

ARCHITECT OF MODERN THOUGHT

Albert Einstein Part II

Einstein was born in 1879 of German-Jewish parents. He abominated drill and discipline at school. In fact he had an aversion for the arbitrary laws of man throughout his life just as deep as the devotion he felt to the laws of nature. At the age of sixteen when his family moved to Italy he already had thought deeply enough about life under the strict German regime to renounce his German citizenship. At the age of eighteen he failed his entrance examinations to a world famous Swiss engineering school, the Zurich Polytechnic, because in his enthusiasm for mathematics and physics he neglected while at high school to study modern languages and botany. He succeeded in entering a year later. His talents were praised at the Polytechnic, but on graduation he was not asked to stay on for further post-graduate work. In the meantime he had become a Swiss citizen and took a minor job as a patent examiner in the Swiss patent office. While there, and at the age of only twenty-six, he published his special theory of relativity and his work on quantum theory which later won him the Nobel prize. These two revolutionary papers did not bring him acclaim immediately. Although some famous physicists of the day hailed him as a new Copernicus, he remained obscurely unknown for several more years. But gradually recognition came, and he held university posts in Zurich, Prague and Berlin. His general relativity theory was published in Germany in 1916 during the First World War. After the war in 1919 an English astronomical expedition verified one of the predictions of his theory: the bending of light rays by the gravitational pull of the sun. Then suddenly fame burst upon him.

In his youth he left the Jewish religious community because he was a free thinker, though at a later date, reaction against anti-semitism led him to rejoin it.

In 1921 he made his first trip to the United States on behalf of the Zionist movement together with Weizmann, the Jewish scientist who was a prominent Zionist leader. Einstein was received by the American public with wide acclaim. He also visited many other countries and was entertained by royalty and by other leading figures of the day.

When Hitler came to power in Germany, Einstein left the country with the words: "As long as I have any choice I will only stay in a country where political liberty, toleration and equality of all citizens before the law are the rule." He settled in the United States where he worked at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton until his death last year.

People who have known him intimately emphasize these personal characteristics: simplicity, friendliness, kindness, modesty, sense of humour, an air of personal detachment. He never sought personal recognition, fame nor material rewards. He did not try to conform in dress or social customs to the habits of those around him.

Public esteem of Einstein's scientific achievements made anything he said on any topic whatsoever, newsworthy. Although he never sought publicity for himself, he did not shrink from using his ability to command public attention to make his views widely known on issues close to his heart.

He was strongly against war, narrow nationalism, militarism and coercion in any form. The fact that he sometimes made use of his scientific renown to focus public attention on statements of his political convictions meant conversely that his scientific theories were publicly attacked on various occasions with great violence largely for political reasons. Such political attacks came from quite opposite quarters. In Hitler's Germany his theories were attacked as Jewish-Bolshevist physics. In Soviet Russia he was attacked for his alleged idealist, anti-materialist tendencies. He did not fight back against such manifestly non-scientific attacks, but regarded them with detached tolerance.

Leopold Infeld who for several years worked closely together with Einstein, attempted to explain Einstein's hold on the public imagination by the conjecture that in him the public saw a simple and sincere man unostentatiously and naturally living up to universally cherished ideals of the good life whom they could set up as a symbol of their own unrealized aspirations. Who will fail to respond emotionally to quotations such as the following from Einstein's own writings?

"The ideals which have always shone before me and filled me with the joy of living are goodness, beauty and truth. To make a goal of comfort or happiness has never appealed to me; a system of ethics built on this basis would be sufficient only for a herd of cattle." And another quotation:

"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed."

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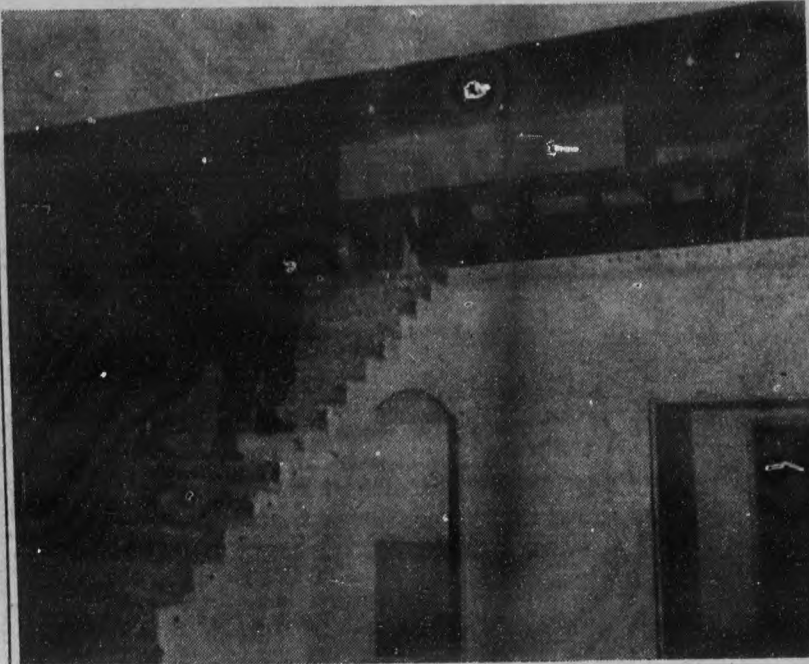
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Queen Street

COLLEGE SNAPS

IN STAGES OF CONSTRUCTION



These stairs might almost be a modern artists conception of the way to the stars, but, no, the steps are those upon which many of us walk every day. The discerning eye will quickly notice the entrance to the Cafeteria in the centre of the shot.

★ ★ ★



These hardly look like the hallowed halls some people consider them to be today. They are, of course the offices of the S.R.C. Even the Brunswickan office looks quite plain, a fact which is hardly true today.

★ ★ ★



Recognize this place? You probably come here for coffee every day. It's the cafeteria in the Students Centre, not quite so finely furnished as it is now. The students cafeteria has established itself as a favourite meeting place on the campus. It provides a pleasant break to the academic day and has been a welcome and much-needed addition to the university.

You are always welcome at the

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SAINT JOHN — AND — FREDERICTON

FILM SOCIETY ANNOUNCES '56-'57 SCHEDULE

Memberships are now available at the bookstore and library for the U.N.B. film society. The first film is to be shown on October 14 and final arrangements for this season's films are being completed.

At presstime the following program has been planned. The title of the October 14 film will be announced as soon as it has been confirmed.

October 28: "Wages of Fear" a French thriller built around trucking nitroglycerin over mountainous South American hinterland. This film was recently reviewed in Life.

November 18: "Hue and Cry", a British comedy starring Alastair Sim and a gang of Cockney youths.

December 2: "Ox Bow Incident", a controversial film starring Henry Fonda and Dana Andrews relating the impact of a lynching on a small western community.

January 20: "Jour de Fete", a brilliant French comedy starring the great Jacques Tati the star of "Mr. Hulot's Holiday".

February 3: "Rembrandt", directed by Alexander Korda and starring Charles Laughton in one of his best acting roles, this is a biographical film of the great Flemish master.

February 24: "The Childhood of Maxim Gorki", an excellent pre-war Russian film based on the early life of the famous Russian writer.

March 10: "Umberto D", directed by Vittorio de Sica, a chillingly realistic film of life in post war Italy.

Short Subjects will be shown with all of these features. A ninth film will be shown if membership is sufficiently large. Single membership fees are three dollars; double membership fees are five dollars. Membership is open to all, both students and townspeople, who are interested in seeing good films.

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G.W.G.

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