

History of the International Association of Paediatric Dentistry Part 7: The International Forum of Dentistry for Children

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A meeting in London

After consulting with international colleagues, British Paedodontic Society (BPS) Secretary Donald Norman arranged a meeting on 23 February 1968 at the London headquarters of the British Dental Association. Arvid Syrrist (Fig. 1) said that he thought there would be ten to fifteen participants at this international forum. He had copied Norman's letter to Manuel (Manny) Album, a paedodontic practitioner from Pennsylvania and President of the American Society of Dentistry for Children (ASDC). Syrrist cautioned: "I think that we do need to discuss *economy* if we decide to establish an



Fig. 1. Professor Arvid Syrrist, Founding President of International Forum and of the IADC.

organization." Norman told Syrrist that the BPS would be represented by President-elect Phil Holloway and himself. They assumed Syrrist would chair the meeting. Although no longer an officer of the BPS its committee suggested that Dennis Berman (Fig. 2) should assist in making the proposed meeting a success: his role in arranging the first International Symposium in London in April 1967 made him a valuable link with many of the people attending that meeting. Syrrist was delighted to learn that Berman would be available to help. So was Album, "since we all think so highly of him". Although Album originally said that Paul Starkey, Theodore Levitas and Irvin Eichenbaum (members of the ASDC committee on international affairs), and Wesley Young and Tom Barber (of the Executive Council) would attend, eventually only two came, "to keep the meeting small and the accomplishments large".

Norman told Neil Swallow of Cardiff about the meeting. The latter reminded Norman that although there was not yet a formal Welsh section of the BPS, weekly study meetings were held at the Cardiff Dental Hospital. Norman also invited Tony Hargreaves of Edinburgh to attend the international meeting because it was felt that Scotland should have a representative. The Societa Italiana di Odontoiatria Infantile indicated that it would be represented by Professor Sergio Fiorentini (President), Ricchi Ermanno (Vice-President and Director of the Rome School Dental Service), Giuliano Falcolini (Secretary), Domenico Palermo (Treasurer), P. Luigi Masi (President of the Second Symposium on Children's Dentistry) and Mario Massignani (member of the Symposium committee). As the Italian delegation would be relatively large,



Fig. 2. Professor David S. Berman (right), founding secretary of the International Forum and of the IADC, talks to Dr Paul Starkey of the ASDC.

BPS President James (Jimmie) Byrom felt that the BPS could strengthen its representation. In particular, Byrom wanted Slack to attend. However, in February Norman wrote to Professor Donald Foster in Birmingham that the BPS had cut its representation to a minimum as the USA was now sending only two representatives: "even their President was not attending." In the end, Foster also went.

Representatives attending the meeting on 23 February 1968 came from France (Professor André Boucher, Michel Schouker), Italy (Giuliano Falcolini, Professor Sergio Fiorentini, Professor P. Luigi Masi, Mario Maignani, Domenico Palermo), Sweden (Professor Arvid Syrrist), Denmark (Professor Erik Kisling), Norway (Professor Erik Weland), Finland (J. Haataja), USA (Manny M. Album, Ted Levitas) and the UK (Professor Geoffrey L. Slack, Dennis Berman, Jimmie Byrom, Don Norman, Professor T. Don Foster, J. A. (Tony) Hargreaves and Phillip J. Holloway). In addition, Gerald Leatherman, Secretary-General of the FDI, attended by invitation. Syrrist was elected Chairman for the meeting, with Berman as Secretary. It was agreed that although everyone could take part in the discussions, each country would present its formal views through one delegate and would have only

one vote. The meeting would be conducted in English, but delegates could report in their own language followed by translation into English.

Boucher suggested that each national society should be free to organize its own meetings without calling them international meetings; that a European paedodontic society be formed initially with *national units*; that meetings of the European society should take place every 4 or 5 years to coincide with an FDI meeting; that the President of the European society would be from the host country. Fiorentini said they should approve the draft constitution previously circulated, that delegates should take it back for discussion and that it should be placed before the delegates for final approval in Sienna (where the Second International Symposium was to be held in June 1969). Album proposed that an Anglo-Continental paedodontic society should be formed which would lead later to a world society; that a simple constitution should be prepared; that a publication for scientific and other information relating to child dental health should be introduced; and that a central agency for gathering information about national meetings on child dental health should be formed. Holloway said that international cooperation would best be served by a central office for a free exchange of ideas rather than for reaching

more formal decisions. A formal plan could be developed for discussion in 1969. As a confirmed internationalist, Syrrist spoke for the Scandinavians in expressing pleasure at the London venue and for consent for the formation of an international organization. Leatherman offered his help if required.

The international forum

It was proposed by Holloway, seconded by Slack, and agreed unanimously, that an international organization for children's dentistry should be established. Holloway's proposal for a steering committee until the Sienna meeting was agreed unanimously. Syrrist (Chairman), Fiorentini (member) and Berman (Secretary) were appointed with power to coopt further members. They were asked to note the delegates' views that the committee form short- and long-term plans (Slack); that the European region should first set the pattern and that other regions might follow suit (Levitas); that, from experience with the FDI, it was advisable to develop a strong core initially and the regions later (Leatherman); that international meetings should be held every 4 years with a programme planned by an international committee (Album); that the committee should ascertain the existence of other national paedodontic societies. It was agreed that each participating country would pay the international organization up to 50 dollars to cover secretarial expenses until the 1969 meeting. Finally, they agreed that the next meeting of their *International*

Forum of Dentistry for Children should take place at the Sienna meeting in June 1969. Berman copied the minutes of the London meeting to countries not represented, to bring them up-to-date and to give them a chance to participate in future. His covering letter pointed out that, after receiving any responses, he and the committee would formulate their proposals, a copy of which he would circulate before the Sienna meeting.

Meanwhile, there were further developments in Europe. A second French study day took place on 6 July 1968, organized by the Société Française de Pedodontie under the presidency of André Boucher. It was held in Strasbourg, a city well remembered for the establishment by Professor Jessen of an early 20th century children's dental clinic. Felix Mockel, Chief of the Paedodontic Clinic at the Catholic University of Louvain, wrote to Syrrist in October indicating that a *society of paedodontists* was to be founded within the Royal Belgian Society of Dental Medicine. On 21 April 1969 the London-based South-East Group of the now-national BPS set aside money to send Holloway as BPS representative to Sienna, in case the national society had insufficient funds for this purpose. He was authorized to guarantee a BPS subscription of 130 dollars (75 pounds sterling) per year to the international society, for a period not exceeding 3 years.

The scene was set for the establishment of Sam Harris' long-awaited dream, an international organization of children's dentists.