

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PSYCHIATRY AND LAW  
FOURTH SEMIANNUAL MEETING

On 30 April 1972 the fourth semiannual meeting of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law was held at the Baker Hotel, Dallas, Texas, in conjunction with the 125th annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. The Executive Committee of the Academy convened in a dinner session on Sunday 30 April from six to seven p.m.; this was followed by a business meeting of the general membership lasting from seven to eight, with the scientific program beginning at 8 p.m. This program included a presentation (with slides) by Dr. Monica Blumenthal on attitudes toward violence among U.S. males. Professor David Wexler of the University of Arizona Law School led the formal discussion of the Blumenthal paper. Following this, Dr. Wexler also presented an original study, which contained rich statistical data on violence. Dr. Blumenthal's paper was based on information gathered from individuals arrested in California during riots and similar civil commotion. In the course of commentary on the Blumenthal paper by members of the audience, Dr. Walter Briehl of Los Angeles declared that the work was most important and highly significant. On the other hand, Dr. Leonard R. Friedman from Boston felt that certain data and statistics in the paper were erroneous and that the sample was inappropriate. Similar questions regarding sampling technique were raised by Drs. Jacques Quen and Ames Robey, who also inquired as to when the arrested individuals responded to the questionnaire: Was it immediately following arrest? Or, before commission of a violent act?

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Throughout the U.S. participation in programs of continuing education has become an increasingly significant requirement for continued medical licensure and/or membership in state medical societies. Accredited continuing education may be offered under auspices of professional societies, such as the APA, and the Academy addressed itself to the problem of securing official sanction for its courses in psychiatry and the law. It was in this light that Dr. John Torrens presented a report which recommended that (1) The Academy not sponsor regularly accredited courses in psychiatry and the law; (2) Such accredited courses should more appropriately be offered under recognized university auspices rather than by a professional subspecialty body such as our own. Discussion from within the group indicated that the Academy's "teach-ins" were particularly designed to serve: (1) our own members, (2) other psychiatrists interested in problems of psychiatry and the law. It was generally felt that instruction for our membership could best be offered during the fall annual meeting. While a "teach-in" would not necessarily be appropriate at that time, a panel discussion or a series of half-day presentations dealing with a specific subject might prove helpful. On the other hand, nonmembers interested in general aspects of law and psychiatry could best be instructed at a "teach-in" held during the Academy's semiannual meetings held concurrently with the APA annual meeting in the spring. We should make every effort to get accredited courses on the APA program for a half-day session or schedule panel discussion on topics of interest to general psychiatrists.

It was suggested that Dr. Jonas R. Rappeport and Dr. Robert Sadoff confer with Dr. Melvin Sabshin, APA Program Chairman, to work out plans for incorporation of course work in law and psychiatry into the accredited portions of the APA program. Furthermore, they should consult with Dr. Sabshin about rescheduling the law and psychiatry papers to allow them to be held at a time closer to our Sunday meeting, rather than having them on Friday, as has been done up to now.

The Treasurer's Report, presented by Dr. Ames Robey, showed a balance of \$3,000; it also revealed that 43 members had not yet paid this year's dues. Dr. Walter Shervington, Chairman of the Membership Committee, indicated there were now 235 members. It was also decided that a membership directory should be prepared under supervision of Drs. Herbert E. Thomas and Jonas R. Rappeport. Costs involved were estimated to be about \$1,000, but all felt this would be important to have our membership listed in a directory as an aid to attorneys and other psychiatrists in referrals.

The new AAPL Constitution and Bylaws were approved by the membership in a mail vote. Publicity designed for prospective members and new applicants was also distributed among the regular members, so that they might be aware of what kind of information new members were receiving.

It was decided that, as often as possible, the recipient of the Guttmacher Award or of the Isaac Ray Award would be invited to be the Academy's principal speakers during the Sunday night scientific session.

It was voted to assemble all membership files and other records in a central office in Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, Pittsburgh (the office of Dr. Herbert E. Thomas), together with records of the Bulletin, rather than transferring them from the office of one successive membership chairman to the next.

Meetings scheduled which would be of interest included the International Meeting of Forensic Sciences in Edinburgh, Scotland on September 21 and 22, 1972. Many indicated interest but would be unable to attend. Dr. Robert Sadoff will represent the Academy at this meeting. With respect to the 1973 APA Hawaii meeting, it was determined that about half of the membership would be able to attend, and our meeting would be held at the usual time during the APA meetings, on the Sunday prior to the APA meetings. A program would be worked out to present a panel for these meetings, as well as our scientific session.

Discussion now centered on the proposed new Journal of Law and Psychiatry, edited by Dr. Gerald Epstein. Two leaders in the Academy, Drs. Jonas R. Robitscher and Robert Sadoff, were invited to membership on its editorial board, and the question of "conflict of interest" with development of the Academy's own Bulletin arose. After due deliberation, it was determined that there was no conflict and that the Academy should be on record in support of the new Journal of Law and Psychiatry. It was the apparent wish of the membership that the AAPL Bulletin be (1) a newsletter disseminating information on activities of Academy members, (2) a printed record of meetings, and (3) a vehicle for scientific presentations. Dr. Herbert A. Raskin agreed to prepare a book review section with

the aid of Dr. Jacques Quen. Dr. John Suarez will be in charge of advertising, essential to aid in financing the Bulletin. Dr. Robitscher will continue as Associate Editor, and Dr. Sadoff will author a column entitled "Happenings," and possibly present a presidential message. Dr. Sadoff suggested that members might consider making donations to support the Bulletin, since the Academy now has the status of nonprofit organization for tax deduction purposes. It was also suggested that the Bulletin be printed rather than offset, and that its size be smaller. Dr. Thomas also suggested distributing 200 free sample copies to a carefully selected group of agencies and libraries to stimulate subscriptions.

During deliberations of the Executive Committee, two significant issues arose. The first centered on the feasibility of admitting professors and other law teachers to Academy membership. This was tabled for further discussion at the October meeting in Ann Arbor.

The second issue based on a motion introduced by Dr. Jonas R. Rappeport, concerned the Academy's position on the right to treatment for mentally ill offenders in correctional institutions. It was voted to appoint a task force of a similar ad hoc committee to study the problem, prepare appropriate statements for distribution among the membership, and that there should be discussion and a vote taken to determine the Academy's official position by the full membership during the Ann Arbor meeting.