Philipp Lenard: Foreword to ‘German Physics’  
[August 1935]

The foreword stems from today’s conflict,  
The work seeks values infinite.

“German physics?” you will ask. --- I could also have said Aryan physics or  
physics of the Nordic type of peoples, physics of the probes of reality, of truth  
suckers, the physics of those who have founded scientific research. --- “Science is  
national and will always remain so!”, you will want to protest. But this is  
inevitably based upon a fallacy. In reality, as with everything that man creates,  
science is determined by race or by blood. It can seem to be international when  
universally valid scientific results are wrongly traced to a common origin or  
when it is not acknowledged that science supplied by peoples of different countries  
is identical or similar to German science, and that their science could only have  
been produced because and to the extent that other peoples are or were likewise  
of a predominantly Nordic racial mix. Nations of different racial mixes practice  
science differently.

Yet, no people has ever embarked on scientific research without basing them-  
selves on the fertile ground of already existing Aryan achievements. Initially,  
foreigners had always only kept pace with or imitated these. The racial charac-  
teristics of these foreign forms only become recognizable after they have devel-  
oped over a longer period. Based upon the available literature, one could perhaps already talk about Japanese physics. Arabian physics existed in the past.

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1The following appears on the title page under the author’s name: “Written to delight all who seek intellectual satisfaction [geistige Ruhe] in well-founded scientific knowledge.” The translated titles of the four volumes are: Vol. 1: Introduction and Mechanics; Vol. 2: Acoustics and Heat Theory; Vol. 3: Optics and Electricity Theory, Part 1; Vol. 4: Electricity Theory, Part 2. The dedication on a page of its own reads: “Respectfully dedicated by the author to the Reich and Prussian Minister of the Interior Dr. Frick, promoter of large-scale research in the Third Reich”.

An advertisement for Lenard’s book containing excerpts from its foreword is reproduced in Sugimoto [1989], p. 125. The heading of the notice adds: “The Nobel prizewinner of physics shows ways to a race-specific [arteigenen] understanding of natural science in his new book”. See also doc. 45 for a review. Discrepancies with later editions are indicated.

2 As is already clear from this first sentence, Lenard is attacking primarily the already widely held view that science is an international endeavor independent of the personal characteristics, such as race or background, of the individual researcher. For more on this Nazi concept of ‘Aryan science’ versus ‘Jewish science’, see the Introduction, sec. 5.3.

3This word is not emphasized in later editions.

4Lenard provides his own definition of these ‘existing Aryan achievements’ in his work cited in footnotes §§ and 30 below.

5On the rapid developments in Japan after 1900 see, e.g., James R. Bartholomew, The
Nothing has yet emerged about Negro physics. In contrast, a characteristically Jewish physics has developed and become prevalent, which has only rarely been recognized until now, because literature is usually categorized according to the language in which it is written. Jews are everywhere; and whoever still contends that science is international today clearly means unconsciously Jewish science, which is, of course, similar to the Jews everywhere and is everywhere the same.\[6\]

It is important to examine the ‘physics’ of the Jewish people a bit here, because it stands as a conspicuous counterpart to German physics, and because for many, the latter will only be brought into the right light by identifying its opposite. As with everything Jewish, Jewish physics also only recently came under some unbiased public scrutiny.\[7\] It had remained hidden for a long time and developed haltingly. At the end of the war\[8\] when Jews in Germany began to dominate and to set the tone, the full force of its characteristics suddenly burst forth like a flood. It then promptly found avid supporters even among many authors of non-Jewish or of not really pure Jewish blood. To characterize it briefly, let me best refer you simply to the activities of its undoubtedly most prominent representative, to the unquestionably pure-blooded Jew A. Einstein. His ‘relativity theories’ attempted to transform and dominate the whole of physics; but they have now already completely played themselves out against reality.*\[9\] Apparently they never were even intended to be true. The Jew conspicuously lacks any understanding of truth beyond a merely superficial agreement with reality, which is independent of human thought. This is in contrast to the Aryan scientist’s drive, which is as obstinate as it is serious in its quest for truth.\[10\]

The Jew has no noticeable capacity to grasp reality in any form other than as it appears in human activity and in the weaknesses of his host nation [Wirtsvolk].\[11\]

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\[6\] This is a typical prejudicial generalization held by Nazi ideologues and many contemporary ethnologists, falsely assuming that Jews share unique racial characteristics throughout the world and that their culture is completely independent of their local sociocultural environment.

\[7\] The suspicion that Jewish press agencies and newspaper staff were conducting a deliberate propaganda campaign in an attempt to manipulate the masses was frequently raised by right-wing ideologues: See, e.g., Gehricke [1924]a, footnote †† of Glaser’s anti-Semitic tirade (doc. 77), or Stark’s accusations in doc. 56, p. 160.

\[8\] In the third edition, the year 1918 is specified here in a footnote.

* [Footnote 1], p. x of the original: “It goes without saying that a discussion of this misguided theoretical system has no place in this work. It will become evident that this does not leave a gap in our comprehensive and interrelating presentation of general scientific knowledge. The same also applies to other unrealistic or unreliable ‘theories’, which will remain unmentioned. The insignificance of their absence is best supported by their own unauthoritativeness.”

\[9\] On Lenard’s agitation against A. → Einstein’s theories of relativity see, e.g., Lenard [1918/21]; cf. Hentschel [1990], secs. 2.3 and 3.2 and references there.

\[10\] The following paragraph is printed in smaller type in the original.

\[11\] The term Wirtsvolk also evokes the common anti-Semitic image of Jews as ‘parasites’.