• Labour promised to implement the Beveridge Report, offering people what they wanted to hear – jobs for everyone, plenty of new houses, & an NHS
• Some Tories blamed their defeat on the Army Education Corps & the ABCA who supposedly influenced many troops to vote Labour; Churchill didn’t help by claiming that a Labour government would bring with it features associated with the Gestapo. This rang hollow because Attlee, Morrison & Bevin had worked with him in the national government during the war

The new men in power
• Attlee came from a middle class background, was educated at public school & Oxford & originally intended to become a barrister. He was elected MP for Limehouse in 1922, & leader of the Labour Party in 1935. Attlee was shrewd & determined, & managed his Cabinet well
• The Foreign Secretary was Ernest Bevin - the son of a Somerset farm labourer, he had started work at the age of 11 as a farm boy. Later he became a drayman & then leader of the Transport & General Workers’ Union. After the 1926 General Strikes he had turned against industrial action, & was a success as Churchill’s wartime Minister of Labour
• Hugh Dalton was Chancellor (replaced by Sir Stafford Cripps in 1947)
• Herbert Morrison was leader of the House of Commons
• Aneurin Bevan was Minister of Health
• All of them, apart from Bevan, had served in Churchill’s coalition, & so had plenty of experience in government

Labour & the Welfare State
Significance of the Beveridge Report
• This was published in November 1942 & provided plenty of ideas about what a welfare state should aim for - the elimination of want, disease, ignorance, squalor & idleness
• The Labour party already had its own plans for social reform before the Beveridge Report appeared
• In spite of the economic difficulties, a mass of new legislation reached the statute book, & by July 1948, Britain had a welfare state
**National Insurance Act 1946**

- This extended the original 1911 Act to cover all adults. The scheme was compulsory; in return for a weekly contribution from worker, employer & government, the individual was entitled to sickness & unemployment benefit, old age pensions for women at 60 & men at 65 (26s a week for an individual, & 42s for a married couple), widows’ & orphans’ pensions, maternity allowances, & death grants to help with funeral expenses.
- These were all more generous than Beveridge had anticipated.

**National Assistance Act 1948**

- This was designed to fill any loopholes not covered by the 1946 NI Act - those who only received the 10s a week non-contributory pension, women whose husbands were in jail, unmarried mothers, the blind, the deaf, physically handicapped.
- The Act set up National Assistance Boards - to which people could apply for further assistance. This was a significant move away from the previous idea that poverty was a matter for local administration.
- The government also placed a duty upon local authorities to provide homes & other welfare services for the elderly & the handicapped.
- The NI Act & the NA Act provided a whole new social security structure.
- Even the Tories did not vote against either bill!

**The National Insurance Industrial Industries Act 1946**

- This was an improvement on the old Workmen's Compensation Acts, and made it easier for workers to claim compensation.
- This Act made it compulsory for both workers & employers to join the state in making weekly contributions to the fund to provide compensation to injured works & pensions for those who were disabled.

**Education**

- The government concentrated on implementing the Butler Education Act of 1944, making secondary education until the age of 15 free, & providing meals, milk & medical services in schools.
- The 11-plus exam was introduced to select which children were thought suitable for a grammar school education & which would go to secondary modern schools.