cultural traditions. I have met in India, in many different parts of India, multitudes of people who are determined to do the same. But along with that I have seen how, the one good thing that Britain gave to India, being the most precious possession we have, the English language, allows over so wide an area, so many people to speak of the possibilities of democratic socialism, in almost the same way and the same idiom, that we have in Wales. And I felt therefore very much at home in many of these arguments. In some respects the greatest creation of the British Labour Movement is the possibility of socialism in India. Aneurin Bevan himself showed a special interest in India. He went there on two notable occasions. On one occasion in 1957 it was touch and go whether India would leave the Commonwealth; he was able to speak to the Indian Parliament and to the people in India, at that time, in a very different accent to the one that was being used by the government of that day, and afterwards, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian leaders of that time were prepared to persist in the conception of maintaining a Commonwealth. It may be that when we get a new Labour government, as I trust we will, one of its major tasks will be to rebuild the idea of an association between Britain and India, because it is a fact that we are both engaged in the same kind of exertion as to whether we can build a new kind of community, and whether we can do it by liberal means, by means of free debate and argument.

But I was asked to speak on some of the problems of writing the biography of Aneurin Bevan, and certainly there have been many problems. I was a little alarmed when Professor Williams talked about Welsh history with Wales left out, for I am afraid, in this second volume I have written, Wales plays a lesser part than it did in the first volume. I suppose that is unavoidable, but I hope that the two volumes may be read together because, of course, what Aneurin Bevan gave to British politics was inspired by what he brought from Wales. And I have hope that something of that may be retained in the second volume. I was again nervous when Professor Williams reminded me that in fact perhaps the Welsh strand in that history had not been emphasised as strongly as it might be.

When I started, however, to write this volume one of the major difficulties that I had to contend with, or as anyone writing about Aneurin Bevan at this time would have had to contend with, was that I had to start with the year 1945 and a Labour Government elected with a huge majority, capable of achieving everything if it was able to do so and had the will power to do so, a government which aroused expectations I suppose, that have never been previously exceeded

amongst democratic people in these islands, and Aneurin Bevan entered that government as its youngest member, even though he had been ostracised by so many of his colleagues in the years gone by. He had not been elected to any office by the Parliamentary Labour Party, nor had he ever even been elected to any Shadow Cabinet by the Parliamentary Labour Party. He was appointed to office because Attlee thought in 1945, no doubt, that it was the right course to take, although there were many who said that he had done it, that Attlee had done it, because very soon the loud-mouth demagogue would be exposed and they wouldn't have any more trouble from him.

Now when Aneurin Bevan died many people wrote about him in very different terms indeed and some people wrote as if he had been a tragic failure because of some temperamental disability that he had : of how he had failed to work with his colleagues; how there must have been some attribute which was in him which prevented him from using these enormous talents which everyone acknowledged to the full. But it has always seemed to me that that is a very strange way of telling the story and what I have sought to do in this volume is to try and describe the dilemmas which the individual has to face. Most history is written backwards and the historians look back and see how easily these matters could have been resolved, if only the participants had had the wisdom that they possess. But I believe that biography especially, and history as well, must be written by taking into account all the dilemmas and choices and pressures which politicians have to bear at the immediate moment, with nobody knowing exactly how each argument will turn out. I think that if anyone reads the history of these past fifteen years they will have to see that in the fifteen years between 1945 and 1960, the fifteen years of Aneurin Bevan's life that I have included in this volume, it was not the weakness in the character or temperament of Aneurin Bevan that was responsible for any tragedy that occurred. It must be sought elsewhere, the cause of the failure to use such talents and such genius. And it must be looked for in the nature and the organisation of the Labour Party and of the Labour movement itself.

I do not mean to say that nature is unchangeable, or that organisation cannot be altered. Indeed I think that, in many respects, it is being altered for the better. Just to take one example, and I mention this because although I have been in India and haven't read many of the reviews of the book that have appeared, I have read one or two comments that have stirred me to make these replies now. The fact is that many of the right wing leaders of the Labour Party or their descendants, fail or refused to face the fact that during the period from about 1950 to nearly 1960, during the whole of that period of the 1950's, they operated a system of discipline in the Labour Party of almost totalitarian proportions. Of course it wasn't totalitarian in the sense that anybody could be expelled to Siberia or that they could be sent to the salt mines, but it was a form of discipline which sought to exterminate any means of change and alteration in the direction of the Labour Party. A few trade union leaders banded together to decide how they were going to manipulate the Labour Party; they had clear ideas of what they wanted to achieve, they had leaders in the Party who were quite prepared to accept their method of doing it and to conduct the affairs of the Parliamentary Labour Party in a manner which prevented any real form

of democratic change within the Party. And that is the reason why, on several occasions, it came almost to the point that Aneurin Bevan was driven out of the Party; and some of them hoped, of course, to see him driven out of Parliamentary life altogether.

Aneurin Bevan, all through that period, fought for a new tolerance and a new readiness, for a different kind of exchange within the Labour movement and within the Labour Party. And when he was asked by Hugh Gaitskell in 1959 to become the Deputy Leader of the Party following the disastrous election of 1959, the first demand that Aneurin Bevan made to Gaitskell was that the standing orders of the Labour Party, which had been the instrument by which this discipline was imposed over these years, should be abandoned. He didn't secure that entirely, and indeed soon after Aneurin Bevan's death that form of discipline was reimposed for a period but today, I am glad to say, it is almost as distant and out of date as the Spanish Inquisition itself. People are amazed to remember what methods were used to try to hold the dominant right wing position of the right wing leaders of the Party in those days. And so when people say to me now, "Ah well, can you explain how it could be that such talents were not immediately recognised?" the fact of the matter was that the talents were one of his principal offences, because he was using those talents to state more clearly than anybody else could do, what was the ferment inside the Labour movement which the leaders were seeking to suppress and stifle. That is the story of the 1950's very largely. One of the central features of his life, contrary to all the charges against him, was that when he made his declarations and speeches (I don't mean every aside, I don't mean every word which he spoke which might be snapped up by a newspaper report or a political opponent or anything of that sort, but I meant the **political** declarations of his life) they were made not for the purpose of merely enthusing the audience at that moment, but for the purpose of getting people to act. Certainly, nobody looking back on those controversies of the fifties can say that he was merely making declarations for the purpose of causing trouble in the Party or seeking to grab the leadership, as they said at the time. Anybody who examines it now can see it was a much more powerful intelligence than that which was at work.

Now, how to convey all these things in a book, because that is what I am supposed to be talking about, the problems of how to do it; one of the difficulties is that Aneurin Bevan was unreportable. Some of the blame has been put, as he very often put it, on the reporters in the newspapers. I used to argue with him intensely about it on many occasions, although I accept there were newspapers who were certainly prepared to use every means they could to try and destroy him; not necessarily the obvious newspapers like **The Daily Express**, who were out to destroy him for straight political motives, but papers like **The Daily Mirror**, which were engaged then, as they have been since, in trying to choose the leaders of the Labour Party for us. And they were engaged then in trying to assassinate the character of Aneurin Bevan in order that we should have a much milder Labour Party as a consequence. As indeed we did have, for we had for many years a Labour Party that was perfectly satisfactory to the owners of **The Daily Mirror**; I am hoping very much that we are escaping from that predicament now, but certainly that was what they desired then. But it was not only, as

sometimes Aneurin Bevan himself was persuaded to believe, it was not only malice or political motivation which made the newspapers seek to paint him as a boorish, blustering Caliban; it wasn't only that. It was because his art was almost un-reportable.

Aneurin Bevan in making a speech was not seeking to guard every word that he uttered, he couldn't put a sentinel on every sentence to see that it went out to the world, properly shaped and properly dressed and properly approved, to appear next day in print without anybody misunderstanding it. If he had made speeches like that he wouldn't have been listened to in the rest of the country, let alone Wales. Of course he didn't make speeches like that, he made speeches in which the audiences participated in the making of the speech. He made speeches not in which he was trying to say what was popular for the audience, indeed I do not believe there is any leading political figure in the whole of our history who has been less of a demagogue in the sense that he said things in order to be popular, indeed most of us used to discover that he would be saying the very opposite. It was part of his doctrine or argument, that he should act contrarily. He always used to work on the principle, at least in his best speeches, that you don't go for the weak parts of somebody's speech because they will fall anyhow, you go for the strength. If you can take the strongest point in your opponent's speech, if you go for the citadel and you can capture that, then all the outworks will fall in the same assault.

I remember one occasion in particular in the constituency which I represented then, in Devonport in 1951, when he came to speak to us at a crowded meeting three or four days before the poll, a huge meeting, packed with Conservative opponents as well as with Labour supporters, and he got up and spoke for an hour and a half. There were some interruptions at the beginning and he made a deal with the interrupters saying that he would put their case for them, and that if they had any doubts, or qualifications, or criticisms, to make of the way in which he put it he would be only too glad to make corrections to suit their requirements. And he then made the most perfect and effective and overwhelming case for laissez-faire economics that I have ever heard. Indeed many of us in the Labour Party were getting extremely nervous as he went on, we wondered what was going to happen at the end. Like the man who was selling goods in the market who borrowed the gold watch from one of the people in the audience and brought the hammer on the watch and smashed the watch and then said that unfortunately he had forgotten the rest of the trick. And some of us were wondering if that was going to happen in Devonport in 1951; however having put their case perfectly and established it in all its strength, he then dismantled it almost brick by brick. And the Tories in the audience listened as fascinated as anybody. And so that was the way in which he used to put arguments in many places, he couldn't put them like that in the meetings of the Parliamentary Labour Party, because as he himself says in one of the letters that is published in this book, he said that he always had a claustrophobic feeling when he went into the meetings of that body, because there, in that period, he had none of the protections that you have in the House of Commons.

This was one of the reasons why Aneurin Bevan came to be a strong believer in forms of Parliamentary Government; it didn't mean to say that he agreed

with every aspect of it, but he thought it had many virtues and one of the virtues was that the British House of Commons does provide protections for minorities and even for tiny minorities. And therefore Aneurin Bevan was able to make in the House of Commons the speeches which persuaded people outside and which he was denied the right to make inside the meetings of the Parliamentary Party itself. There, there were no protections for debate, there the matters were hurried through in a matter of an hour or a short space of time. Maybe that was the necessity but there, there was no certainty, that debate could be exhausted before the vote was taken, indeed it was the majority which could bring down the closure whenever they wanted. And it was precisely because real genuine debate was stifled at the centre of the Labour Party proceedings in those times that we headed for such dangers. Dangers which might have been irreparable. However the Aneurin Bevan who spoke in the House of Commons or spoke in the country in the manner I have described, found that the speeches he made, when they appeared in the newspapers next morning, read very differently indeed. These reports, he believed, bore no relation to the spirit and significance and meaning of what he had actually said. Of course he was outraged and he was very nearly destroyed by that mechanism too.

Now another question that I had to face was that people said he changed in later times. Was it not the fact, they asked, that the speech he made in Brighton in 1957 on the bomb, was the mark of a man who had allowed his political views to mellow, as had happened to so many political leaders on the left in our history? That was the accusation made at the time, indeed the accusation was made in even more stinging terms. Some people alleged that in 1957 when Aneurin Bevan changed his view, as was the accusation, on the manufacture of the bomb and made the speech at Brighton, that he had entered into some secret compact with Gaitskell and the leaders of the Labour Party. The compact was that he would become Foreign Secretary, the position that he wanted in the next Labour Government, and as a consequence that he had been ready to make this speech which had caused such distress, and much deeper than distress amongst the left-wing of the Labour Party and those who had been his strongest supporters throughout most of his political life. Now I happened to disagree with him bitterly on that subject, but I never believed that he had made any such compact, I think it would have been quite impossible for him to reach any such compact. Of course there was a half truth in it which made the accusations all the worse and that was that he had to take into account, and did take into account, what he thought were the political calculations of the time, he did take into account what would happen if he refused to speak for the Labour Party at that moment and if he had led his own supporters, and many others, into the political wilderness for a further fight such as we had had in the early part of the fifties; he had to take that possibility into account. It was one of the factors which went to make up his mind. But the idea that he had entered into any cynical compact was not merely deeply repugnant to his nature, but it is utterly confounded by any study of the facts.

Whether he was right or wrong in that decision is another question; it was an irony of almost unbearable proportions because no one more than Aneurin Bevan had led the revolt against the complacency and the orthodoxy, and the

timorousness of politics, of British politics of the 1950's. Nobody had played a greater part in breaking that orthodoxy and yet when he broke it, in a sense it exploded in his face. It was an extraordinary incident but certainly no one could believe, no one who knew him could believe, and nobody who studies the facts, and nobody who studies the subsequent story can believe, that he had entered into any such compact. He was engaged, as he had been all his life, at the same time as he presented the ideas in which he believed in trying to fashion the instrument for making those ideas effective. And he had always believed, and believed more firmly in those last years than he had before, that the Labour Party was that instrument and that with all its defects and meannesses and wretchedness in some respects, it had to be sharpened still because there was no other instrument which could do the job. And so what I have sought to do in the book, in my belief in the greatness of Aneurin Bevan, apart from all the individual achievements, the National Health Service, the maintenance of an intelligent view of world affairs, an intelligent, Socialist, imaginative view during all the wretched times of the 1950's, along with all those particular achievements, is to indicate what I think he did for many of us in maintaining the idea that Democratic Socialism was a revolutionary creed, and that if it lost that essence it was not worth anything at all. When you heard him speak you could feel that revolutionary fervour, but not only the fervour itself. It was the way in which he amalgamated intellect and emotions, the way in which he tried to state in a single sentence or a single idea, a single speech, the necessities of word and deed. All that he did was an essay in word and deed, never one without the other, and I believe that the more people look at his life the more this will become evident. And if, as I trust we will, we secure a Labour government which does intend to proceed with the task of Socialism I still think that the chief credit will be due to Aneurin Bevan.

David Francis, General Secretary of the South Wales Area of the National Union of Mineworkers :

I think it is appropriate that I should be here tonight to receive this second volume on the life of Aneurin Bevan from the author Michael Foot. And it is also appropriate, too, that this lecture should be delivered at the end of the week when we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the most devoted Union in Wales. There is no Union in Britain, let alone in Wales, that contributed more to the Labour Movement than the South Wales Miners' Federation and later on, the South Wales Area of the National Union of Mineworkers. I am proud to boast that fact. Aneurin Bevan was a product of the South Wales Miners' Federation. So was Noah Ablett and Arthur Horner, and many other illustrious parliamentarians that could be mentioned from this platform tonight. And, Michael, I am very grateful that you have been able to come here and make this presentation of the second volume of "The Life of Aneurin Bevan".

Michael Foot, M.P. :

Thank you very much Dai for the two records, and I think that that deserves two books, so, I will see that the South Wales Miners' Library also gets a copy of Volume One as well, so that they can put it there. And I would like to use this opportunity of wishing the very best success to the South Wales Miners' Library.

I think it's a splendid idea. I'm sure, in association with a study of Welsh History, it will have a great success, and I hope also that we may be able to see what other contributions can be made to the Library. It is one of the most important tasks of all, I believe, in ensuring that we do things properly in our Socialist future, that we get more and more people to learn about the history of our movement in the past, so I wish the South Wales Miners' Library, the very best of success indeed, and thank you very much for the invitation to come here this evening for that reason alone.

Chairman—Professor Gwyn A. Williams.

I should like to end with making four thanks. One is to Dai Francis obviously, for showing us once more why he is the Secretary, if not Secretary General, of the South Wales Area of the N.U.M. Secondly, I would like to thank the Principal of the University College at Swansea for offering us his hospitality this evening; he and his staff have served us wonderfully well and we thank him sincerely. Thirdly, I would like to thank you for being an audience of quite terrifying intensity, but mainly of course we must thank Michael Foot. He has said he hero-worshipped Nye Bevan and he spoke of his oratory, but it seems to me that when it comes to oratory, to genuine oratory of an intelligent man speaking to an audience as if they too were intelligent people, he need hero-worship nobody because he is second to none. And his achievement in doing this after flying from the Orient and being seventeen hours without sleep just leaves me speechless—which is an unusual condition for someone from Dowlais. So to conclude I will borrow some words from the French Revolution, which is a bloody good place to borrow words from, and I will say that Citizen Foot has deserved well of his country, both of them, and of Socialism, and, if I may be momentarily arrogant, in the name of yourselves, of both his countries, and of Socialism, I would thank Citizen Foot.