

Plenarvorträge (PV)

Plenarvortrag PV X Do 19:00 VMP 8 HS
Max-von-Laue Lecture: Bohr, Oppenheimer, and Sakharov:
Physicists and Politics in the Cold War and the Responsibility of Scientists Today — ●DAVID HOLLOWAY — Stanford University

After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, physicists realized that their science, which before World War II had seemed to be remote from practical use, had laid the basis for the most terrible weapons. They felt a special responsibility for dealing with its military and political consequences.

In this lecture I will look in particular at the efforts of Niels Bohr, Robert Oppenheimer, and Andrei Sakharov to confront the challenge of nuclear weapons and to prevent the catastrophe of nuclear war. I will examine how they understood that challenge, how they tried to meet it, and how their activities brought them into conflict with political authorities. I will explore the differing conceptions the three men had of the relationship between science and politics and, on that basis, discuss the responsibility of scientists today.