

GOD IN THE TEST-TUBE

by Bertram D. Wolfe

(Continued from the last issue)

The Case of Albert Einstein

A word should be said here about the special case of Albert Einstein. He alone of the many contributors is virtually devoid of theological refuse. He once told an inquiring reporter: "I believe in the God of Spinoza, which God, as Hobbes long ago discovered, is no God at all."

"He who calls the world God," wrote Hobbes of Spinoza, "asserts thereby that the world has no cause or, in other words, that there is no God. In the same way he also denies the existence of God, who does not regard the world as created but as existing eternally, for the eternal can have no cause."

"I cannot imagine a God who rewards and punishes," writes Einstein. "Neither can I believe that the individual survives the death of his body."

Yet he cannot bring himself to part with the word "religion" after he has emptied it of all meaning. So, at last, he erects for himself a fetish to worship: "To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge this feeling is at the center of true religiousness."

Knowledge of the impenetrability of the universe and our own dull faculties—the emotional reflex of our ignorance and dullness—a truly noble fetish! Nor is this noble worship of ignorance and dullness for everybody. "The common herd," writes the democratic Einstein, "remains dull in thought and insensible in feelings . . . The only deeply religious people of our largely materialistic age are the earnest men of research."

This great thinker "may be after all, a simple soul," writes Dr. Cotton and after reading his opinions outside of his field—on Zionism, on pacifism, democracy and on cosmic religion—we must admit that very likely Dr. Cotton is correct.

A Ghost That Knows His Einstein

Einstein has thus prepared a nest for religious cuckoos to lay their eggs in. And they lay eggs aplenty, and befool the nest as well. Cotton fathers on Einstein a relativistic God. J. Malcolm Bird, "psychic research expert," tells a learned laboratory tale about a medium who was addressed by a spirit, mistook it for her father when it was her father-in-law, learned that in life the ghost had had a little goatee, learned that she had been seen by the spirit the night before washing lingerie in her bathroom (how could the spirit possibly find that out!) And finally J. Malcolm Bird discovers that "the communicator (i.e. the ghost) was alive at the time"!!! Does that phase J. Malcolm? Not a bit! Has he not studied Einstein? "The relativistic philosophy presents time in a new light and pictures the future as having a real existence in some part co-extensive with the present." So, of course a man's ghost can be in the spirit world before the man is dead. And in place of the medium being exposed as a cheap faker, she is revealed as a modern scientific marvel, communicating with relativistic ghosts who know that they can be the ghosts of dead men long before the men die, for has not Einstein made the future present? No doubt, in the spirit world there are only twelve ghosts that really know their Einstein. But twelve really active ghosts are enough!

A Shameful Capitulation

The most alarming thing about this symposium is not the gibberish about near-sighted Gods to whom man was an afterthought, mathematician-Gods, Gods that are personal since they

created personalities (why not parasitical because they created parasites), divine measuring rods, quantum-Gods and relativity-Gods, Gods of cosmic power and cosmic law and order, Gods who are "more dependable" because they obey the law, Gods that reward and punish, Gods that work if you try them out and Gods in whom it pays to believe, electronic Gods, Gods at the hind end of telescopes, Gods at the bottom of test tubes, cosmic energy-Gods, theorem-Gods, fugue-Gods, poem-Gods, sunset-Gods, and the whole Walpurgis-night rout of surviving personalities, table-rappers, furniture-movers, magic makers, bell-ringers, hobgoblins and ghosts.

The alarming thing is the spectacle of the capitulation before religion on the part of a number of men professing to be scientists, a capitulation in the name of science before the assembled forces of unreason, anti-science and obscurantism. The bloody pages of the record of the persecution of knowledge by obscurantism, of science by defied ignorance, are to become white as snow. "Religion," we are now to believe, "is the parent of research." We are to rivet on again the shackles of ignorance which were one by one struck off from the spirit of man, the investigator and increasingly the master of his surroundings. We are to believe again "that the mind of man is incapable of grappling with reality in any truly scientific way" (Mather), that ignorance and impotence are a source of wonder and joy (Millikan), that while "religion can never become a science . . . science can become a religion and seems on the verge of doing so" We are to agree that science is nowhere and never to concern itself "with values, with right and wrong, with better and worse," with how man should live his life, with social organization, but should limit itself to the study of the sub-human, sub-living physical chemical world. We are to dilute organized knowledge with disorganizing hocus-pocus and recognize that "the speculations of religionists and philosophers regarding a First Cause are a form of science" that "in the final analysis and scientific theory (like any religious dogma) is simply a belief" (Curtis).

We are to enthrone ignorance upon a golden throne and sing hosannas to it for ever and ever. "Science cannot solve the great mystery of our existence," is the burden of our hymn of praise to the degradation of the spirit of man. "Human purpose is naught and human planning less than naught." Faith alone assures us that there is definite purpose in all experience." (Thus can we exalt planlessness and give up planning, exalt exploitation and misery and give up striving to fashion a better world! Does not faith tell us that there is a divine and inscrutable purpose in all things evil, in all things as they are?) "This knowledge makes life as it is

Thomas is assuming a new color in his open passage to liberalism by becoming the guide and inspirer of the Militants in the S.P., particularly in New York. He has been acting with increasing frequency as their advisor and in the last resort exercises considerable influence over their policies.

At the same time, the Hillquit forces are also preparing themselves. Oneal has hastened to take his fling at the Thomas types in the columns of the *New Leader*. Algernon Lee does his bit at every turn to defend "Marxism" as he sees it, teaches it, practices it.

There has just been started by the Hillquit forces a new paper—*The American Socialist Quarterly*. The first issue presents a systematic attack on the ideas and proposals of Thomas. There is sharp criticism particularly against some of the "solutions" in Thomas's "America's Way Out."

Berenberg, one of the editors of the *American Socialist Quarterly*, takes special pains in criticizing Thomas's formulations rather sharply. Haim Kantorovich indulges in general criticism of certain stripes of "Marx-killers" and, of course, by inference and even directly, lets Thomas know that the Socialist party is to stay "pure" and not become liberal.

Very serious repercussions, organizational and political, may follow in the Socialist party ranks if the breach is not healed by some compromise arrangement.

worth living and service (real 'slavery') a privilege" (Conklin).

Science is a feeble but ever-brightening flame whose light pierces deeper and deeper into the limitless darkness of the infinite universe and now in the name of science we are bidden to blow out the little light and leave all in darkness again. And this suicide is euphemistically called "the reconciliation of religion and science."

The fact is that religion and science were never farther apart. It is not religion that is destined to give the death blow to science but science to religion. Not that all ignorance is to be banished overnight forever. The banishing of darkness by light is an endless process, endlessly progressing but never to be completed.

But the deification of ignorance, "wonder and joy" at ignorance, capitulation before refined versions of savage animism, these are about to be banished forever.

The End of Religion

The sources of religion are two:

FREDERICK DOUGLASS INTERRACIAL FORUM

HOWLAND STUDIO

1660 Fulton St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

SUNDAY, FEB. 7, 1932, 4 P. M.

Jay Lovestone

The Negro and the Labor Movement

The Economic Week

THE stock market declines this week have wiped out most of the January gains. Stocks trading is now lowest in six months. Steel production continues to stay at a very low ebb despite the slight increase in operations this month.

The Reconstruction Corporation Act's failure to stimulate sentiment, the unexpected protracted railway wage-cut negotiations, the resumption of the trend towards heavy gold losses, and the unfavorable dividend actions by the U. S. Steel

Corporation and the Bethlehem Company have given a sour ending to the first month of the new year and have lent further blackness and dismay to the outlook for Spring.

The U. S. Steel Corporation reported the smallest monthly, quarterly and annual earnings in its history.

The decline of auto production by 8% at a time when constant rise is common has proved a hard blow especially to the steel industry. Commodity price trends con-

tinued downward. Car loadings, adjusted seasonally, are showing a marked sagging. The railway wage-cut and the proposed 25% cut in the building trades have given a new impetus to additional serious wage-cuts thruout industry. Indications for a worsening of the agricultural outlook are multiplying.

The adding of the acute Far Eastern complications to the debts and reparations tangle has laid the basis for a further extension of the disruption of the world market.

THE LIQUIDATION

by N. K. Kr

Nadezhda Constantinovna Krupskaya addressed a large audience of American and English workers and specialists at the Dzerzhinsky Club on December 5. The lecture was devoted to the question of education in the U. S. S. R. and dealt particularly with the liquidation of illiteracy. Comrade Krupskaya pictured the gigantic strides made by the working class since the October revolution in liquidating this terrible heritage of the tsarist regime.

Illiteracy was widespread in the pre-revolutionary period. Even after extensive educational work carried out from 1917 to 1920, one-third of the male population and two-thirds of the women were deeply illiterate.

At the present time—stated Krupskaya—fifteen years after the victory of the October revolution, we have liquidated illiteracy in the Russian Socialist Republic.

The work was exceedingly difficult. However, in the year of 1924-25 one million were taught to read and write, and since that time, in 1928, '29, and '30, almost every year five million adults liquidated their illiteracy.

Comrade Krupskaya recalled a conversation with Lenin. She remarked: "When will we finally liquidate illiteracy?" And Lenin replied: "It is necessary that the masses themselves should undertake this work."

And surely the words of Lenin have become true. In 1931, illiteracy was liquidated among 17 million adults. The education drive was carried into the most remote corners and Krupskaya recalled how in the Black Soil District the women used to gather in the huts to learn how to read and write, and described how, there being no pen-knife, an old man skillfully sharpened their pencils with an axe. At the present time the gigantic army of literates and all the toilers are

the impotence of man before uncontrollable forces of nature and the impotence of man before uncontrollable social forces. The forces of nature have been losing their dark terrors before the victorious advances of natural sciences. Now the forces of society are about to lose their mystery and terror before the victorious march of the proletarian revolution and planned economy of social science. The spirit of man is about to strike off forever, these double shackles. And the bourgeoisie, whose death hour is also the death hour of religion, rather than see science the handmaiden of classless humanity, of a Communist society, is prepared to surrender science, its once faithful servant, to be again the abject slave of theology, once more in chains. Therefore, the cause of science is slipping out of the hands of the bourgeoisie and the emancipation of science from its last shackles is becoming identified with the struggle of the working class to strike off the bodily and spiritual chains from all mankind.