

OWEN, Sir ARTHUR DAVID KEMP (1904 - 1970), international administrator

Name: Arthur David Kemp Owen

Date of birth: 1904

Date of death: 1970

Spouse: Elizabeth Elsa Owen (née Miller)

Spouse: Elizabeth Joyce Owen (née Morgan)

Parent: Gertrude Louisa Owen (née Kemp)

Parent: Edward Owen

Gender: Male

Occupation: international administrator

Area of activity: Public and Social Service, Civil Administration

Author: Evan David Jones

Born 26 November 1904, the eldest son of Edward Owen, minister of Crane Street church (B), Pontypool, Monmouthshire, who some months previously had moved from Bethel church (B), Tonypany, and his wife Gertrude Louisa, daughter of Thomas Henry Kemp. (He had been a notable schoolmaster in Tal-y-bont, Cardiganshire, from 1865 to 1892 and a master in the Normal department of the University College of Wales from 1892 to 1894, after which he moved to become principal of the Merthyr Tydfil Teacher's Training Centre). The family moved from Wales in 1908 when the father was inducted as minister of Hope church, Hebden, near Leeds. David Kemp, as he was generally known, was educated at Leeds grammar school and the University. He graduated in economics and commercial studies, taking the M.Com. degree in 1929. He was assistant lecturer in economics at Huddersfield Technical College, 1926-29; director of Sheffield Social Survey Committee, 1929-33, secretary of the Civic Division, Political and Economic Planning (P.E.P.), 1933-36; co-director of the Pilgrim Trust Unemployment Enquiry, 1933-37; lecturer in citizenship, University of Glasgow, 1937-40; general secretary, P.E.P., 1940-41. In 1942 he became personal assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps in the office of the Lord Privy Seal and later in the Ministry of Aircraft Production. He was a member of the Cripps mission to India in 1942, and of the Reconstruction Department of the Foreign Office in charge of League of Nations affairs, 1944-45. He was a member of the U.K. Delegation at the International Labour Conferences held in Philadelphia in 1944 and in San Francisco in 1945. He became one of the leading administrators of the United Nations from 1946 until his retirement in 1969. He acted on the editorial board of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from 1959 to 1968. He was a steadfast believer in the principle of co-operation between nations; his service to the United Nations at a time when that organisation was being set up was crucial. His efforts gained him general respect. His Welsh nonconformist ancestry doubtless influenced his ideals; there was a hint of a Welsh accent in his speech. Shortly before his death, he was made General Secretary of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

He married in 1933 Elizabeth Joyce, daughter of E.H. Morgan, Methodist minister. A son and a daughter were born to them. After their divorce in 1950 he married Elizabeth Elsa Miller; they had two sons. He died in St. Thomas' Hospital, London, on 29 June 1970, after being created K.C.M.G. that year. In addition to publishing his reports on the Sheffield survey in 1931-33, he published *British Social Services* in 1940 and a host of contributions to periodicals. He received honorary LL.D. degrees from the universities of Leeds in 1954, and Wales in 1969.

Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

Sources

Who was who?

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 1964-70

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