

'Jones for Hornsey': when a Communist took 10,000 Hornsey votes

by Andrew Whitehead

GJ. 'Jonah' Jones really thought he had a chance of becoming the Communist MP for Hornsey in 1945. The general election, held just as the Second World War was ending, saw Britain swing sharply to the left. Labour's Clement Attlee became prime minister presiding over arguably the most left-wing government the country has ever seen. And the small Communist Party achieved its best ever election results - standing in more than twenty constituencies and winning in two.

Hornsey was unusual among the seats which Communists contested in 1945. It was an overwhelmingly Conservative constituency - at this time sharing the boundaries of the Municipal Borough of Hornsey - which had never returned a Labour MP. Unlike in some other areas of London the Communists had never won any local council seats, indeed Labour didn't at that time have much of a presence on Hornsey Borough Council.

Jonah Jones was a local man, the only one of the three candidates who lived in the constituency, and he made a powerful case that he was best placed to wrest the seat from the Tories. His strategy was based on gaining the backing of the local Labour Party for his candidacy. While some key local Labour figures were willing to support him, the party eventually put up its own candidate. Towards the end of the campaign, Attlee took the unusual step of intervening personally to warn Labour supporters against voting for Jones.

The local Communist campaign was energetic and well organised, and Jones probably had a bigger canvassing and publicity operation than either of his opponents. But in the end, the Communists came third - not too far behind the Labour candidate, but a long way adrift from the Conservative victor, Captain David Gammans. Jonah Jones, however, salvaged one remarkable success from his defeat. He won more than

HORNSEY	
E. : 63,947 ; C., 56,461 ; B., 90 ; S., 7,396.	
*Gammans, Capt. L. D. (C.)..	24,684
Fiske, W. G. (Lab.).	12,015
Jones, G. J. (Comm.)	10,058
	12,669
C. majority	
NO CHANGE	
1941 By-election :—C., 11,077 ; Ind., 4,146—C. maj., 6,931. 1935 :—C., 30,494 ; Lab., 10,320 ; L., 6,206—C. maj., 20,174. (1931 :—C. maj., 33,609.)	
Capt. L. D. Gammans, who won the seat at a by-election in 1941, was formerly in the Colonial service.	
Mr. W. G. Fiske is a lecturer to the Forces and for the Cooperative Society and W.E.A.	
Mr. G. J. Jones, an L.C.C. teacher, is a member of the London District Committee of the Communist Party.	

Hornsey's 1945 election result

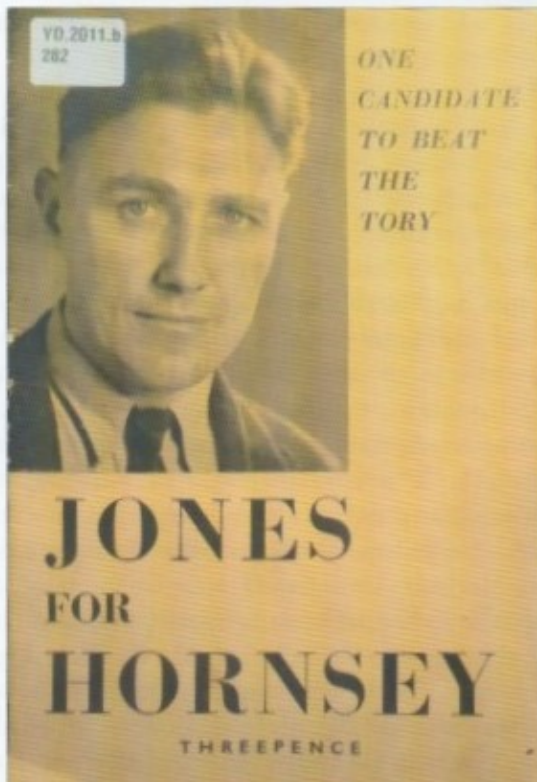
10,000 votes - 10,058 to be precise - a much higher tally than any other Communist candidate in England in the 1945 election. Indeed it is the biggest vote any Communist has ever achieved in an English constituency which Labour also contested.

Some older Hornsey Historical Society members may remember as children seeing 'Vote Jones for Peace' graffiti. But more than three-quarters of a century after the 1945 election, and sixty years after Jones's death, the memory of how a Communist took so many Hornsey votes has faded. With the help of pamphlets in the British Library, back numbers of the *Hornsey Journal* and a cuttings file held by the local Labour party, along with the recollections of Jones's only child, Frances (who lives locally and is an HHS member) and of others whose parents were once local Communist activists, it's been possible to piece together the remarkable story behind the election slogan: 'Jones for Hornsey'.

George John Jones was born into a working -class family in Ilford in 1905. His father was a Post Office engineer. After qualifying as a teacher, Jones worked at a London County Council school in Hoxton. English was his main subject and he taught swimming too, taking his school -boy teams to repeated success. He was also a gifted amateur boxer. After his marriage to Ruby Large, a fellow leftist, he moved to Crouch End. He picked up his nickname while at teacher training college and from then on everyone knew him as Jonah - his party colleagues, his family, it's even how he signed letters to his wife. Their daughter Frances was born in 1940. At the time of his first Parliamentary candidacy, the family were living on Weston Park - though as Jones's election literature made clear, they shared the house with two other families.

His political trajectory is spelled out in an admiring pamphlet *Jones for Hornsey* written by Peggy McIlven, a fellow Hornsey Communist, to boost his 1945 Parliamentary campaign (there's a copy in the British Library). According to this account, Jones was still a teenager when he joined the Independent Labour Party - then a left-wing current within the Labour Party. In 1932, the ILP disaffiliated and became a separate political party to the left of Labour. Jones was a member of the ILP's Wood Green branch which was largely under the control of a hard left faction, and in 1935 the branch disbanded and moved over as a group to the Communist Party (or CP).

The Communist Party of Great Britain had been established in 1920 out of an array of left-wing groups.



Jones for Hornsey, published by the local Communist Party in 1945. Courtesy of the British Library

For its first fifteen years, it was a tiny and often sectarian group with small pockets of strength among the organised industrial working class. Although its strategy was not based on Parliament, it had some electoral success, notably with Shapurji Saklatvala, who was elected as MP for Battersea North, initially as a Labour candidate and then as a Communist but without a Labour opponent.

The first Communist to win against Labour opposition was Willie Gallacher, who captured West Fife in the Scottish coalfields in 1935. The next general election was ten years later; Gallacher was re-elected in Fife and the other Communist success in 1945 was Phil Piratin, also against Labour opposition, in Stepney and Mile End. So great was the depopulation of the East End because of bombing and evacuation that Piratin took the seat with barely half the number of votes that consigned Jones to third place a few miles away in Hornsey.

The Communist espousal of the policy of the popular front from 1935 onwards led to a big jump in the party's membership and profile. Communists worked with others on the left to support the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War, oppose fascism and argue against the appeasement of Nazi Germany. For the first time, Communists sought - and won - support from among significant numbers of students and intellectuals.

The fight against Franco in Spain and against Oswald Mosley's brand of fascism closer to home propelled Jonah Jones to local prominence. As well as taking on the role of CP branch secretary in Hornsey, he became the secretary of the local Aid Spain Committee, which brought together Labour members, Communists and others in support of Spain's elected government. The Aid Spain Committee was refused permission to hire Hornsey Town Hall for a rally because of a perceived 'danger to life and property' which added to the fury of local left-wingers when Mosley was allowed to use the Town Hall in January 1937 for a rally in support of the prospective fascist candidate in neighbouring Wood Green. This was just three months after the renowned Battle of Cable Street when a mass protest on the streets of London's East End had prevented Mosley and his blackshirt followers from marching through a mainly Jewish area.

Jones wrote an angry letter of protest to the *Hornsey Journal*:

The previous visit of Mosley to Crouch End with his retinue of broken-nosed bruisers is an indication of what may be expected at a Fascist meeting. The attitude of the Council makes it plain that, just as it is prepared to show its sympathy with Franco, Hitler and Mussolini abroad, so it will give a helping hand to Mosley at home.

When Mosley came to Hornsey, the *Journal* deployed four reporters in the hall and outside. While the violence was nothing like on the scale of Cable Street, the newspaper's report makes clear that it was by local standards a tumultuous event, with hundreds of Mosley's supporters inside the Town Hall and hundreds of anti-fascist demonstrators outside:

Four men and one woman were ejected [from the Town Hall], and in the cases of the men unnecessary brutality was used by the Fascist stewards in the course of their duty. Mounted police were called to clear the crowds from the courtyard of the Town Hall after the meeting and during the melee a sergeant was unseated when his horse reared and was injured by one of the Fascist cars. Fascist 'storm troopers' from their headquarters travelled in a large, black motor-coach, with its squat windows protected by thick mesh wire.

Alongside the demonstration at the Town Hall, a more sedate protest meeting was held nearby at Crouch End's Clock Tower where the two main speakers were Labour's Dorothy Woodman and Jonah Jones for the Communists. As the evening progressed, and Mosley's supporters dispersed, the anti-fascists again congregated at the Clock Tower and once more Jonah Jones addressed the crowd:

Long after Mosley and his thugs had gone away the crowds stayed to hear what the working-class representatives of Hornsey had to say (the Communists later recounted). . . . Until 11 o'clock that night Jones conducted the rally. Feeling burned high.

The Communist anthem the Internationale was sung, slogans shouted in support of the Popular Front and the crowd gave three cheers for the British volunteers who had gone to Spain to fight against Franco.

This was a landmark event in Jones's political activism. He had won his spurs - demonstrating his ability as a political organiser and orator. He also won his electoral spurs at about this time. When Labour decided not to contest South Haringay in a local election, Jones took the plunge. Although he lost to the Municipal Reform (that is, Conservative) candidate, he polled well - indeed better than the Labour candidate the last time the party had contested the seat. He chose to nurse the constituency and stood there in several council elections over the years.

The early stages of the Second World War proved difficult for the Communist Party. The CP's notorious 'about-turn' when the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with Germany - from supporting a 'people's war against fascism' to denouncing an 'imperialist war' - lost it a lot of sympathy. The

Communist paper, the *Daily Worker*, was banned and there was active discussion of outlawing the Communist Party too. All this changed when the Nazi-Soviet pact fell apart and Hitler ordered an invasion of the Soviet Union. Stalin changed overnight from Britain's adversary to a potential ally. Communists campaigned for a second front to defend the Soviet Union and in energetic support of the allied war effort. The perceived heroism of the Russian people at the siege of Stalingrad and the military successes of the Red Army led to an upsurge of sympathy for the Soviet Union. The key role of Communists among anti-fascist partisan and resistance forces in Italy, France and elsewhere also contributed to the growing appeal of Communism. During the latter part of the war, the British party achieved its peak membership of well over 50,000.

In the 1945 election, the CP wanted to reap the dividend of its increased membership and support - but not to imperil the prospect of the country's first ever Labour government with a Parliamentary majority, not least because the Communists' long-term goal was affiliation to the Labour Party. The Communists were very selective about which constituencies to contest. The party only put up five candidates across London. Hornsey was not an obvious choice; it was a rock solid Conservative seat, and in 1935, their candidate had a majority in the constituency of more than 20,000. But the CP had organisational strength across the Borough of Hornsey: in rather crude terms, mainly intellectuals in Highgate and Muswell Hill, and largely skilled workers and teachers in Hornsey Vale, Haringay, Stroud Green and Finsbury Park.

Hornsey's Communists also had another key strength in Jonah Jones. He never became a prominent figure in British Communism, although he was for a while on the party's London district committee, but he was hardworking, ambitious and had a touch of charisma. Jonah Jones was an activist rather than an ideologue but he became a well-known and well-regarded local figure.

Jones had an attribute which is always useful in electoral politics - matinee idol-style good looks. His photo appeared prominently in local party propaganda for the simple reason that he was conspicuously handsome. It certainly enhanced his popularity within the CP. One fellow member of the Hornsey branch, Alison Macleod, commented waspishly many years later that Jones had an 'ecstatic female following' within the local party who thought he could do no wrong. He endured periods of poor health, however, and shortly after his marriage spent two months in Hornsey Cottage Hospital. He had a heart condition which can't have been helped by his fondness for cigarettes. That may explain why he didn't 'join up' in the armed forces.

You are invited to a
PROTEST MEETING

called by Residents of South Haringgay Ward against
the refusal to increase Labour Representation on
Hornsey Borough Council.

SPEAKERS—

Councillor H. HYND (Labour Party)

G. J. JONES (Communist Party)

With Trade Union and Co-operative Speakers

Chairman - B. A. POUNTNEY (Labour Party)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION ON YOUR LOCAL PROBLEMS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3rd, at 8.0 p.m.
ALLISON HALL, Green Lanes, N.8. ADMISSION FREE

Labour and Communist together - a handbill from 1942,
Courtesy of the Hornsey and Wood Green Labour Party

In the early part of the war, Jones was evacuated along with many of his school pupils to Northamptonshire. During the wartime Blitz, he volunteered to help out in Shoreditch, an area badly affected and where many of his pupils lived. In the war years, and particularly after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, Hornsey Communists sought to make common cause with Labour Party activists both on local issues - particularly housing, child care and public health - and in support of the war effort and in initiatives such as organising blood donor camps.

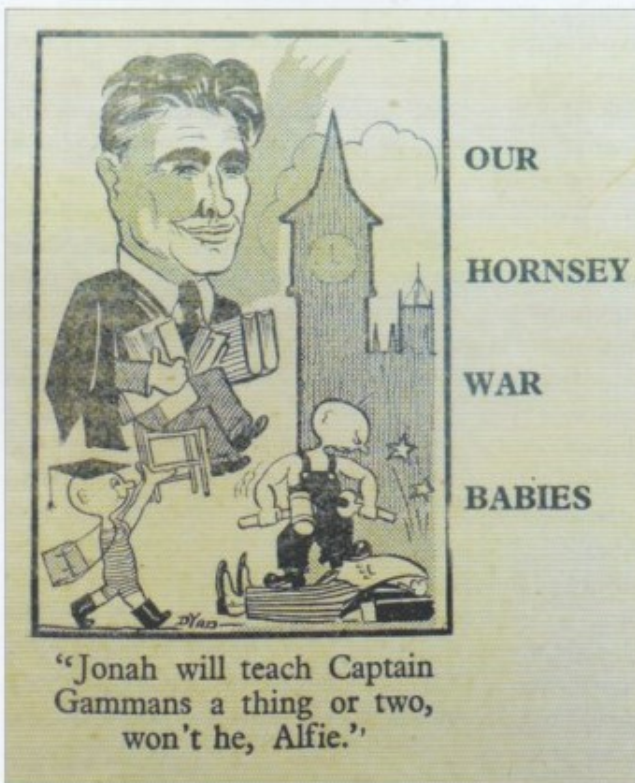
One particular episode demonstrated the closeness of the local Labour and Communist parties. In 1942, an independent councillor representing South Haringgay resigned. No municipal by-election was held because of the war and it was up to the council to co-opt a successor. Jonah Jones had been the runner-up at the last election there. Harry Hynd, Hornsey Borough's sole Labour councillor, argued that the Communist should be awarded the seat. Only one other councillor supported him; the large majority endorsed the selection of another independent. Furious at this travesty of local democracy, Labour and Communist parties organised a protest meeting at a hall on Green Lanes where Hynd and Jones shared a platform. It was this sort of collaboration which encouraged talk of a joint Parliamentary candidate.

By the end of the war, the Hornsey CP had grown into a formidable political force with its own newsletter and its own premises. The local party offices were at 4a Broadway Parade, close to the clock tower, currently a newsagent. The entrance was from the rear, and the property stretched over two floors above shop premises. Michael Prior, whose parents were both

active in the Hornsey CP, has memories of visiting the offices when a child. An outside staircase gave access to a floor which was used as an office with space for committee meetings, and on the upper floor was accommodation which could be used by a party worker.

The newsletter, a well-produced four-page publication selling for twopence (that's in pre-decimal money and the equivalent of less than a penny, nowadays), was called *Hornsey Forward*. Only one copy has been located and it's difficult to know for sure whether any more were published. A note in the newsletter states that all the content was provided by people from the Hornsey area, and the information it offers about contributors gives a picture of the range of local CP activists: among the men, there were two industrial research scientists, an electrical engineer and an activist in the cooperative movement; and among the women were a teacher, an industrial worker who was also active in the Haringgay Housewives Club, and the leader of the Hornsey war nurseries campaign whose husband was serving in the Eighth Army.

The surviving copy of the newsletter is undated but appears to be from the summer of 1944. Jones wrote the front-page article which was accompanied by his photograph. It carried the headline: 'Your Future Demands Unity NOW!' Jones was already described as the prospective Parliamentary candidate. 'We believe that we can, without exaggeration, claim to be the strongest force in local progressive politics', Jones declared. The Communists' aim, it seems, was to put



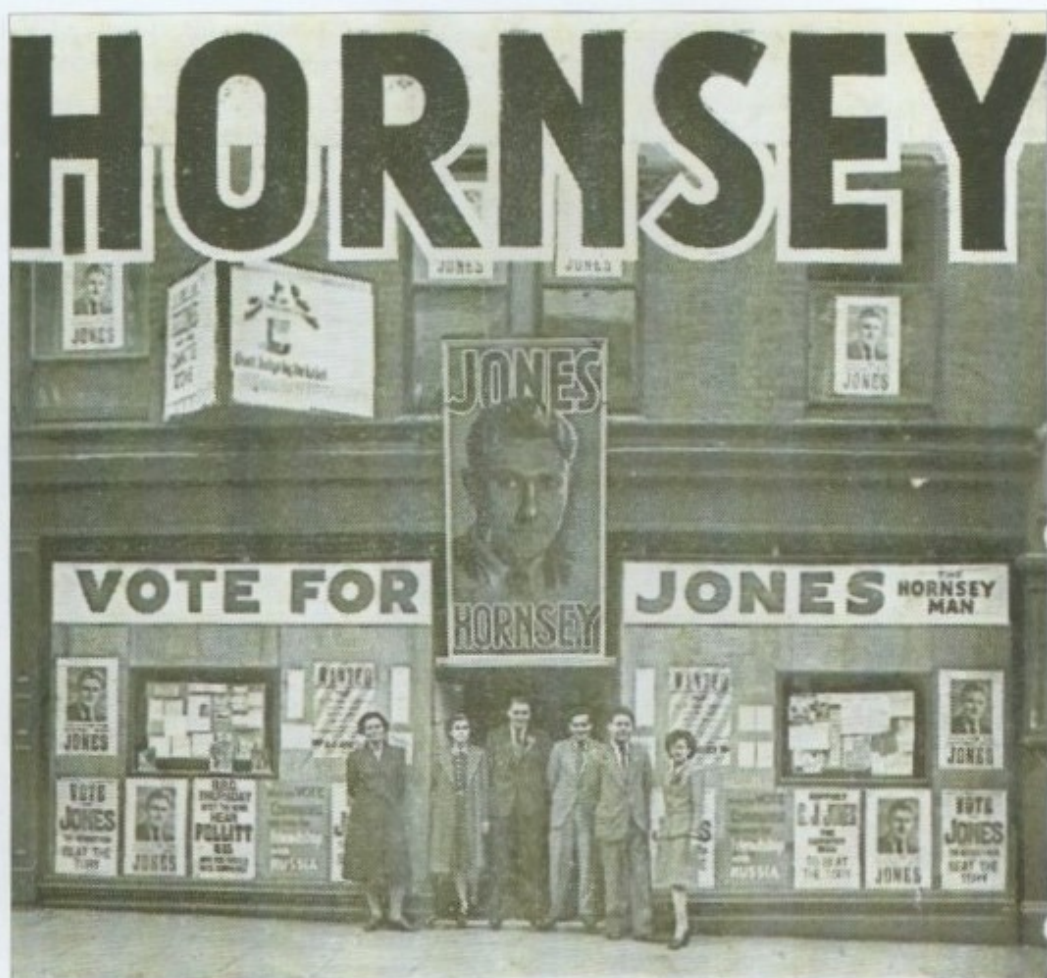
From *Hornsey Forward*, c1944

forward Jones's name early, build on his local profile and support, and bank on Labour and other left-wing organisations falling in behind.

'Here in Hornsey', Jones declared in the run-up to the '45 election, 'we need a platform of the whole of the Left - Labour, Liberal, Co-operative, Commonwealth, Trades Council and Trade Unions - to ensure the defeat of Tory domination'. What of course he envisaged was that all these left movements should unite behind his candidacy. The Communists proposed that all the left-of-centre parties and movements in Hornsey should have an open conference at which they would settle on a single candidate to challenge the Conservative incumbent.

Several of the smaller parties were on board, but Labour, while not rejecting the proposal, was lukewarm. Jones and his colleagues may have been hoping that the Labour Party - which had no expectation of victory in Hornsey - might regard backing a Communist in an unwinnable seat as low risk. It was wishful thinking. Labour didn't give the Communists a free run in any of the constituencies the CP contested.

With the benefit of hindsight, it's clear that Jones could never have won Hornsey without Labour support and very doubtful that he could have been successful as a candidate of the united left. But at the time many in the local party believed their man was in with a chance. The scientist J.B.S. Haldane came to speak in Jones's support; the candidate addressed dozens of local meetings; Pat Sloan, an influential Communist who had spent much of the 1930s in Moscow, was the press officer for the campaign; Francis Aprahamian (who later married Peggy McIlven, the author of the pamphlet biography of Jones, and whose brother Felix was a renowned music critic) was the election agent. The campaign achieved something of a coup when it took over a double-fronted shop in Park Road at the heart of Crouch End - now the Foto Plus store - and plastered the windows with election posters, mounting an outsize portrait of the candidate above the shop door.

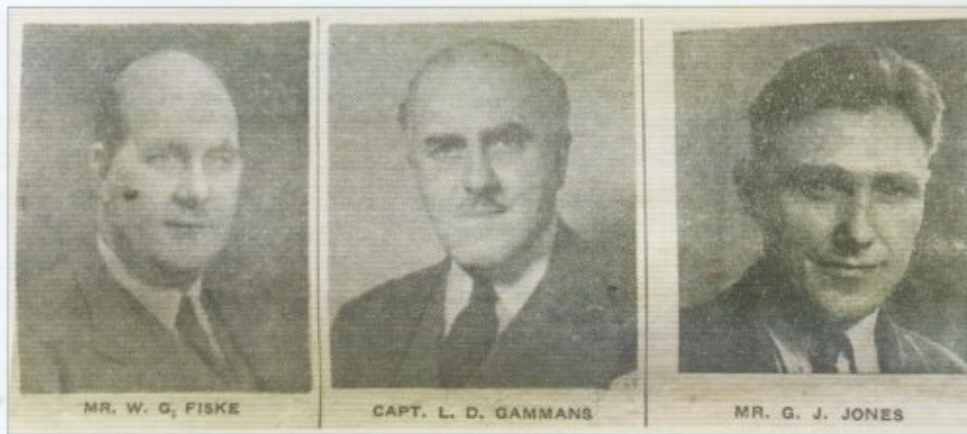


Jones outside 3 Park Road

All the time, Special Branch was keeping an eye on Jones and his colleagues. Jones's daughter, Frances, remembers that as a child she was told to assume that calls to and from the home phone were being tapped. On phone calls, Jones's party colleagues were referred to by nicknames. She remembers one family friend and party colleague, a Russian, who would always start any phone conversation with the words: 'don't say my name!' As a youngster, she found it quite exciting.

Buried away in the National Archive are documents which demonstrate how well based was Jones's concern about phone tapping. Sallie Aprahamian, Francis and Peggy's daughter, has tracked down surveillance documents relating to her father. They include notes of a phone conversation during the campaign between Jones and another Communist candidate. A police file on Aprahamian which mentions his role as election agent in Hornsey states: 'JONES is well known to Special Branch'.

Still more startling is a document which an informer working at a CP office photographed: a handwritten letter from Aprahamian to a party colleague making the case for Jones to stand in Hornsey. Whatever the murky circumstances of the surveillance, the letter provides an insight into why the party allowed Jones to contest the seat. According to Aprahamian, the Hornsey party had as many as



The three candidates
- *Hornsey Journal*

279 members and another 150 'listed supporters', with six ward groups and two factory groups. It could get twenty to thirty canvassers out every week. The *Hornsey Forward* newsletter had a print run of 3,000 and about a thousand copies had been sold of the *Jones for Hornsey* pamphlet. Aprahamian described Jones as 'well-known in [the] locality. He's spoken in all wards during the last 4 months. [He] Has been assisting in solving [the] housing problems of 6 people recently.'

Aprahamian also gave his account of the local moves towards a united left candidate:

Joint cttee, has agreed on programme (Lib, Lab, C[ommon] W[ealth], Coop, CP). L[abour] P[arty] has twice resolved for a conference [to select a joint candidate] and backed out. Large minority in Management Committee is for local unity. ... Working agreement on municipal candidates has been reached.

He added that the Trades Council strongly supported electoral unity while a key local trade union, the Woodworkers, had heard both potential left candidates and come down in support of a single candidacy. The ground was about as favourable as it could be for a Communist to stand.

Labour's choice of a prospective candidate did not help the party's cause. Bill Fiske was a Londoner, and later leader of the Greater London Council, but he had no local links. Jones's election posters and literature made little mention of the Communist Party, describing the candidate simply as 'the Hornsey man to beat the Tory'.

A month before polling day came a development which the normally restrained *Hornsey Journal* described as a campaign 'bombshell'. The president and vice-president of the local Labour Party, along with five other prominent local party members, issued a letter disowning their own candidate. Fiske, they said, was 'unknown both to Hornsey and to the Labour Party members who adopted him' while the Communist candidate 'is a Hornsey resident with a fine local record and the strongest local party organization to campaign for him. We appeal, therefore, to the whole Labour

movement in the borough and to all progressively-minded residents to give their full support to the candidature of Mr Jones.' Fiske's campaign had been holed below the waterline while Jones's chances of pulling off a surprise victory had been greatly enhanced. Of the smaller left and radical parties, the ILP urged support for Fiske while Common Wealth, a short-lived radical movement which had wide backing during the war years, echoed the Communist demand for Fiske to stand down.

Most astonishing of all was the *Hornsey Journal's* line on the controversy. The weekly paper made no secret of its support for the sitting Conservative MP,

<p>GAMMANS for the LANDOWNERS</p>	<p>G. J. JONES is the candidate who lives in HORNSEY and shares a HOUSE WITH OTHER FAMILIES HE KNOWS THE HOUSING PROBLEM</p>
<p>JONES for the RESIDENTS</p>	<p>VOTE for JONES</p>

Hear . . .
JONES'
. . . Policy
MEETINGS, 8.0 p.m.

AT

FRIDAY, 22nd JUNE
BAPTIST CHURCH HALL, STAPLETON HALL ROAD.

FRIDAY, 22nd JUNE
PARK ROAD SCHOOL.

SATURDAY, 23rd JUNE
COLDFALL SCHOOL.

MONDAY, 25th JUNE
MUSWELL HILL SCHOOL, ALEXANDRA GARDENS.

TUESDAY, 26th JUNE
CHRIST CHURCH HALL, EDIPSON ROAD

WEDNESDAY, 27th JUNE
PAKLAND ROAD SCHOOL.

WEDNESDAY, 27th JUNE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HALL, PRINCE'S AVENUE.

THURSDAY, 28th JUNE
WOODSTOCK ROAD SCHOOL

'Vote for Jones', *Hornsey Journal*, 22 June 1945

Captain Gammans, but published an editorial which, in essence, endorsed the CP appeal for the Labour candidate to withdraw:

There is no doubt that Mr Jones enjoys the confidence of the people to a far greater degree than does Mr Fiske, and that at the election it is Mr Jones who will get the left wing votes ...

It is in the interests of all the people that Captain Gammans's position as member of Parliament and the support he enjoys in the Borough should be clarified for once and for all. A split Left vote only makes things easier for him, but he, like all fair thinking Conservatives, would prefer that his majority should be over a united Left wing vote - a vote for Mr Jones.

It was an extraordinary intervention. Jones and his campaign increasingly ignored the Labour candidate and behaved as if he was in a two-way contest with the Conservative. Prior to 1969, the party allegiance of Parliamentary candidates did not appear on the ballot paper. The Labour Party may well have feared that many of their supporters would vote for Jones thinking that he had Labour support.

With ten days to go before polling, Clement Attlee broke off from campaigning to write a public letter to Bill Fiske. As 'the official Labour candidate', Attlee wrote

Attlee's Call to Hornsey . .

Central Committee Rooms,
Limehouse Division,
669b, Commercial Road, E.14.
26th June, 1945.

Dear Fiske,

I send you my very best wishes for your election campaign in Hornsey. If the Labour Party is to secure a good majority in the next House of Commons, it must concentrate on the return of its candidates for constituencies like Hornsey, which can no longer be regarded as strong Tory seats.

I know that your campaign is being made more difficult by the presence of a Communist Party nominee, Mr. Jones, who is trying to deceive the electors into believing that he has the support of prominent members of the Hornsey Labour Party. This can only serve to help the Tories, and I am confident that Hornsey electors will realise that, as the official Labour candidate, you are the only man who can claim the support of the local Labour movement.

I appeal, therefore, to all those who are tired of Tory domination to rally solidly behind you as the only man who can possibly defeat Captain Gammans.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) C. R. ATTLEE.

FISKE for LABOUR

'Attlee's Call to Hornsey', *Hornsey Journal*, 29 June 1945

to Fiske, 'you are the only man who can claim the support of the local Labour movement.

I know that your campaign is being made more difficult by the presence of a Communist Party nominee, Mr Jones, who is trying to deceive the electors into believing he has the support of prominent members of the Hornsey Labour Party.'

The local Labour Party secured advertising space in the *Hornsey Journal* to publish Attlee's letter prominently and in full. It's unusual for a party leader to point up divisions within his own ranks in quite such a fashion but it probably helped to stanch the haemorrhage of Labour support to Jones.

On voting day, the *Journal* found that 'Conservative and Communist "checkers" were outside every polling centre but there was little evidence of any Labour check-up'. It reported that Jones seemed to have the advantage over Gammans in the Campsbourne and Priory Road areas as well as in Finsbury Park and Harringay. Votes weren't counted for another three weeks to allow time for postal ballots from those serving in the forces abroad. When Hornsey's polling boxes were emptied, the Conservatives had achieved a more emphatic victory locally than they had perhaps expected. The results were:

Gammans, Capt. L.D. (Conservative)	24,684
Fiske, W.G. (Labour)	12,015
Jones, G.J. (Communist)	10,058

Jonah Jones's creditable tally was seen as a vindication of the Hornsey CP's decision to contest the seat. The party held an election party at the Town Hall to celebrate both Labour's victory nationwide and Jones's 10,000 votes in Hornsey. Phil Piratin, the victorious Communist candidate in the East End, was among the speakers - Jones pointed out playfully that there had been twice as many Communist voters in Hornsey than in Stepney.

No other Communist candidate in an English constituency came anywhere close to a tally of 10,000 votes (though Willie Gallacher was re-elected in West Fife with more than 17,000 votes and the party leader Harry Pollitt was a close second with more than 15,000 votes in another coalfield seat, Rhondda East in South Wales). Alison Macleod suggested unkindly that Jones's relative success played to his vanity and that in later years he ended every conversation with the refrain: 'I got 10,000 votes in 1945'.

Jones can't have been all that surprised by his defeat however much local Communists may have convinced themselves that they were in the running. He may well have been more disappointed when, three months later, he again failed to win a council seat in South Harringay. The Communists had been confident

of gaining representation on Hornsey council with Jones seen as all-but-certain to win.

As far as Jones and his colleagues were concerned, Labour had acted in bad faith to block the Communists' chances. The local Labour Party, when announcing that it would contest the Hornsey Parliamentary seat, had also declared that in the subsequent council election Labour would only contest half the seats falling vacant, 'leaving opportunity for other Left Wing parties to share in this form of political activity'. But when the moment came, Labour backtracked on that understanding. Jones had never previously faced Labour opposition when he stood in South Haringay - now Labour aimed to take both of the ward's seats; it was, Jones fumed, a 'shameful, inexcusable and disgraceful denial of agreements'.

Jonah Jones came close to victory - less than 200 votes adrift - but two Labour candidates leapfrogged over him to wrest the South Haringay seats from Municipal Reform. One of the Labour victors was the journalist Ted Castle, the husband of the emerging Labour Party firebrand, Barbara Castle. In all, Labour gained ten council seats across the borough - a breakthrough moment for them. Communist candidates polled strongly in Highgate and in Stroud Green as well as in South Haringay, but the Borough of Hornsey never had a Communist councillor.

The 1945 election was not the end of Jones's attempts to secure election to Parliament. He contested Hornsey as a Communist on three further occasions - but his support ebbed away. On his final candidacy in 1959, he was fourth with just over a thousand votes. The party continued to have its own offices in Crouch End - as far as Michael Prior remembers - until towards the end of the fifties. His impression when growing up was that the local CP revolved around 'a number of very prominent, very good militant women' - his mother, Lena Prior, among them.

By the time of his last candidacy, Jonah Jones was in poor health. In 1957 he had spent time at a sanatorium outside Moscow. He remained loyal to the party and an admirer of the Soviet Union to the end of his life. The leader of the British CP, John Gollan, gave the address at Jones's funeral at Golders Green crematorium in December 1960. Among other tributes reported in the *Hornsey Journal* was one from Lady Gammans, who had inherited the Hornsey Parliamentary seat from her husband. She spoke of Jones's courtesy: he 'was a man dedicated to the cause in which he believed. Although he must have realised that he could never hope to win, he nevertheless refused to give up the fight. I always found him a straightforward opponent, keeping personalities out of politics.'

What some within the CP described as Jonesy-ism, the habit of contesting elections even if the prospects

were poor, remained in evidence locally. In the initial elections to Haringey council in 1964, the Communists put up a candidate in all twenty wards. Eight of their candidates were women; none came anywhere close to winning a seat; their highest poll was 254 votes in South Hornsey. The Communists persisted in contesting the Hornsey Parliamentary constituency into the 1970s.

Jonah Jones's daughter, Frances, says that as a teenager 'the party made my life difficult'. Her father was still 'standing on Crouch End Broadway preaching to the converted' every weekend, and she was teased mercilessly at school. But she remembers her father with great fondness. 'He was a lovely Dad and a nice, kind man'. Two Spanish Communist refugees were regular visitors. Quite often her father got involved helping those faced with eviction, particularly in the pockets of poor housing in Hornsey Vale. 'That's what he was like! Sometimes you woke up to find strangers sleeping on the floor. We always had an open house.'

'He was certainly very dogmatic', she recalls. 'He was disappointed he didn't get any further in the party and angry about the splits - he felt that everyone should stay together for the good of the party. I'm proud of him as a man who stuck to his ideals, whether they were popular or whether they weren't. I liked that there were always people around. It was an interesting childhood, with interesting people - like a North London version of the Bloomsbury group: doctors, musicians, people from the Hornsey College of Art. I had a lovely childhood.'

Andrew Whitehead is the author of *Curious Crouch End*, being published later this year [2021] by Five Leaves. He lived for many years in N8 and now has his home in NW5; he is a member of the Hornsey Historical Society. The author would like to express warm thanks for the information, encouragement and support given by Jonah Jones's daughter, Frances, as well as by Michael Prior and Sallie Aprahamian, during his research. He's very grateful to the Hornsey Historical Society and to the Hornsey and Wood Green Labour Party for their kindness in arranging access to their holdings and archives. The British Library and the Working Class Movement Library in Salford were hugely helpful in giving permission for images to be reproduced to accompany the article.