



Elemental Germans: Klaus Fuchs, Rudolf Peierls and the Making of British Nuclear Culture 1939-59

Christoph Laucht

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This book considers the role of the two German-born émigré atomic scientists Klaus Fuchs and Rudolf Peierls in the evolution of British nuclear culture from the start of the Second World War until 1959. As outsiders coming to the United Kingdom, the experiences of these two figures offer points of access to key features of British nuclear culture, in particular its scientific foundations and the social, cultural and political consequences of the atomic scientist's work. Fuchs' and Peierls' ethnicity, their socialization and schooling in Germany along with their exposure to German culture before coming to the United Kingdom were instrumental in shaping nuclear culture in their host country. Peierls assumed a chief role in the establishment of the early British and the Allied nuclear weapons projects and took a leading role in the Atomic Scientists' Association, the chief organization of atomic scientists in Britain after the war. Fuchs, by contrast, shattered confidence in the efficiency of the British Security Service at home and abroad when he confessed in early 1950 that he had passed on sensitive nuclear data to the Soviet Union since 1940.

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