

THE DISCOVERY OF FORCING

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1. Introduction. I would like to begin by thanking the organizers of this conference for inviting me, and especially my friend Adolf Mader, whom I first met on a semester visit to Hawaii nine years ago. My knowledge of abelian groups is very limited, but since it has developed that forcing has played a role in the subject, there is most likely some interest in what I shall relate. I do remember quite well my first contact with abelian groups. This was through the monograph of Irving Kaplansky on infinite abelian groups which appeared while I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago, in the mid fifties. I recall reading the book rather cursorily, and even being surprised by the role that ordinal numbers played in Ulm's theorem. Kaplansky was an enormously lively and forceful influence in Chicago at that time, and he certainly represented algebra very ably to us students. In my first year or so, I studied many subjects avidly including algebra, mostly ring theory and algebraic number theory. I have now learned that Reinhold Baer was one of the pioneers of the abelian group theory, and I can relate that I recall seeing him when he would come up from Urbana seminars. Algebra was in the air at Chicago, perhaps more so than analysis, and before eventually deciding to return to my earlier interest in analysis by choosing Antoni Zygmund as my advisor, I was much taken by the beauty of algebra. The University of Chicago of that period has often been described as having its Golden Age, which fortunately for me coincided with my stay there, and an absolutely essential component of the excitement of my student days was generated by the enthusiasm of Kaplansky and of his many seminars and the resulting notes and monographs that arose from them. I should also mention, just to make a point of contact with Peter Hilton's beautiful talk on the birth of homological algebra, that there was also a good deal of ferment around the courses of Saunders MacLane, in topology, the $K(\pi, n)$ spaces, and the visit of Henri Cartan when he lectured on the calculation of the homological structure of these spaces. So I hope I have established some small credentials for

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