



UNIVERSITÄT
LEIPZIG

Fakultät für Physik und Geowissenschaften

Prof. Dr. J. Deiglmayr
Prof. Dr. I. Sodemann

Physics Colloquium

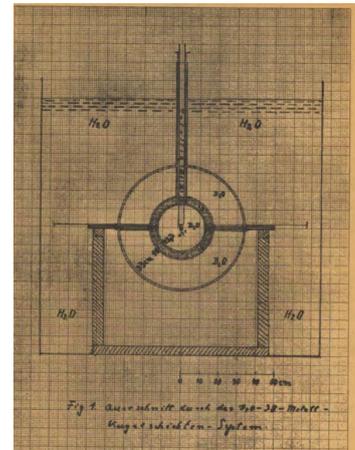
Tuesday, 16 May 2023 at 16:30

Prof. Dr. Manfred Popp

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

Nuclear Physics in Germany under National Socialism – How Heisenberg avoided an effort to build an atomic bomb

Werner Heisenberg had already been a professor at Leipzig University for six years when the National Socialists seized power in Germany. Despite facing attacks from the Nazis for his significant contributions to quantum physics (among them the uncertainty principle), which they considered as “unarisches”, he chose to remain in Germany. In October 1939, he was asked to join the German Uranium Project, which had been established in April to explore the potential consequences of nuclear fission, discovered by Otto Hahn and Fritz Straßmann. In December, Heisenberg presented a theory on the nuclear reactor, which immediately earned him recognition as the intellectual leader of the so-called Uranium Club.



This lecture will shed light on previously unexplored aspects of the Uranium Club. It will focus on Heisenberg's role in it, including his achievements and mistakes, his acts and omissions, scientific interests and duties, his announcements about the possibility of a nuclear bomb with millions of times the destructive power of conventional weapons while at the same time dampening expectations, as well as his efforts to signal to the world that Germany was not building nuclear weapons.

Venue: Universität Leipzig, Faculty of Physics and Earth Sciences
04103 Leipzig, Linnéstraße 5, **Change of room: small lecture hall**

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