Meyrin-Geneva, July 1961 - Prof. Victor F. Weisskopf, who joined CERN in September last year as member of the Directorate responsible for research, becomes fourth Director-General of the Organization on 1 August 1961.

He is succeeding Dr. J.B. Adams who returns to the United Kingdom as director of the Controlled Thermonuclear Research Establishment, at Culham.

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Victor Frederick Weisskopf was born in Vienna on 19 September 1908.

He studied under Max Born and James Franck at the University of Göttingen, where he obtained his doctorate in physics in 1931. His thesis was devoted to the "fundamental theory of the interactions of light with atoms".

In 1931 Victor Weisskopf began his travels round the Universities, which helped to make him "a citizen of the world", a scientist freed from the restriction of frontiers and such conventional concepts.

Weisskopf was therefore in Leipzig in 1931, acting as an assistant to Heisenberg, and a year later he was in Berlin as assistant to Schrödinger. He spent his summers at the Institute for Theoretical Physics directed by Niels Bohr in Copenhagen.

During the early 1930's the difficult situation developed in Central Europe, resulted in the exile of many thousands of Europeans. Victor Weisskopf was also drawn into the migratory movement. During the latter part of 1932 he accompanied his colleague Placzek to the Institute of Physics and Technology at Kharkov in the USSR. There they both took part in theoretical research under the direction of L. Landau.
Weisskopf returned to the West in 1933. Until 1935 he was assistant to Wolfgang Pauli at the Federal Polytechnic Institute (ETH) at Zurich. He then rejoined Niels Bohr in Copenhagen to take up an appointment as research associate, working on the theory of radiation and nuclear structure.

Then, as many other European physicists, Victor Weisskopf joined in the move across the Atlantic: at the end of 1937 he accepted an appointment as professor at the University of Rochester. He remained there until 1943, when he went once more West, to Los Alamos, New Mexico. Working there on applications of nuclear energy, he was to become "the oracle" for his colleagues.

In October 1945, Victor Weisskopf was offered an appointment to teach physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in New England.

V. Weisskopf taught at M.I.T. until 1960 and at the same time supervised research on nuclear and elementary particles structure. During the past 15 years he has been a frequent visitor to Europe. In 1950 and 1951 he was guest professor at Sorbonne University and at the Zurich Polytechnic Institute where, 20 years before, he had done research with Pauli.

Prof. Weisskopf first came to Meyrin on 9 August 1957 as a guest professor. He stayed for a year with the Theoretical Studies Division and took part in research work on the 600 MeV synchro-cyclotron which CERN was then putting into operation.

He was therefore no stranger to CERN matters when his name was proposed as a member of the directorate in charge of research. Victor Weisskopf who always encouraged international co-operation, accepted his appointment. M.I.T. granted him a leave of absence and on 12 September he returned to Meyrin.

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Victor Weisskopf's main interest is theoretical physics and he has published a number of articles on this subject and on philosophical matters. However, his major work is a 900 page book: "Theoretical Nuclear Physics", written in co-operation with John M. Blatt in 1952 and translated into Russian.
Prof. Weisskopf is a corresponding member of the French Academy of Science, a member of the National Academy of Science in the U.S. and until the end of 1960, he was President of the American Society of Physics. In recognition of his work he was awarded the Planck medal by the German Society of Physics in 1960.

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P.S. Photographs available on request at the Public Information Office.