

Plenarvortrag PV III Di 20:00 HSZ-01
Gravity: A Political History — ●DAVID KAISER — Program in Science, Technology, and Society, MIT, Cambridge, MA, USA — Department of Physics, MIT, Cambridge, MA, USA — Max-von-Laue-Lecture

A popular image persists of Albert Einstein as a loner, someone who avoided the hustle and bustle of everyday life in favor of quiet contemplation. Yet Einstein was deeply engaged with politics throughout

his life; indeed, he was so active politically that the US FBI kept him under surveillance for decades. His most enduring scientific legacy, the general theory of relativity – physicists’ reigning explanation for gravity and the basis for nearly all our thinking about the cosmos – has likewise been cast as an austere temple standing aloof from the all-too-human dramas of political history. But was it so? This talk explores surprising linkages between the pursuit of general relativity and the political history of the 20th century, tracing the embedding of the research in the wider context of the social responsibility of science.