

Amos de-Shalit

Professor Amos de-Shalit died on 2 September from acute pancreatitis. He had played an important role in the thinking and detailed planning which went into the foundation of the European Physical Society.

Amos de-Shalit was born in 1926. He was educated at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and ETH Zurich and did research in the USA at Princeton, Stanford and MIT. He was one of the founders and leaders of the brilliant school of physics in Israel. In 1956, he was Visiting Professor at the Hebrew University, becoming Head of the Department of Physics from 1961 to 1963. He then moved to the Weizmann Institute of Science as Scientific Director and was Director General of the Institute from 1966 to 1968. In his last few years he turned to the problems of science teaching and a few months before he died took up the post of Head of a new Department of Science Teaching at the Weizmann Institute.

Professor de-Shalit was a theoretical physicist whose research was mainly

concerned with nuclear structure theory, covering such topics as the application of group theoretical methods and diffraction theories. His most important contributions were on the nuclear shell model.

Amos de-Shalit was a man with a deep sense of responsibility, not only with respect to his immediate environment but equally in the widest cultural sense. His involvement with problems of education and with the future of physics research was intense. Since its very beginning, becoming a member of the Steering Committee when it was created in Pisa in 1966, he contributed greatly to the planning that eventually led to the foundation of the European Physical Society.

At the various meetings of the Committee which he attended he gave wise advice on widely different problems. He was well known for his clarity of thought and brilliance of exposition.

Already at the Pisa meeting he stressed that collaboration in physics research, including matters of em-

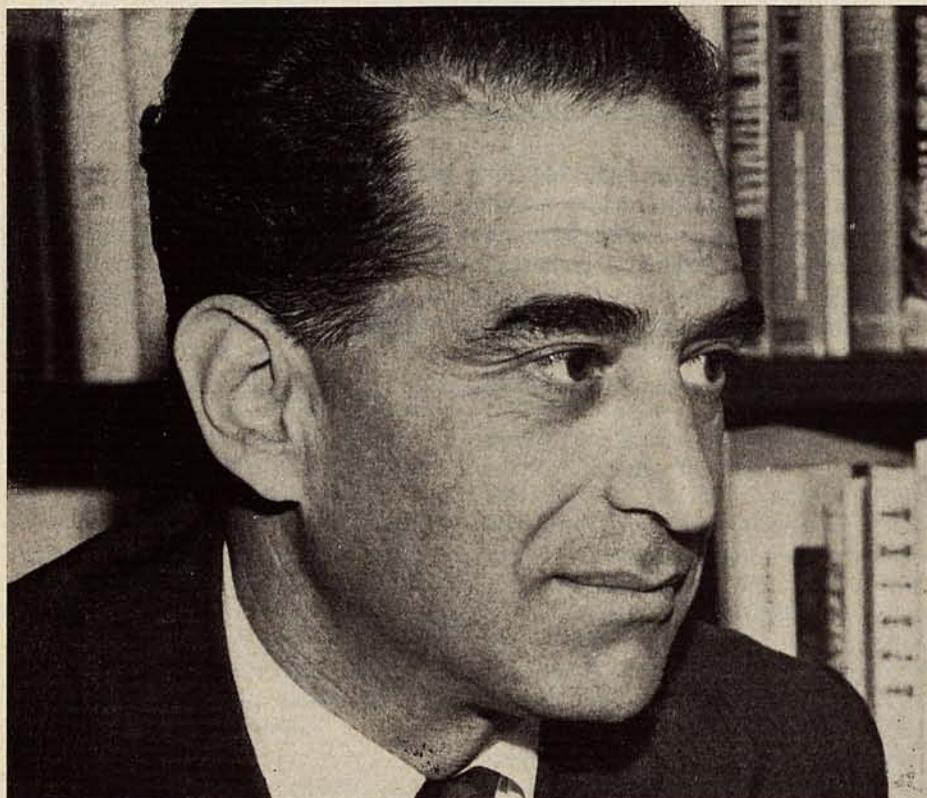
ployment and exchange of personnel and use of equipment, should be organized on a European scale. He also felt that such tasks could eventually be entrusted to a European Science Foundation, to be financed by governments and by industries.

During the Inaugural Conference in Florence de-Shalit was questioned concerning the European Physical Society in a survey carried out by the Czechoslovak Journal of Physics. Here are some of his replies :

"I see the main purpose of the EPS as that of causing European physicists to know each other better, and thereby to increase their mutual cross fertilization. This can be achieved by running proper conferences, schools, joint laboratories, policy panels, education programmes on various levels, etc., and by stimulating exchange of scientists, both temporary and long term or even permanent."

"Although in the present world it seems to be harder and harder for small nations to retain their identity, it still remains true that various groups of people, usually with a common heritage and objects of identification, retain some common features. It will best serve the future of all of us if such groups make use of their common features for the progress of great human values".

It was his feeling for "great human values" that gave warmth to de-Shalit's whole personality. His exceptional abilities and enthusiasm carried others with him. In losing him the European Physical Society has suddenly become much poorer.



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