

PHILLIPS, MORGAN WALTER (1902 - 1963), general secretary of the Labour Party

Name: Morgan Walter Phillips
Date of birth: 1902
Date of death: 1963
Spouse: Norah Mary Phillips (née Lusher)
Parent: William Phillips
Gender: Male
Occupation: general secretary of the Labour Party
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: Mary Auronwy James

Born in Aberdare, Glamorganshire, 18 June 1902, one of the six children of William Phillips, but he was brought up in Bargoed, Glamorganshire. He left school when he was 12 years old to become a colliery surface worker. When he was 18 years old he became a member of the Caerphilly divisional Labour Party, secretary of the party in Bargoed, 1923-25, and chairman of the Bargoed Steam Coal Lodge, 1924-26. After attending a two-year course in economic and social subjects at the Labour College, London, he became secretary of the Labour party in West Fulham, 1928-30, and later in Whitechapel, 1934-37. He also gained experience in local government as a member of the Fulham borough council, 1934-37. In 1937 he went to the party headquarters at Transport House as propaganda officer, being appointed secretary of the party's research department in 1941. As an able organizer, quick and unambiguous in his decisions, he soon rose to become secretary of the party, and general secretary in 1960. He was virtually the architect of the surge in the party's fortunes which resulted in six years of Labour government. Nevertheless, his organization tended to be blamed for the defeat in the 1955 general election. Despite the defeat of the Labour Party in 1959 his own reputation rose. His daily press conferences were one of the outstanding successes of the election. With an understanding of journalists, as of most classes of people with whom he came in contact, he answered questions with admirable conciseness. He kept the Labour Party from crumbling completely after the election by presenting a clear analysis of what had happened and constructive proposals for the future, many of which are included in his paper, *Labour in the Sixties* (1960). He also published *East meets West* (1954) and various political and economic pamphlets.

As one of the great international figures of the Labour movement he presided over a succession of conferences called by the International Socialist Committee from 1944 onwards and was chairman of the Socialist International from its formation in 1948 until he resigned in 1957. He was at the height of his career when he suffered a stroke in August 1960, and had to retire a year later. He married Norah Lusher in 1930 and they had a son and daughter. He died 15 January 1963 in London.

Author

Dr Mary Auronwy James

Sources

Who was who?

The Times and *Western Mail*, 16 January 1963

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Morgan Phillips](#)

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