

DEAKIN, ARTHUR (1890 - 1955), trade union leader

Name: Arthur Deakin
Date of birth: 1890
Date of death: 1955
Gender: Male
Occupation: trade union leader
Area of activity: Business and Industry; Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: John Graham Jones

Born 11 November 1890 at Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire, the son of a shoemaker. His father died when he was a child, his mother re-married and the family moved to live at Merthyr Tydfil. In 1904 he began work at the Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds steelworks at Dowlais. He was influenced by socialism, in particular by Keir Hardie, who used to address meetings at the factory gates. Although Deakin worked long hours, he read widely and attended evening classes. In 1919 he was appointed an official of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union which later became the Transport and General Workers' Union with its headquarters at Shotton in Flintshire. For fifteen years he served as a member of the Flintshire County Council, he became an alderman of the Council and served as its chairman. He also rendered service as a J.P. In 1932 Deakin was chosen as the general secretary of the General Workers' Group, and in 1935 he became personal assistant to Ernest Bevin, the general secretary to the T.G.W.U. When Bevin became a member of the Cabinet in 1940, Deakin to all intents and purposes took his place within the union. He was himself appointed general secretary in 1945, an office which he held for ten years. He was influential, too, within the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, and he himself chaired the Congress in 1951-52. Deakin held a large number of posts on committees and public bodies, and he was one of the directors of the *Daily Herald*. He received the C.B.E. in 1943, became a C.H. in 1949 and he was chosen as a member of the Privy Council in 1954. He was a strong, forceful personality whose opinions carried great weight within Transport House. Yet he was also a moderate who fought courageously against the Communists and the extremists within the Labour Party. He died 1 May 1955 at Leicester Royal Hospital six months before reaching retirement age.

Author

Dr John Graham Jones

Sources

Who was who?

The Times, 2 May 1955

Western Mail, 3 July. 1940, 24 November 1945 and 2 May 1955

The Biographical Index of W. W. Price, Aberdŵr

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Arthur Deakin](#)

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Published date: 2001

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