



*Pierre Auger (left) at CERN's 30th anniversary in September 1984 with Edoardo Amaldi. In the early 1950s, the two men, respectively as head of UNESCO's Exact Sciences Department and Secretary General of the fledgling international organization, played vital roles in the establishment of CERN. Seen between them is Denis de Rougemont (1906-1985) who as founder of the European Cultural Centre helped make the CERN idea a reality, while on the right is Jean Mussard, Auger's assistant at UNESCO.*

*(Photo CERN 88.9.84)*

formidable skills were widely sought, for example in national committees in broadcasting and literature as well as science, while on an international level he was a member of a UN group on the application of science and technology for development.

## Pierre Auger 1899-1993

Distinguished French scientist and statesman Pierre Auger died on 24 December, aged 94. Rarely has one man been able to contribute so much to science and to scientific administration on both national and international levels.

In 1925, before completing his doctorate, he discovered the famous multiple cloud chamber electron tracks which showed that X-rays could eject several electrons from a single atom. The main photoelectric electron was accompanied by characteristic 'Auger electrons' from an atomic reorganization. In 1932 he carried out pioneer studies of neutron production from beryllium bombarded by alpha particles. Subsequently turning to cosmic rays, his physics research career was crowned in 1938 by the discovery of the large cosmic ray showers resulting from primary interactions high in the atmosphere each producing hundreds of millions of secondaries extending over hundreds of metres on the ground.

After founding the documentation service of the Centre nationale de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), at the outbreak of the Second World War he went to Montreal to work with the

Anglo-French atomic energy team, subsequently moving to the French Scientific Mission in London.

After the war, he was Director of Higher Education in France (where he helped establish new national technical institutes) and a founder member, with Frédéric Joliot-Curie, of the Atomic Energy Commission. In 1948 he became head of UNESCO's Exact Sciences Department. In a 1950 UNESCO Conference in Florence, Isidor Rabi proposed that UNESCO should 'assist and encourage... regional centres and laboratories... to increase... international collaboration of scientists'.

Auger made this 'Rabi resolution' a reality. He worked tirelessly, travelling around Europe for high-level meetings. His good contacts made these meetings especially fruitful, while his far-sightedness ensured that CERN's government had the correct international flavour. At a UNESCO meeting in 1952 the provisional 'Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire' (a title subsequently discarded but which gave the acronym CERN) was set up.

In the late 1950s, at the same time as being CNRS Research Director, he became involved in space research, first on the national level, then as Director General of the European Space Research Organization (ESRO) from 1962-67. Auger's