

JONES, PHILIP (1618 - 1674), colonel in the Parliamentary army and member of Cromwell's Second (or 'Other') House

Name: Philip Jones

Date of birth: 1618

Date of death: 1674

Child: John Jones

Child: Oliver Jones

Gender: Male

Occupation: colonel in the Parliamentary army and member of Cromwell's Second (or 'Other') House

Area of activity: Military; Politics, Government and Political Movements

Author: Thomas Richards

He was born at the Great House, Swansea, though his family estate lay at Pen-y-waun in Llangyfelach. He joined the Parliament side early in the Civil War; by 1645 he was captain of the Swansea garrison; in 1646, a colonel, and very prominent as Horton's chief henchman at the battle of S. Fagans (8 May 1648). He was made governor of Cardiff Castle, and acted as host to Cromwell when the latter was on his way to capture Pembroke Castle in 1649. But it was not as a colonel or governor that Philip Jones became influential and important, but as a man of sound judgement, of wisdom beyond the ordinary, and with a marvellously wide knowledge of men and things in Wales. The members of the great London committees were very glad to take advantage of this wisdom and knowledge: the Plundered Ministers' Committee asked him to resolve the difficulties that had arisen over the vicarage of Mydrim and the living of Llangunllo in Radnorshire (August 1649), and to do justice to the harassed clergyman of Llangatock in Brecknock (March 1650). Before that, Philip Jones had become himself a member of the powerful Committee for Compounding (December 1648) and of the Committee to look into the proper maintenance of ministers and how it could be best secured (February 1650). When the Propagation Act came into force in the same year, he was not only one of the seventy-one commissioners but was credited with being its chief executant in South Wales, and became the target of attacks by Royalists, dispossessed clergymen, and virulent pamphleteers: 'Whoever his creatures might be,' said a fierce Cavalier from Gower, 'Collonel Jones was always beside the curtain,' and it was openly bruited abroad that he had built up a great fortune from the forfeited lands of king's men. A petition was framed full of charges against Philip Jones and presented to the 'Rump' in 1652, but that body was dissolved before anything effective could happen. He took the wind out of the sails of his opponents by prevailing upon the first Protectorate Parliament to pass an ordinance calling for a meticulous account of every penny received during the Propagation period in South Wales, and of every penny spent; the account was laid before a commission of five sitting at Neath, and it was passed as correct, 10 August 1655 (this is the famous document known as MS. J. Walker, c. 13, and preserved in the Bodleian Library). The agitation against him receded for a while, but the hunt was renewed in May 1659 and again in March 1660, but it died down with the dissolution of Parliament and the obsessions of the Restoration.

Philip Jones was one of the most powerful men in the country in the days of the two Protectors. He was a member of the Council of State, and on numerous sub-committees: he was on the committee at the end of 1653 to deal with provocative speeches by people like [Vavasor Powell](#), and to draft a new ordinance to keep such excesses within the bounds of reason; he was the most prominent member of a commission in 1655 to bring about peace between English merchants and the king of Portugal. To see him coming in with the Treasurer of the Propagation in North Wales soon damped the criticism of the London accountants upon the figures of the latter; and it is next to certainty that it was his word in the Council that saved Botwnnog school from being moved to Pwllheli. Naturally, he did not forget his native town; through his influence Swansea received two charters, one in 1655 one in 1658 - the latter made it into a borough.

Jones had no sympathy whatsoever with extremists and fanatics; this explains his sitting in Cromwell's 'Other House' as Philip lord Jones, his doing his utmost to get the Protector to declare himself king, and his being appointed to supervise the Protector's household (it was he who organized the funeral arrangements of November 1658). After Richard Cromwell resigned, Jones became at once the target of attacks from Royalist pamphleteers and the army extremists; and he saw as soon as anybody that the king could not be kept out, and that it would be well to come to terms with the coming powers. There was a dangerous moment in the peevish Convention Parliament (June 1660) when Philip Jones was named as a person who deserved punishment for the part he had played during the Republic, but his friends saw to it that the idea was dropped, helped by some words of diplomatic contrition which he had to sign. In 1661 the Carmarthenshire consistory court brought a charge against him of having (many years before) carried away the organ of S. Mary's Swansea, but it remains a mere record on the books, with no more said about it. In fact, whatever bitter clerics and hostile Royalists might say, Jones had prepared a safe accommodation for himself with the new powers through the kindness and generosity he had shown to some of them when he was in the ascendant (of this there is a good example in his decision of 1656 in favour of Ann, daughter to one of the Carmarthenshire Mansells and niece to the dispossessed [Francis Mansell](#), principal of Jesus

College, Oxford). He retired to the lands he had bought at Fonmon in the Vale of Glamorgan, became high sheriff in 1671, and died on 5 September 1674. One of the witnesses of his last will was Robert Thomas of Llanfihangel by Cowbridge, M.P. for Cardiff, and one of the five commissioners at Neath in 1655 who declared that the Propagation accounts of Philip Jones and his co-adjutors were correct to the nearest penny. And the name of his youngest son, Oliver, born in 1654, was a living memory of the old friendship with Cromwell and his family.

Author

Thomas Richards, (1878 - 1962)

Sources

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Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Philip Jones of Fonmon](#)

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Published date: 1959

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