

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES  
ON ABELIAN GROUP THEORY:  
THE FIRST FORTY YEARS**

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Dedicated to Jim Reid

A total of 23 international conferences on abelian group theory and related topics have been held periodically for the past 40 years in eight different countries. These conferences were held sporadically during the 1960's and 70's but, beginning in 1980 they have occurred at least every two years. While there could well be some difference of opinion about which conferences should actually be included in such a list, those conferences listed below included participants from several countries, had a number of talks related to abelian group theory and were attended by some of the major contributors to the subject. Notable omissions from this list include conferences held in the USSR and eastern Europe. Although there was a lot of research activity in abelian group theory in these countries, as outlined in historical articles by Fomin, Fuchs, Salce and Simson in this issue, opportunities for participation in joint conferences with western mathematicians were limited for many years.

There seems to be a general consensus that the first international conference devoted largely to abelian group theory was held in Oberwolfach, Germany, in 1961. This conference was attended primarily by European mathematicians. It is interesting to observe that at this conference, there were only two talks a day and a total of two talks in English. By way of contrast, recent conferences have had as many as eight to ten talks per day with all presentations in English.

The 1962 New Mexico State University Conference, occasioned by the visit of Laszlo Fuchs to the United States, marked the beginning of active participation of U.S. mathematicians in abelian group theory conferences. Subsequent conferences had a truly international flavor. For example, the 1963 Tihany, Hungary, conference had participants

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