

## PADLEY, WALTER ERNEST (1916-1984), Labour politician

**Name:** Walter Ernest Padley  
**Date of birth:** 1916  
**Date of death:** 1984  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Labour politician  
**Area of activity:** Politics, Government and Political Movements  
**Author:** John Graham Jones

He was born at Chipping Norton on 24 July 1916, the son of Ernest Padley, a grocery clerk and his wife Mildred. He received his education at Chipping Norton Grammar School and as the holder of a TUC scholarship, at Ruskin College, Oxford. He began his career as a clerk with the Co-operative Wholesale Society and in 1933 joined the Distributive Workers Union. He had joined the ILP in 1932 and stood as the ILP candidate in a by-election in the Acton division of Middlesex in December 1943. He also served as a member of the national executive of the ILP, 1941-46, and joined the Labour Party in the latter year. He became secretary to the London Co-operative Societies' Joint Education Committee, and he was also president of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, 1948-64. He is believed to have been the youngest president ever to be elected to this position at the age of 31. He was once a close colleague of James Maxton in the leadership of the ILP.

Padley was the Labour MP for Ogmore, from 1950 to 1979 when he retired. It was regarded as one of the safest Labour seats in the country, and Padley raised his majority to more than 26,000 votes. He was elected a member of the Labour Party NEC in 1956, and served as its chairman in 1966-67. He was also chairman of its overseas sub-committee, 1963-71. He continued a member of the NEC until 1978. He served as Minister of State at the Foreign Office, October 1964-January 1967. He was chairman of the Labour Party, 1965-66. He was noted at Westminster for his outspoken views and made several useful contributions to debates in the Commons on trade and industry. Before his election to parliament, he wrote a number of monographs. His published books include *The Economic Problem of the Peace* (1944), *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* (1945), *Britain: Pawn or Power?* (1947) and *USSR: Empire or Free Union?* (1949). He married on 7 November 1942 Sylvia Elsie Wilson, and they had a son and a daughter. Their home was at 73 Priory Gardens, Highgate, London. He died on 15 April 1984. His successor as Labour MP for Ogmore was **Sir Ray Powell** (1928-2001) who had previously served as Padley's political agent for twelve years and was widely known to be Padley's chosen successor.

### Author

Dr John Graham Jones

### Sources

*Etholiadau'r Ganrif / Welsh Elections 1885-1997* (Talybont 1999)

*Welsh Hustings - 1885-2004* (Ammanford 2005)

*Dod's Parliamentary Companion*

*The Times guide to the House of Commons* October 1974

*The Times*, 17 April 1984

*Western Mail*, 17 April 1984

### Further Reading

NLW Archives: [General Election, 1950. Ogmore Parliamentary Division. Walter Padley The Labour Candidate](#)

NLW Archives: [Parliamentary Election 1974 Ogmore Constituency. Walter Padley The Labour Candidate](#)

NLW Archives: [Parliamentary Election 1974 Ogmore Constituency Walter Padley The Labour Candidate](#)

NLW Archives: [Welsh Devolution Referendum, 1979](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Walter Padley](#)

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