

# Death of D. Ivon Jones

**R**EADERS of the *Review* will regret to learn of the death of Comrade D. Ivon Jones, who has contributed many brilliant and informative articles to our journal. Comrade Jones was an indefatigable and sterling proletarian worker for Communism. I first met him in Moscow in May, 1921, where he had come from South Africa to represent the International Socialist League—as it was then called—at the Third Congress. In commission we often met to discuss the problems in the Anglo-Saxon section of our movement, and I soon came to appreciate the invaluable qualifications of Jones as a fighter for the closer co-operation of our British Party with the Colonial parties.

He was very keen about organising the Negro natives of South Africa. He had made a special study of the ethnographical and cultural obstacles to work amongst the natives, but never lost faith in the belief that one day the workers in South Africa—black and white—would unite against the bloodsucking exploiters of the Rand. His faith and devotion to the Communist International was an example for all to emulate.

Born in a small village in Wales of working class parents in the year 1883, Jones' early life was the usual lot of working class children. Going to work at 13, first one thing, then another, he finally emerged as a shop assistant. At the age of 19 he became obsessed with the idea of going abroad as is characteristic of most lads in Great Britain. He went to New Zealand with that hankering and striving after the something he couldn't find in Wales. During his four years stay in New Zealand, he worked as an agricultural labourer in Otago, learning to milk cows, plough land, shear sheep and other proletarian tasks. Still yearning for the indefinable, he turned his thoughts to South Africa, and it was here, since 1906, he found his forte in work amongst the struggling proletarians, educating, organising and helping in the common task of combating the gold-bugs of the Rand.

He became a member of the young Labour Party, and soon became known as an ardent student of Marxism. I recollect in those days sending him literature from our Socialist Labour Party literature depot in Glasgow.

The first years Comrade Jones spent in South Africa were given over to Trade Union work—no mean task in those days

just following the British annexation of the Dutch Republics. In such work, the division and national hatred amongst the proletariat—sedulously fostered by the gang of crooks who run the mines—brought Jones face to face with the practical and complex problem of the natives. His proletarian instincts, however, remained strong enough to counteract the sophistry of the bourgeois democratic theories of race, and till his death he stood for a policy of uniting the black workers with the white workers in the common struggle against the oppressors.

In 1914, he became General Secretary of the Labour Party, Comrade Andrews as President collaborating with him. But when the European War broke out Jones and Andrews, who set their faces against the imperialists were forced to resign. A split was the result, and the International Socialist League was formed with a little paper called *The International*. Comrade Jones became editor, and during the war he raised his voice and used his pen with vigour to denounce the imperialists. For this, like so many other brave proletarians, in the Colonies, as in Great Britain, he was outlawed. It was during this period he contracted the fell disease of consumption, which brought him to an untimely end.

Jones was a true Internationalist. He heard and responded to the call in 1917 for the conference at Stockholm. He had no hesitation in lining up with the Third International launched in 1919, and in October, 1920, he left Durban to come as delegate representing the faithful band of Internationalists in South Africa to the Third Congress.

During the repression of the Rand strike, and the murderous butchery of the workers by the bloody Smuts, Jones could not contain himself in Soviet Russia. He longed, and indeed planned to come to Great Britain that he might do something to help to muster the support of the British trade unions to try and stay the hand of Smuts. But his health and strength was fast ebbing. Only those of us with whom he talked, could appreciate the tragedy of the situation. It is questionable, if he had travelled at that time if he would have reached England alive.

Readers of the *Review* have already been acquainted with the qualities of Jones as a writer, and a student of Bolshevism, or, better still, Leninism. I had arranged with him to do a series of articles exclusively for the *Review* with the design of bringing into our movement more of the spirit and teachings of Leninism. Already two of these have appeared. His untimely death deprives

us of a rich feast of studies and researches in Leninism, inestimable for a movement such as ours, in this country with little revolutionary experience.

The loss is ours, and with the comrades in the Colonies it will be up to us to fill the gap and go forward strong in the determination to carry on the noble task of working for the unity of the disinherited in England and throughout the Colonies towards the emancipation of the exploited from the grip of the imperialists—the task to which our Comrade Jones dedicated his life.

THOMAS BELL.

P.S.—This brief appreciation of Comrade Ivon Jones would be incomplete without a word of praise to Comrade Davidovskia, who was most attentive and devoted to Comrade Jones in his illness. All the English-speaking delegates, who have been privileged to meet Nurse Davidovskia will join with us in thanking her for her services.

## *Pluiose*

(In Memoriam D. IVON JONES.)

See how the veld is blood-red : full the spruit,  
 Furrow and donga as with sanguine rain—  
 (Even as a flood-mark of our strife and pain,  
 Bitter, yet sweet)—o'erfull in sluit on sluit ;  
 That what we sowed be harvested—ripe fruit,  
 Honey of bees and yellow growth of grain.  
 Thus nature's cycle : how can be in vain,  
 Comrade, your life's endeavour and pursuit ?

So, too, is Ivon one with those that fell,  
 Brothers whose blood has stained the veld in fight—  
 (How are their names still hallowed in our ears!)—  
 Boer or Briton, Bantu—black or white :  
 Thus shall be quenched the smouldering fires of hell,  
 Thus shall be harvested the golden years.

L. A. MOTLER.