

What happened to Einstein's papers?

A rather large number of letters¹ in the correspondence columns of your journal under the heading of "Relativity Debate..." reflect the difficulties encountered when one seeks to resolve the limitations of the special theory without taking recourse to the general theory. The contemporary textbook versions of the general theory further compound the problem by the modern trend of using non-integrable local Lorentz frames of reference. Without an easily accessible complete collection of Einstein's original papers it will become harder and harder to track down the discrepancies between source and contemporary renditions. Permit me to cite a few later Einstein papers relevant to some of the questions with which your correspondents have been concerned.

At the end of section 2 of his article on the foundations of the general theory, Einstein² writes: "The principle of the constancy of the vacuum speed of light requires a modification." At the time, Max Abraham took Einstein to task (in a rather unfriendly manner) about this deviation from his earlier stance. Abraham's objections have now been forgotten, because they were an attempt at curtailing a researcher's privilege to change or even modify his earlier views of nature.

How far Einstein was willing to go in abandoning the constant vacuum speed of light is apparent from an article he published in 1914.³ It is a response to an article by Harzer,⁴ and in this article (in discussing the Sagnac effect) Einstein recognizes the need for distinguishing between two distinct vacuum speeds of light in certain noninertial systems. An overview of these matters and their relation to the older literature can be found in a more recent review article.⁵

Few libraries have these precious old journals, and even then the appropriate references are hard to find. Clearly much confusion could be avoided if Einstein's complete works were available in this country, either in German original or in translation. All of which prompts the question: What has prevented this publication in the quarter century that has gone by since Einstein

passed away?

A Russian version has been available for many years. Yet no Western country, nor Israel has been able to take a similar initiative. Presumably they are prevented from doing so by US estate law. Surely, it is not the first time that the common interest of science and technology is being held hostage by litigation!

The present example though is utterly distasteful, because legalistic bickering has been able to delay for more than twenty years the accessibility of the intellectual inheritance of one of the great minds of this century. It is an extremely embarrassing state of affairs for a world that prides itself to champion the cause of intellectual freedom. Crackpot books about Einstein, yes, but Einstein's own writings, no: only in Russia!

At this late date a government-sponsored publication, by act of Congress, is called for. I, for one, hate to contribute to the profits of private endeavor that, through all those years, has shown such shameful disregard for the common good.

References

1. A. D. Allen, *Physics Today*, May (1980) p. 86. W. Kantor, *Physics Today*, Nov. (1980) p. 15. A. D. Allen, *Physics Today*, May (1980) p. 89. B. G. Wallace, *Physics Today*, August (1981) p. 11. F. J. Belinfante, *Physics Today*, August (1981) p. 13. A. D. Allen, *Physics Today*, August (1981) p. 13.
2. A. Einstein, *Annalen der Physik*, **49** (1916) 769.
3. A. Einstein, *Astronomische Nachrichten*, **199** (1914) 9 and 47.
4. P. Harzer, *Astronomische Nachrichten*, **198** (1914) 378.
5. E. J. Post, *Rev. of Modern Phys.*, **39** (1967) 475.

E. J. Post

9/81

Playa del Rey, California

Velikovsky again

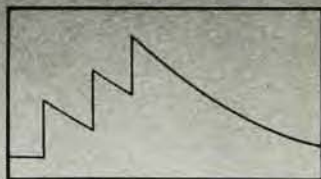
C. Leroy Ellenberger in his letter (April 81 page 72) responding to S. F. Kogan's letter (September 80), mentions that Sagan overlooked such factors as specific heat, mass and surface area in his calculation of cooling regarding Veli-

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