

Léon VAN HOVE

Director, Theoretical Studies Division

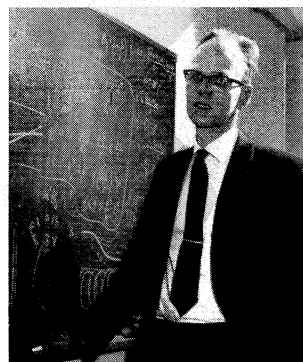
Léon Van Hove was born in Brussels on 10 February 1924, not far from the University—l'Université Libre de Bruxelles—where he matriculated in 1941... but soon found his course interrupted. There was a war on and the University closed down on 24 November of that year.

Like many others, Léon Van Hove attended lectures secretly; one of the students would act as host to a professor and a group of fellow students. He completed his academic education in this way. This did not stop him from obtaining a degree in mathematics in 1945 and a doctorate in the following year with his thesis on the calculus of variations.

Henceforward his interests changed: from pure mathematics he turned to theoretical physics. Why? According to Prof. Van Hove "very probably because it so happened that I was in very close contact with physicists from 1945 onwards".

In 1945, he was appointed Assistant to Prof. J. Géhéniau at the Brussels University. Officially he occupied this post until 1952, but in 1947 he spent a few very useful weeks at the Institute of Theoretical Physics in Copenhagen, and returned there for six months in 1948 to work with Prof. Niels Bohr.

Then in 1949, Léon Van Hove crossed the Atlantic, having been invited to spend a year at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, the famous centre of advanced research in mathematics, mathematical physics and history.



It was there that he finally abandoned pure mathematics for theoretical physics; his last publications on purely mathematical subjects date from that time: from then onwards his publications were devoted to physics (so far they number about fifty).

In 1952, he relinquished his appointment as assistant at Brussels. Georges Placzek whom he had met in the United States asked him to come back to the Institute for Advanced Study. Léon Van Hove therefore returned to New Jersey as a "member of the School of Mathematics", a school specializing among other things in studying the problems of theoretical physics. With Placzek, Van Hove concentrated on studying the theory of the scattering of neutrons in matter.

In 1954, the University of Utrecht offered him the chair of theoretical physics. It was there that Prof. Bakker approached him with a view to succeeding Markus Fierz as Director of the Theoretical Studies Division at CERN. At Utrecht, Prof. Van Hove studied the quantum field theory and the many body problem.

For these studies and for all his scientific work in theoretical physics, in 1958 Prof. Van Hove received the prize awarded annually by the Francqui Foundation to a Belgian scientist. The following year, he was made a member of the Netherlands Academy of Science.

Léon Van Hove arrived at CERN on 5 September as a visiting professor and Director of the Theoretical Studies Division. He will divide his time between Geneva and Utrecht during the present academic year. From the summer of 1961 onwards he will become full-time Director of the theoretical studies of the Organization.

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«CERN COURIER»

was founded in 1959 at the instigation of Prof. C.J. Bakker (†). It is published monthly for the staff of the European Organization for Nuclear Research and distributed free of charge to members of the Organization, scientific correspondents and anyone interested in problems connected with the exploitation of particle accelerators or in the progress of nuclear physics in general.

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The cover photograph shows the large 28 000 MeV synchrotron in the foreground of some CERN facilities (ATP Photo). The inset picture was taken behind the vacuum chamber of the synchro-cyclotron while a technician was checking the radioactivity level after an experiment (ILO photo).

Last month at CERN

The "CERN COURIER" is one year old. When our modest publication was started in August 1959 it was originally intended only for the members of CERN to associate them more closely to the life of the Organization by keeping them better informed. To-day, the "CERN COURIER" goes to all parts of the world to give news of our activities. The number of copies printed in the two official languages, French and English, has increased from 1000 to a total of 2500.

On the occasion of this first anniversary, we should like to thank all those who help to keep the "CERN COURIER" going: typists, translators, photographers, draughtsmen, printers, proofreaders and especially those who, with great patience, tell us about their work, give us their time or their advice, or

whose signature lends distinction to our periodical.

A month never seems to go by without news from the PS "Machine Group" of an increase in the intensity of the accelerated proton current. The latest figure is 3.1×10^{11} protons per pulse, and this speaks for itself. The quarterly shut-down for maintenance work on the machine took place from 14 September to 2 October.

The most important of the recent experiments on the PS is certainly that which confirmed that the impact of 25 GeV protons on the nuclei of light targets produced not only the hydrogen 2 nuclei (deuterons) already observed, but also hydrogen 3 nuclei (tritons) and helium 3 nuclei. The discovery of nuclei of light elements in the products of high