

Köhler and Planck: Beyond Sense-Perception

LaRouche writes that “Max Planck’s exchanges with Wolfgang Köhler on the subject of psychology, must be considered together to comprehend the subject-matter which I am emphasizing here.” The LaRouche Basement Team has elaborated this concept in several locations.

The LaRouchePAC special report *Planetary Defense*, also published in [EIR](#), April 13, 2012, described Köhler’s contribution this way:

“The psychologist Wolfgang Köhler diagnosed the pervasive belief in Newtonian absolute space to be a mental illness which arises from an excessive belief in sense perception. The limitations of our sense of vision cause us to tend to separate our visual field into objects and background. Our extended electromagnetic sensorium, however, shows us that what we refer to as background is nothing of the sort.”

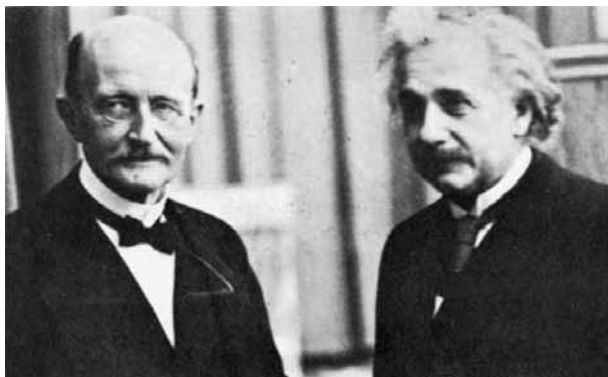
In other words, if gestalts, not *point sources*, form the basis of perception, then the physical universe is organized that way too (see Oyang Teng in [EIR](#), June 10, 2011).

Köhler, in a 1959 speech on “Gestalt Psychology Today” (cited by Sky Shields, [EIR](#), Oct. 17, 2008), referenced his discussions with his former teacher,

the physicist Planck:

“When reading the formulae of the physicist, one may emphasize this or that aspect of their content. The particular aspect of the formulae in which the gestalt psychologists became interested had, for decades, been given little attention. . . . [We had] good reasons for being surprised by what we found; and we naturally felt elated when the new reading of the formulae told us that organization is as obvious in some parts of physics as it is in psychology.

“Incidentally, others were no less interested in this new reading than we were. These other people were eminent physicists. Max Planck once told me that he expected our approach to clarify a difficult issue which had just arisen in quantum physics if not the concept of the quantum itself.”



Max Planck (1858-1947) and Albert Einstein (1879-1955)



Wolfgang Köhler (1887-1967)