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## **【72】 The 1955 Bern Conference on General Relativity and Gravitation: an Institutional Innovation**

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The year 1955 marked the celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the formulation of special relativity by Albert Einstein. André Mercier, then head of the Theoretical Physics Department of the University of Bern, the city where the theory was formulated, decided to organize a large international conference to celebrate Einstein's achievements. He obtained the prestigious support of Wolfgang Pauli who accepted to chair the conference. Held in July 1955, the conference turned out as the first ever international meeting entirely devoted to subjects related to general relativity. It initiated a tradition of international conferences devoted to this field. The 1955 meeting in Bern was also instrumental in the recognition of a distinct community of scholars, the relativists, in the time of the « Renaissance » of Einstein's theory of gravitation. Indeed, after thirty years of stagnation, the fifties marked the return of general relativity and gravitation to the mainstream of physics. My presentation intends then to present the role played by the 1955 Bern Conference as an institutional innovation in the process of the « Renaissance » of general relativity.

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