

**Letter from D.I. Jones to M. Rakosi,  
[July–August 1921]<sup>1</sup>**

PROPOSED COLONIAL BUREAU OF THE COMINTERN

The Secretary,  
Comintern

Dear Comrade Rakosi,

I have spoken to several Colonial delegates regarding the advisability of forming a Colonial Bureau of the Comintern; and I should be obliged if you would place the proposal before the Small Bureau or the Executive Committee.

In the present state of things the Colonial delegates feel that they have no plan of work, and no adequate scope for their activities. We feel that we could best contribute to the work of the Comintern by the formation of a Colonial Bureau, and thus feel of some use to the International movement.

We propose that such a Bureau should gather together all matter pertaining to the Colonies, Colonial exploitation, and the Colonial movements in India, Africa, Java, Palestine, Egypt, etc.

The collection of data and statistics, literature, etc., would be the task of this Bureau. It would also be its duty when called upon to advise the Secretariat regarding the various aspects of the Colonial movements. It would also keep watch over social and political developments especially affecting the Colonial working masses where there is no Communist movement or where it is too weak to make its voice heard.

For example, John Harris<sup>2</sup> the Negrophile liberal, has succeeded in making an issue in the British liberal Press of the repressive measures of the British Administration in Kenya, where the natives have been subjected to compulsory labour and land expropriation. Such matters might also receive the attention of the Comintern, giving a lead directly or through the British Communist Party, and thus enhance its prestige as the defender of the unprotected working masses of the Colonies.

It is suggested that the Negro question as it surges up in its most frenzied form in America would also come within the purview of the Colonial Bureau to

1. The document is not dated. The date was established on the basis of another document, 'Minutes of the Preliminary Meeting of the Bureau of Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries at ECCI' (RGASPI, 495/154/76/1). K.M. Troianovsky, M.E. Yaroshevsky, A.I. Tenenbaum and D.I. Jones participated at the meeting that took place on 24 August 1921. The meeting resolved to create a Department of Dominion Countries and Negro Peoples within the Bureau and to appoint Jones as head of this Department, thus fulfilling Jones's request.
2. The identity of John Harris could not be established.

collect information for the Executive Committee and make proposals on developments from time to time. And the immense amount of matter arising out of the Indian movement, the necessity of collecting data on present political developments, non-cooperation, Swadeshi,<sup>3</sup> etc. and the part played by the young Indian proletariat in Gandhi's Boycott movement, as also the struggles of the proletariat in its own interests, where it clashes with the Nationalist movement and how far the two march together, – all offers a wide field for work which only the Comintern can do.

This work would of course require a Secretary and a Russian typist. An office fitted out for statistical work with a card system for the work of reference to all the collected data, and bookshelves with catalogue system for the collected literature. The Colonial Delegates, with any other comrades which the Executive might consider it advisable to add, would form an advisory Committee to control the Bureau and advise the Executive Committee on Colonial developments. The Colonial delegates would apportion out the work of reading up and collecting the material for current literature and journals etc., make a collection of same and advise the Archives Department what to order from abroad. Literature on the Colonial question now in the Library might form a separate section as part of the Colonial Bureau.

Trusting these suggestions will not be unwelcome to the comrades,

I remain, fraternally yours,

D. Ivon Jones.  
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(South Africa)

RGASPI, 495/64/8/8–9.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

Inscriptions: 1) Jones

2) '8'

3) 48B

3. Swadeshi (Sanskrit for 'local', 'national') movement in India in the late nineteenth century for the development of national industries, against British goods.