

JONES, THOMAS (1870 - 1955), university professor, civil servant, administrator, author

Name: Thomas Jones
Date of birth: 1870
Date of death: 1955
Spouse: Eirene Theodora Jones (née Lloyd)
Child: Eirene Lloyd White (née Jones)
Child: Elphin Lloyd Jones
Child: Tristan Lloyd Jones
Parent: Mary Ann Jones (née Jones)
Parent: David Benjamin Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: university professor, civil servant, administrator, author
Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration
Author: Benjamin Bowen Thomas

Born 27 September 1870 in Rhymney, Monmouthshire, the eldest of the nine children of David Benjamin Jones, a shopkeeper, and his wife, Mary Ann Jones. He was educated in Rhymney Board School and Lewis' School, Pengam. At 14 he became a clerk at the Rhymney Iron and Steel Works. He was admitted to the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth in 1890 as a prospective candidate for the Calvinistic Methodist ministry. He migrated to Glasgow University in 1890 where he had a brilliant academic career. He was appointed to a lectureship there in 1901. From 1904 to 1905 he was lecturing in Ireland under the Barrington Trust and from 1906 to 1909 he was an assistant commissioner (research) to the Royal Commission on the Poor Law. For one academic session, 1909-1910, he was Professor of Economics in Queen's University, Belfast. He returned to Wales in 1910 as Secretary of the Welsh National Campaign against Tuberculosis. In 1912 he was appointed Secretary of the National Health Insurance Commission (Wales). He was transferred to London in 1916 as Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, later becoming Deputy Secretary. He retired in 1930 to become the Secretary of the Pilgrim Trust. He became a Trustee in 1945 and Chairman from 1952 to 1954. From 1934 to 1940 he was a member of the Unemployment Assistance Board. He was appointed C.H. in 1929.

Jones was a man of exceptional drive and energy. Although he abandoned his intention of becoming a minister of the church, the social teaching of the Scriptures remained his chief inspiration. **Thomas Charles Edwards**, Joseph Mazzini, **Sir Henry Jones** and Sidney Webb, successively influenced him greatly. Throughout his life, he sought to be a 'doer of the Word'.

He was one of the founders of *The Welsh Outlook* and its first editor (1914-1916), of the Gregynog Press in 1922 and the principal founder of Coleg Harlech in 1927. He, more than any other person, was responsible for the establishment of the Arts Council in 1939, or the Council for the Management of Music and the Arts as it was first known.

During his term of office in the Cabinet Secretariat he rendered great service during the Irish troubles in the negotiations that led to the 1921 settlement and likewise during the General Strike crisis in 1926. Three of the Prime Ministers whom he served, viz. **Lloyd George**, Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin placed great confidence on his judgement. His relations with Ramsay Macdonald were not so happy. He kept in close personal touch with **Lloyd George** and Stanley Baldwin throughout their lives. Both used him for confidential discussions, for example, during the attempts between 1935 and 1938 to improve Anglo-German relations. As the Chairman of the South Wales Coalfield Distress Committee and of the unemployment Committee of the National Council of Social Service his energy and insight gave effectiveness to efforts to mitigate the sufferings caused by industrial unemployment between 1929 and 1939. He was the Chairman of the York Trust (1934-40) and of the Elphin Lloyd-Jones Trust (1935-45). He served on many public bodies, for example the Councils of the University of Wales, the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth (President, 1944-45), the National Library of Wales and the National Museum of Wales. He was Chairman of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments for Wales 1944 to 1948. He became a member of the Observer Trust when that was established in 1946.

He wrote and published many articles and pamphlets. His books include, the Everyman edition of *The Duties of Man*, Joseph Mazzini (1907), an edition of *Old Memories*, **Sir Henry Jones** (1938), *A Theme with variations* (1933), *Leeks and Daffodils* (1942), *Rhymney memories* (1938), *Cerrig Milltir* (1942), *The Native never Returns* (1946), *Lloyd George* (1951), *Welsh Broth* (1951), *A Diary with Letters* (1954), *The Gregynog Press* (1954), *Whitehall Diaries* Vol I and II (1969), edited by Keith Middlemas.

He received the honorary degree of LL.D. from Glasgow University (1922), the University of Wales (1928), St Andrews (1947) and Birmingham (1950). He was awarded the medal of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion in 1944.

He married Eirene Theodora Lloyd in 1902. There were three children of the marriage, **Eirene Lloyd (Baroness White)** , 1909 - 1999; Tristan Lloyd Jones, 1913 - 1990, Elphin Lloyd Jones, 1916 - 1928.

Thomas Jones suffered a serious fall indoors at his home in St. Nicholas-at-Wade, Kent, in June 1955 and died in a private nursing home in Golders Green 15 October 1955. He was cremated.

As a vigorous and resourceful administrator, he was regarded as one of the most unselfish and devoted benefactors of his time. He spoke and wrote Welsh but had grave reservations about Welsh political nationalism. His range of friends and acquaintances was exceptionally wide not only in Wales and the United Kingdom but throughout the Commonwealth and the United States of America. He was a tireless letter writer, most generous with advice and help to all and sundry, in every walk of society. No man had a higher sense of the value of time and he made excellent use of it.

Author

Sir Benjamin Bowen Thomas, (1899 - 1977)

Sources

The works noted above and personal knowledge

E. L. Ellis, *T. J. a life of Dr Thomas Jones* (Cardiff 1992)(1992)

his papers in N.L.W.

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: **Thomas Jones**

Additional Links

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