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Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker and Farm Hall

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Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker (1912-2007)—a student, colleague and friend of Werner Heisenberg—was a leading physicist of the German nuclear project during the Third Reich and was among the ten German internees in Farm Hall. There, he was not only one of the younger generation, but also someone who dominated the discussions, in particular those of a political nature. Just after Hiroshima, he argued that “the peaceful development of the uranium engine was made in Germany under the Hitler regime, whereas the Americans and the English developed the ghastly weapon of war.” The time he spent in Farm Hall also became instrumental for his thinking about the political responsibility of scientists and in particular of physicists during the atomic age. It was no coincidence that he became one of the main initiators of the so called Gottingen declaration of 18 (West) German atomic physicists against the development of nuclear weapons in Germany in 1957, and his profile as a pioneer of freedom- and conflict research, which shaped the last decades of his academic life, was also rooted in the discussions and contemplations of Farm Hall. The talk will discuss the central place of Farm Hall in the life and work of Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker.