



Nye: The Political Life of Aneurin Bevan

Nicklaus Thomas-Symonds

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Aneurin "Nye" Bevan was one of the pivotal Labour figures of the post-war era. As Minister for Health in Attlee's government, his role in the foundation of the NHS, the world's largest publically-funded health service and the centre-piece of the Opening Ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, changed the face of British society forever. The son of a coal miner from South Wales, Bevan was a life-long champion of social justice and the rights of working people and became one of the leading proponents of Socialist thought in Britain. He was also vehement in his dislike of the Conservative Party, going so far as to oppose the wartime coalition between Attlee and Churchill. Whilst he admired the Marxist critique of capitalism - and felt that the drive for private consumer affluence in the 1950s flew in the face of social good - he was certainly no communist. He was a passionate believer in public ownership but had a complex relationship with the unions, which may have prevented him from becoming party leader.

In this book, acclaimed author Nicklaus Thomas-Symonds provides the first full-life biography of Bevan in over two decades, from his birth in Tredegar in the South Wales Valleys in 1897 to his death from stomach cancer at the age of 62 in 1960. Thomas-Symonds considers not just Bevan's political career but also his upbringing, his career in local government in Wales and his relationship with his wife, and fellow Labour MP, Jennie Lee. Drawing on first-hand interviews as well as recently released sources, he provides a unique portrait of one of the great British statesmen of the twentieth century.



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