

A ROAD MAP
FOR
LABOUR

By

Rt Hon PETER HAIN MP

Leader of the House of Commons and Secretary of State for Wales



Second Aneurin Bevan Memorial Lecture

20th June 2003

Sponsored by GMB Union



Reverse title page

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PREFACE

It gave me great pleasure on behalf of my organisation, the GMB – Britain's General Union – to chair the Second Aneurin Bevan Annual Lecture held on 20th June 2003 at the Cardiff School of Social Sciences, Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff.

The lecture, organised by the Bevan Foundation and delivered by Peter Hain MP, was in the true spirit of Nye Bevan and its theme was close to all our hearts. It was delivered in Peter's usual eloquent way to guests from all walks of life – trade unionists, politicians and members of the business fraternity. The lecture attracted a large amount of press interest and did a great deal to promote the work of the Bevan Foundation.

The text of the lecture is now being published so that the ideas in it are as accessible as possible, and I am delighted that GMB could sponsor both the lecture and this pamphlet.

I would like to express our gratitude to Peter Hain for his excellent presentation that night and thank all those who have supported the Bevan Foundation. Also can I thank all those who played their part in making that evening a memorable one.

Allan J Garley
Regional Secretary – GMB South Western Region

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FOREWORD

It would have been good if the bank of live cameras covering my speech on 20th June 2003 was normal for Bevan Foundation Annual Lectures. But unfortunately not.

They were there following an extraordinary day of media spin and hype and down right misrepresentation over a perfectly common sense question I had intended to ask in the lecture:

“How can we ensure that hard-working middle income families and the low paid get a better deal, except by those at the very top of the pay scale contributing more? Yet at the same time, how do we reward initiative, risk-taking and enterprise – all of which are crucial to generating wealth and economic success?”

But that morning I had woken up to broadcasters reporting that I was specifically advocating a 50 per cent or 60 per cent higher rate of tax when I self evidently wasn't and didn't. A huge story was running with journalists excitedly speculating that the Government might be about to break a manifesto commitment not to raise basic income tax levels - when we self-evidently weren't and wouldn't. So I was left with no alternative but to close it all down and remove the offending paragraph. Clearly, as a Cabinet Minister, it was incendiary to raise for public debate a question on a lot of peoples' minds – especially since the Tories then put out posters on 'Labour's 61 per cent tax' (the 60 per cent lifted from the media and the 1p National Insurance rise): a piece of dishonest opportunism.

All it proved was that, in the Westminster bubble we all inhabit – media and politicians alike - there's nothing harder than getting the media to take seriously policy debate and serious exploration of new ideas. And nothing easier than getting coverage for personality politics and hyped up stories of supposed splits and so-called gaffes. Every attempt at open debate is turned into a split. Every Ministerial word that is microscopically different becomes a gaffe. And then the media wonder why politicians resort to the very on-message boredom the so deplore.

I genuinely believe that the public want to see, hear and read the merits of interesting ideas by Ministers or Shadow Ministers instead of all sorts of angles, spin and process minutiae – endlessly fascinating and exciting to the Westminster bubble but boring and self-obsessed to everyone else.

I particularly believe that it is vital that we continue to debate how we reduce inequality. Not in the hyped up, over the top way that we saw in the media on the day of this lecture, but in a way that enables sensible discussion about how we take forward our policies in years to come. Because it is possible both to have competitive tax rates, and to ensure fairness in the system – and indeed our Government has made big strides in that direction already.

So, despite the media row around it, this pamphlet, based on the speech I delivered, is a call to Labour to continue to remain true to our socialist roots and our commitment to equality. A call that all of us in the Labour Party must answer.

Peter Hain
September 2003

A ROAD MAP FOR LABOUR

Introduction

The name and memory of Aneurin Bevan continues to have tremendous resonance not only here in South Wales and in the Labour Party, but right across Britain. So, it is a great honour for me to have been invited to give this second Aneurin Bevan Annual lecture.

Last year Nye was one of only a handful of 20th century politicians to appear in the BBC's list of 100 Great Britons nominated by the public. A man whose interests were not confined to politics, but spanned science and the arts would no doubt have been intrigued to find himself listed between John Logie Baird and Boy George! But he deserved his place on that list.

I want to set out how I believe the Government can restate a governing mission that ensures we stay true to the principles that Nye Bevan held dear.

Labour's mid-term crossroads

Labour stands at a mid-term crossroads. We have achieved a huge amount, above all economic stability, record public investment and radical constitutional reform. Yet we are widely criticised as a government of middle-managers focussing on delivery through micro-managing an ever-expanding array of targets and initiatives. So is 'what works' in practice our governing vision? Or is it time to restate our governing vision within a set of clear socialist values that drive our programme of government? Nye Bevan would, I am sure, have wanted the latter: a road-map to take us from mid term on a path to conquer the cynicism that has cast such a spell of disenchantment over British politics and can only work in favour of Conservative and other right-wing forces.

Three clear principles should underpin each of our policies. All are true to Labour's founding principles. But in their implementation we must continue to apply modern solutions. First, devolution and decentralisation – because not everything can or should be run from the centre. Second, equality and redistribution – because we on the left are defined above all by our commitment to social justice. And third, democratic renewal – because an inclusive, participatory democracy is vital for the vitality of our nation.

Devolution and decentralisation

I am proud to stand here in Wales as one of those who fought hardest for devolution, and proud that four years running our own affairs have clearly demonstrated the benefits: from record job creation to free bus passes for pensioners. With Scotland, Welsh devolution has been an historic Labour achievement.

And now it is coming to the regions of England as well, with Regional Development Agencies and Chambers already established and English regional Government to follow.

Why is devolution and decentralisation the first of the three guiding principles? Because empowering and enabling different communities to seek different solutions to shared problems is a principle on which Labour was founded. There is a myth – that has developed mainly because of the emotional attachment in the Labour Party to the historic achievements of our post 1945 government - that Labour has always believed in big centralised government. In nationally run industry and public services. In a top-down, managerial politics. In statism. As Archbishop Rowan Williams noted in his fascinating address to the Bevan Foundation's Annual General Meeting last September: "we have assumed very often that classical socialism is inseparable from big government..."

Yet 'Whitehall knows best' would have been anathema to our founding fathers who believed in localism, devolution and mutualism. They believed in high national standards set by government - as we do, and as we have implemented these past six years: notably in health and education. But they would not have endorsed the view that socialism is what Labour governments do from the centre alone.

That is why it is right that, since devolution, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have been able to pioneer new approaches. The devolved administrations and the UK government have learnt from each other. The new devolved bodies can be, in a phrase that has been used in connection with American states, "laboratories of democracy".

In Wales, for example we have already seen the Assembly coming forward with innovative proposals such as the Children's Commissioner, Assembly Learning Grants and the Welsh Baccalaureate.

And the newly-elected Labour administration in Cardiff has set out on a path, different from that we are pursuing in England, with unique policies – such as ending prescription charges to tackle poverty and take even more people off welfare and into work. This is not only about social justice, but also economic efficiency. Many who suffer chronic illnesses are liable to find themselves, on going into work, just above benefit levels, so they find it a disincentive to seek employment.

Similarly, providing for all Welsh primary school children to have free breakfasts in school will not only help tackle poverty and ill-health, it will also help cut down on truancy and encourage higher pupil concentration and therefore better performance from the very school group where it is typically deficient: again, social justice leading to greater economic performance.

Whether or not these policies prove sufficiently successful or should be extended to England, they are examples of why it makes sense for different communities to seek their own unique solutions, tailored to their specific

needs. Wales, after all, has historically had higher levels of ill health and deprivation.

Photo 2 around about here

Because not everything can or should be run from the centre. From the NHS to local government, we must continue to let go and trust people to decide for themselves what they want and how they get it. We need the active involvement of our communities if we are to develop solutions to the challenges we still face, in particular the inequalities that still exist within Wales.

We need a participatory democracy - local solutions, facilitated by Government action. Enabling Governments at a British and Welsh level that empower communities, rather than direct and control them.

The history of the Labour Party shows that an enabling, devolving socialism is closer to our roots than the statist socialism tradition which came to be identified with the Left and with Labour in particular. Pioneers like Tom Paine, Robert Owen, William Morris and G.D.H. Cole were enabling, devolving, not state socialists.

The origins of our National Health Service lie in the community self-help that provided support for workers through the Tredegar Medical Aid Society, with which Nye Bevan himself was involved. As Hywel Francis and Dai Smith wrote in their history of the South Wales Miners Federation, The Fed: "His riveting, passionate championing of the new Health Service was but an extension of the collective and accumulated concerns of the South Wales miners, their communities and their own, often sophisticated, local medical schemes."

Trade unions and co-operative organisations which were so central to the Labour Party's inception, evolved from a series of self-governing societies, groups and institutions and were not dependent upon a central apparatus. Those principles of local partnership are strongly embedded in Wales, and can be seen in the commitment to community enterprise in the old mining Valleys.

In recent years, the growth of the 'social economy' or 'third sector' in Wales clearly indicates that the spirit and principles of Robert Owen's co-operative movement have been modernised in a new Welsh context. It is also significant that the partnership principle works much better in the Welsh economy, certainly than in England where the culture of community and co-operation has traditionally been weaker. The 'Team Wales' approach – bringing together all the key agencies – is a primary reason why inward investors have found Wales such an attractive place to locate.

One of the conclusions of the Bevan Foundation's excellent recent report on the South Wales Valleys, 'Ambitions for the Future' is: "that action for change must be strongly rooted in the local community...". This principle underlies the changes that have recently taken place in the NHS in Wales. The new structure is all about creating a health service based upon local solutions. GPs, nurses, optometrists, chemists, dentists, representatives from local government and the voluntary sector are all part of the new Local Health Boards. That means decisions about services are taken by those on the ground who are best placed to know what the real needs are.

At Westminster we have also followed this principle by ensuring that decisions on strategies to tackle crime at a local level are being taken by local community safety partnerships. New legislation on health and local government introduced in this Parliamentary session has not only addressed Welsh needs, but given greater flexibility to local authorities and community health councils to meet local needs.

So how do we ensure that inequalities are addressed whilst at the same time devolving more power to local communities? Balance is the key. Power can only be spread downwards in an equitable manner if there is a national framework where opportunities, resources, wealth and income are distributed fairly, where democratic rights are constitutionally entrenched, and there is equality of opportunity, regardless of gender or race.

In the Health Service, we have a national framework of standards and inspections, and the ability for patients to access information about the quality of services. In education, we have a national curriculum, equal standards of testing, a system of inspection and the ability for parents to get information about performance.

It is possible to devolve power while ensuring equality of access and quality. But it is a genuine tension, and one that was known to Labour's leaders in the Party's early days.

John Bruce Glaisier wrote in 1919 in his book *The Meaning of Socialism*: "In the British or so called Anglo-Saxon character (which is in fact very largely Celtic) there is a manifest compromise between the disposition to preserve domestic and local autonomy and the desire for national uniformity and legal sanction."

If local communities, which have suffered from years of neglect and under-investment are to succeed, then they need the strong support of government at both UK and Welsh level – governments that are committed to redistribution by targeting resources on deprived communities, and promoting fairness, full employment and enterprise.

Casting the state as an 'enabler' rather than a domineering 'enforcer' does not mean a passive role in the economy. On the contrary our Government has been absolutely right to be highly active, ensuring economic stability,

intervening in partnership with business, investing in education, skills and high-quality infrastructure.

But in the end government cannot on its own 'erect' a strong economy. It can only provide the conditions which empower employers and employees to build one. Take the example of Enterprise Areas. Entrepreneurial and business activity is essential to the sustainable regeneration of communities.

It's vital that small businesses develop in those parts of Wales that have traditionally suffered from high unemployment, and that the people in these communities get the chance to exploit their abilities and potential to the full.

So, in 360 disadvantaged areas of Wales, Labour is cutting the cost of non-residential property purchase by abolishing stamp duty, cutting the cost of risk capital, through the community investment tax relief and proposals for a community venture capital fund, and giving consideration to cutting the cost of initial investment through enhanced capital allowances.

In rejecting centralism, the ideological imperative for devolution is not separatism but rather a new common citizenship: the belief that the good society is one in which each citizen has the opportunity to exercise power and influence over his or her life. A participatory democracy which engages all its citizens in helping to shape their own lives by giving them a stake in decisions which affect them, their families and their communities.

As Nye Bevan wrote in *In Place of Fear*: "democratic socialism... is based on the conviction that free men can use free institutions to solve the economic and social problems of the day, if they are given a chance to do so."

Photo 4 around about here

Equality and social justice

As a party of the left we are defined above all by our commitment to equality and social justice – and that must be the second signpost on our road-map.

While we can be, and are, environmentalists, democrats, libertarians and pluralists, we stand on the left because we believe that society can and should be more equal. That society is based upon extending individual liberty through social justice.

Only through greater equality do people become free to reach their own full potential. So we must renew our commitment to greater equality and in so doing reawaken a sense of mission that the lives of too many are still awash with poverty, uncertainty, insecurity and lack of ambition.

It's time for a renewed commitment not just to opportunity, and certainly not uniformity, but to genuine equality.

In our first two years in office, there were some who feared that, by taking tough economic decisions - such as those on spending levels and on independence for the Bank of England - we were somehow acting against the interests of people on low-incomes. But, on the contrary, it is the poorest in our society who suffer most from an unstable economy. Those who budget to the last few pence each week are those who find it hardest when there is no certainty on interest rates when inflation spirals and when jobs are cut as a consequence.

Under the Tories, interest rates reached 15 per cent, inflation rocketed to over 10 per cent and there were over 100,000 house repossessions. Under Labour, we now have the lowest interest rates for 40 years and the lowest inflation for 30 years. Low interest rates and low inflation put more money in the pockets of low-income families.

And prioritising the repayment of the nation's debts, as Labour did, means that we have saved 7 billion in debt interest repayments – money we are now spending on schools and hospitals.

Of course, the single biggest route out of poverty is employment. Under the Tories, unemployment in Wales doubled between 1979 and 1997 - standing at over 100,000 for 14 of the 18 years that the Conservatives were in power and at one point reaching 168,000. After just five years of a Labour government, it is down to under 46,000 - the lowest for 25 years and lower than the European average, or that of the USA or Canada. Across Britain under Labour, there are over a million and a half new jobs – and the highest employment level ever.

Much of this reduction is thanks to the New Deal which has helped over 50,000 people in Wales move into work - thanks to a programme funded by a windfall tax on the profits of the privatised utilities, and initially opposed by two of the three opposition parties.

Now, long-term unemployment is down 72 per cent since we came to power and long-term youth unemployment down by a staggering 80 per cent.

Over the past year, Wales has seen the biggest increase in employment of any UK region and the biggest fall in economic inactivity – a vital signal that we are at last eating into the huge 'hidden' unemployment in our Valleys and elsewhere.

With the economy put on a stable footing, with record investment in our public services, with the conditions for business success improved, and with unemployment falling, we have been able to use the fruits of economic success to redistribute wealth on a huge scale.

Labour has preached redistribution of wealth, power and opportunity since the creation of our Party over one hundred years ago. But talking in opposition is easy. Acting in government is more difficult. Yet we have done it.

Nye would doubtless have said we haven't shouted about it loud enough. Yet, by 2005 we will have more than doubled to 7.2 per cent of GDP the 3.5 per cent that Nye was able to win for the NHS under the Attlee government with all its radical reforms. And since 1997 the real incomes of the poorest tenth of the society have risen by 15 per cent with those of the richest falling by 3 per cent.

Maybe we have seemed more preoccupied with winning and maintaining new supporters, than with explaining to our traditional supporters what we have been doing to improve the quality of their lives.

We have been redistributing on a huge scale to people on low incomes at every stage of their lives – in childhood, through their working life, and in retirement. All children have gained from our measures but those on the lowest incomes have gained the most. The poorest families are on average £2,400 a year better off as a result of tax and benefit measures introduced since 1997. The new Working Tax Credit is helping to make work pay for people on low incomes, with or without children. For the first time, setting an income level for all below which we will not let people fall.

We have achieved one of the cherished aims of the Labour Party's founders - notably Labour's first Welsh MP, Keir Hardie over 100 years ago - by introducing a national statutory minimum wage. As a result 40,000 low-income workers in Wales have benefited from the increase in the minimum wage last year to £4.20 per hour. This has doubled the hourly rate that many of my constituents were earning under the Tories, and the rate will be raised this October to £4.50, and to £4.85 by October 2004. And we are set to extend the principle of the minimum wage to those aged 16 and 17 next year.

We have also acted to support those in retirement. By 2004/05 we will be spending £9.2 billion extra in real terms on pensioners, including over £4 billion on the poorest third of pensioners. This year, we are making a radical change in our support for pensioners with the introduction of the Pension Credit, which will, for the first time, help those hard working pensioners who have saved, or have small occupational pensions.

And we have been willing to be radical in our desire to ensure that our public services are properly funded - winning popular support for April's 1p tax rise to fund the NHS.

A truly progressive increase, resting solely on ability to pay and, for the first time for National Insurance, going right up the pay scale. Ending the myth, entrenched for a generation, that no government could ever secure backing for an increase in taxation to invest in public services.

Yet despite all this tackling poverty and social exclusion remain key challenges. Wales is moving forward on many social and economic indicators. But unacceptable inequalities still endure and the gap between the haves and have-nots remains vast.

For example, in Cardiff and Monmouthshire 19 per cent of the population report having a limiting long-term illness; in Merthyr Tydfil the figure is 30 per cent. In Ceredigion 25 per cent of people aged between 16 and 74 have no qualifications; in Blaenau Gwent that figure is 45 per cent.

So, despite our good start, it's now time to consider radical further steps to narrow the gap between rich and poor.

Our priority should be to ensure that children are given an equal start in life. Research shows that life inequalities are forged in a child's first twelve months. Yet there remains a long way to go in meeting our ambitious goal of reducing child poverty by a quarter by 2005, from just over 4 million to just over 3 million, halving by 2010 and eliminating by 2020.

To ensure that we meet these targets we will need to continue to increase our investment in children through continued above inflation increases in child benefit and the Child Tax Credit as well as the vital support we are providing through maternity pay and childcare payments.

Yet income is only one part of a good start in life.

That is why our other excellent policy initiatives such as Sure Start and the National Child Care Strategy are so important in breaking the cycle of one generation of a family passing on low opportunities, poor educational attainment, poor health and poor job prospects down to the next. Only through tackling the causes of poverty in the first place do we remove the need for expensive welfare measures later in life.

But to eliminate child poverty completely will mean reducing the impact of inherited privileges - the ability of the child from one family to achieve because of who their parents were and where they were brought up.

That is why Child Trust Funds will be the most genuinely radical policy initiated by the Government since we were elected. For the first time, every child in Britain has the opportunity of an equal start to adulthood. What is now vital is that we ensure that the initial payment is as generous as possible and that we make top-up payments at key points in a child's life to ensure that the pot of money is as great as it can be at age 16.

As well as helping today's children, we must also help today's adults. For too many, life remains tough. Too many struggle to get to the end of each week, let alone each month. Despite what you might read in the Daily Mail, we do not have a generous welfare system. It is politically unpopular – and difficult – to be seen to raise welfare levels. The introduction of Tax Credits has been a masterstroke by the Chancellor, enabling us to carry out massive redistribution of income while rewarding work.

And the most recent changes, to de-link support for low income from support for children is arguably our most progressive decision. For the first time,

setting out both the responsibility on employers to provide a minimum standard of income through a minimum wage, and accepting that the government has a responsibility to raise income even beyond that level – through the Employment Credit, regardless of whether you have children or not.

But we need to be honest about the fact that it takes more than a change in the law to make things change on the ground.

We all know of cases where people are still being paid illegal wages, trapped in a conspiracy of silence where each knows that to report their employer risks not just their job but those of their friends and colleagues. And with the knowledge that even should they win their case, they would not be welcomed back to their workplace. We must therefore continue to do all we can to enforce the policies we have brought forward to help hard-working families.

Part of the reason that poverty levels have fallen relatively slowly in the last few years is that incomes of those at the very top of the scale have increased – thereby increasing both the level at which we define poverty and the gap between rich and poor.

Large pay deals for directors have left two-thirds of the workforce earning less than the average. While the bottom tenth of earners have seen their before-tax pay rise by 46 per cent over the last decade, the pay of the top tenth has risen by 54 per cent, with the sharpest gains concentrated right at the top of the earnings scale. We must continue to reward success and entrepreneurialism at the top but we must make it harder for companies to make huge pay-outs to failed directors, whilst staff face pensions cuts and job insecurity.

We now need a genuine, honest debate about how we reduce this inequality.

Finally, we must do more to tackle financial exclusion by promoting community banking, Local Exchange and Trading Schemes and Credit Unions.

And take further steps to promote and encourage savings amongst those on low incomes. Current incentives to save are regressive as they are based on tax relief – the more tax you pay the more the incentive and if you pay no tax there is no incentive. We need to find innovative incentives which will benefit those on low to moderate incomes.

We have made a radical start. The lives of many of the poorest in our communities have already been transformed in just six years of a Labour government. But now is not the time for a cease-fire in our war on poverty.

Democratic renewal

The third signpost on our road-map is democratic renewal.

I share the widespread concern about the turnout in the Welsh elections last time. But despite the accusations of the anti-Assembly lobby, this is not a Welsh problem. Turnout has been falling throughout the democratic world.

Yet if the people do not connect with their democratic institutions, less still their democratic representatives, then our whole democracy is imperilled. Politicians cease to appear relevant to the public and an anti-political mood takes hold leading to a spiralling down-turn in disengagement.

Despite the ground-breaking election of equal numbers of women and men to the National Assembly, too many parts of our system of democracy appear archaic.

Further reforms beckon. I would like to see Labour carry out our promised review of the electoral systems in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Europe and London – and bring forward recommendations to make them fairer and propose a fair votes model for Westminster.

Electoral reform for the House of Commons is an issue that will not go away. I have long favoured the Alternative Vote for the House of Commons which produces a fairer outcome than first past the post.

Unlike systems of proportional representation, AV retains the vital single member constituency – a link that has been the historic basis for our representative democracy: and one that I believe we would end at our peril.

It is not the most mathematically fair system, but democracy is more than about mathematical fairness. Democracy is also about accountability.

The best of intentions to create the most proportional system can lead to outcomes more perverse than which occur under First Past the Post – as we have seen in our own Wales Assembly election.

The Conservatives would have gained only one seat in the Assembly under a First Past the Post system both in 1999 and 2003. That would clearly not have represented their true support, now standing at 20 per cent in Wales.

Yet, equally, how can it be right that under the system adopted, candidates who are defeated in the FPTP ballot can then be elected under the regional list ballot?

In the Clwyd West constituency, for example, three of the four defeated candidates were subsequently elected on the regional list, including one who polled only 7.9% of the vote. Should they then be able to call themselves the Member for the self-same constituency as they can do now?

Even more pressing as a piece of unfinished business from our last manifesto is the next stage of reform of the House of Lords. Labour's first stage of reform was truly historic and tends to be forgotten. But Labour has only a quarter of the vote in the Lords today. Nearly a hundred hereditary peers still

sit. They should go, at the very least, as a first step. Despite the fact that in the recent series of votes, the House of Commons could not reach a consensus there was a clear majority for further reform.

Seeing through the establishment of regional government in England, reforming the bewildering array of electoral systems in use in the UK, introducing fair votes for Westminster, and continuing our reform of the second chamber would be a package of democratic renewal that would not only strengthen our democracy but help us reconnect with those that elect us.

That is our responsibility. But in this age of rights and responsibilities, society has a duty too. The lack of engagement in elections is a great threat to democracy. When I remember the struggle to secure the vote in South Africa – and the 10,000 days that Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for fighting for that right, it angers me that it is so taken for granted in today's Britain.

I believe that voting should be compulsory. It works in other countries like Australia, whose people feel no less free than we do. It could work here. After all we are obliged in this country to do a great many other things of far less importance than voting. In return, we should declare General Election day a public holiday. And we should continue to make it easier for people to vote – not least by allowing full postal vote elections.

Another key part of this process of public re-engagement with democracy is public funding of political parties.

It already exists for parliamentary parties, but should be extended to parties in the country as well, along much the same lines: funding not for party campaigning, but for specific organisational, research and educational tasks both nationally and locally. This would make all parties better organised and therefore better able to connect with voters, with funding for local youth organisers.

Donations should be for campaigning and it is important that there is no cap on these: it is a basic right to donate as much as an individual or organisation (such as a trade union or business) wishes to, though they should be transparent and democratic about it.

Additionally, a more open process of dialogue and accountability is important in the development of policy within the Labour Party. The Partnership in Power programme draws not only on the expertise of Party members, but of thousands of sympathisers, whether they are trade unionists, members of community groups or business people.

Yet too often members have not seen a clear enough link between the ideas they bring forward in forums and the government's policies – some of which often appear to come straight from a clear blue sky. I'd like to see us make more use of green papers to consult the Party and the public.

Just as democracy is more than putting a cross in a ballot paper every four or five years, so membership of a political party must be more than paying an annual subscription. If we cannot change and reform to remain connected with our own members, we have no hope of remaining connected with the public.

Photo 4 and 5 around about here

Conclusion

The work of the Bevan Foundation is vital in ensuring our ideas and policies remain rooted in our core values and beliefs. You make an invaluable contribution to Welsh political life.

In the 1980's the predominance of right-wing think tanks encouraged in people the belief that there really was no alternative to the policies that the Thatcher Government was pursuing, and which inflicted such lasting damage on communities and public services in Wales. Now, it is the centre-left that is making the most significant contribution to policy debate, and this must continue if progressive ideals are to predominate.

As a progressive, socialist government Labour must be constantly reappraising our approaches, and be receptive to new ideas. As Aneurin Bevan wrote in 1952: *"The student of politics must ...seek neither universality nor immortality for his ideas and for the institution through which he hopes to express them. What he must seek is integrity and vitality. His Holy Grail is the living truth, knowing that being alive the truth must change."*

Our guide against which we judge new policies must be:

- Do they devolve and decentralise wealth, power and opportunity?
- Do they lead to greater equality and a redistribution to increase social justice?
- Do they help in the process of democratic renewal?

By setting ourselves these signposts we can stay focused on an over-arching governing vision. Yes, with policies tailored to the modern world in which we live. But, pursuing a route true to our socialist roots.

Biography

Rt Hon Peter Hain MP is Secretary of State for Wales, Leader of the Commons and MP for Neath.

He was appointed as the Leader of the House of Commons in June 2003 and Secretary of State for Wales in October 2002.

Peter Hain was a junior minister at the former Welsh Office from 1997 to 1999. He was Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 1999 to 2001; he was appointed Minister of State at the Department of Trade and Industry in 2001 and became Minister for Europe at the FCO later that year. He recently completed negotiations as the Government's Representative on the Convention on the Future of Europe.

Born in Nairobi and brought up in South Africa, Mr Hain was educated at Pretoria Boys High School, University of London and Sussex University. He was a Research Officer at the Communication Workers' Union for seventeen years before becoming Member of Parliament for Neath in 1991.

Mr Hain achieved international prominence as a result of his work in the anti-apartheid movement. He played a leading role in the campaign to secure a 'Yes' vote in the 1997 devolution referendum in Wales. He is a member of the GMB.

Join The Bevan Foundation

Members of the Foundation come from all walks of life and include businesses, community groups, local authorities, trades unions, politicians from several parties and individuals of all ages. The Bevan Foundation is open and accountable to its members and aims to be accessible and inclusive in the way we work. Join us and be at the forefront of new thinking to shape the future of Wales.

Members have a say in what we do and also get:



- our journal, the Bevan Foundation Review, twice a year;
- our policy papers;
- a quarterly members' newsletter;
- invitations to events and seminars.

Membership rates for 2003-4 are:

- individuals £25.00 (unwaged £5.00),
- voluntary organisations, trades union branches, community groups and library subscriptions £50
- corporate bodies - minimum £200 (small) and £500 (large)
- corporate partners - minimum £2,500

I would like to join the Bevan Foundation.

Name

Organisation

Address

.....Post Code

Email

Tel. Fax

I wish to join as *(please tick one)*:

_____ Individual _____ Corporate large / small

_____ Voluntary _____ Corporate Partner / Partner

I wish to pay as follows *(please tick one)* Please invoice me for

I enclose a cheque for I wish to pay by Standing Order.

Please return this form with your payment to:

The Bevan Foundation, Aneurin Bevan House, 40 Castle Street, Tredegar NP22 3DQ

