For years, the various mental health professions in the United States have been fighting turf wars. The post-World War II development of a militarized national security state provided many opportunities for psychology to garner attention for its contributions to the art of propaganda and the development of usable high-tech weapons through human factors engineering, among numerous other endeavors.

One particularly disturbing area where psychologists have attempted to demonstrate their value has been in the development of sophisticated techniques of interrogation that could obtain information from unwilling captives through the application of behavior modification techniques based on psychological science. Historian Alfred W. McCoy has shed light in this area in his recent book *A Question of Torture* and in numerous articles and interviews. He documents the decades-long CIA effort to utilize psychological expertise to develop forms of torture techniques. The establishment of a detention center at Guantánamo for those detained during the Afghanistan war and other battles in the "Global War on Terrorism" provided a particularly favorable environment. A total institution was created whose inmates, the detainees, have, at least in the administration's opinion, absolutely no rights and where all aspects of their daily life can be monitored and controlled. The administration's legal doctrine emphasized that essentially anything short of direct murder was legally acceptable.

The Global War on Terror, launched after 9-11, provided yet another opportunity to experiment with these behavioral science-based torture techniques. The establishment of a detention center at Guantánamo for those detained during the Afghanistan war and other battles in the "Global War on Terrorism" provided a particularly favorable environment. A total institution was created whose inmates, the detainees, have, at least in the administration's opinion, absolutely no rights and where all aspects of their daily life can be monitored and controlled. The administration’s legal doctrine emphasized that essentially anything short of direct murder was legally acceptable.

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It has been so exciting to witness the evolution of Section 9 from a small committee to a much larger section within Division 39. The list-serve discussions have provided a vehicle for the membership to mourn together after the tragedy of 9/11, to commiserate and build advocacy strategies on a variety of social issues and to learn together and teach one another thanks to the work of the Section’s education committee (with Lynne Layton as chair).

Section 9 members remain at the forefront of discussions on the involvement of psychologists in interrogation at Guantanamo Bay. Most recently, Section 9 co-sponsored with Division 48 (Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence) a panel entitled Psycho-Political Dynamics and Consequences of Torture at August APA co-moderated by Neil Altman (Treasurer and a former President of the Section) & Linda Wolfe (President of Division 48). The panel included papers by Neil Altman, Nina Thomas (past Section representative to the Division’s board), and Wells Dixon, a lawyer from the Center for Constitutional Rights. Also, Steven Reisner, a member of Section 9, was invited to speak at the Council of Representatives meeting at August APA about the particular role of psychologists in these interrogations. He argued against psychologists’ having any involvement in these settings. Neil, Nina, Steve and other Section members, including Stephen Soldz (who created and disseminated a petition protesting this involvement) have been at the forefront during these challenging times. They have argued for a re-thinking of the ethics code to prevent the kinds of involvements that might lead to the abuses described. We are grateful to Neil Altman, who as chair of the Divisions for Social Justice and APA Council representative introduced a resolution asking APA to call for a moratorium on psychologist participation in interrogations at U.S. detention centers holding foreign detainees. This measure is currently working its way through the governance structure, with Dr Altman having extensive communication with the ethics committee. He has also been working on a change to the ethics code specifying that psychologists, when ordered by a lawful authority, may only break the ethics code in keeping with “basic human rights.” The ethics committee has not yet approved this change, requested by the Council of Representatives.

In response to the growing concerns among Section 9 members that APA has not sufficiently addressed this issue, some members have decided to withhold their APA membership dues to voice their protest, while others continue to work within the organization for change.

This past fall, section 9 co-sponsored with PsyBc the second annual Ideology and the Clinic conference, organized by Lynne Layton and the Section’s Education Committee, which was entitled Thinking Critically in the Midst of the Maelstrom: Can Psychoanalysis Help us Stay Sane in an Insane World, for which section members were able to get free CE credits. The conference featured groundbreaking papers by Neil Altman and Nancy Hollander. They explained how the psychosocial split is no longer tenable as we cope with the destabilizing impact of dread and insecurity fostered by an increasingly violent, polarized and nihilistic world. Besides Drs. Altman, Hollander and Layton, panelists for this conference included Philip Cushman, Ruth Fallonbaum, Stephen Hartman, Jennifer McCaroll, Andrew Samuels, Stephen Soldz and Annie Stopford.

In addition, section members have been involved in a variety of activities. Karen Rosica, secretary of the section, and Jane Whitmore will be attending a workshop in Uganda as part of a psychosocial development initiative in that part of the world. They promise to keep us posted so that more of us can get involved. Also, Frank Summers’ article entitled Psychoanalysis, the American Psychological Association and the Involvement of Psychologists at Guantanamo is to appear as a field note in an upcoming issue of Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society, edited by Lynne Layton. Rico Ainslie has been working on his feature length documentary film entitled Ya Basta, about the current climate of insecurity in Mexico. Through interviews he explores the origins as well as possible solutions to the insecurity, waves of lawlessness, kidnappings and the general power vacuum that has accompanied democratization in Mexico. We look forward to screening this important opus.

Our reception at last year’s Division 39 spring meeting featured the moving artwork of Wolf Werdigier. His paintings, based on interviews conducted with Israelis and Palestinians, were tributes to the emotional struggles shared by both groups. In keeping with our desire to highlight creative endeavors, this year’s Section 9 reception in Toronto will feature the presentation of an achievement award to Donna Bassin and feature a clip from her new documentary The Mourning After. We honor the important work she continues to do, educating the public about the traumatic effects of war on our Vets.

Finally, we will also be co-sponsoring a symposium in Toronto, with the Committee on Multicultural Concerns, titled Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Prejudice and Conflict: A Model for Applied Psychoanalysis for the 21st Century. Nancy Hollander and Steve Portugues, based on their participation in an internationally organized psychoanalytic study group dealing with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, will be discussants. Laurie Wagner and Marilyn Jacobs have organized this symposium.

In addition, we have also organized another early morning open forum (on Friday morning April 20) to discuss psychologists’ involvement in interrogation at military detention centers, and to work on strategies for section intervention. This meeting will be co-moderated by Nancy Hollander and myself.

As you can see there is a lot happening in section 9. We look forward to continuing to work together on the many crucial issues of the day. On behalf of the Section 9 Board, I wish you all a happy and healthy new year, filled with peace for everyone.
The Ideology and the Clinic study group on PsyBC held its first conference from Sept. 29-October 25, 2005; a second was held from Oct 4 to November 1, 2006. Our goal in the first conference was to look at the ways that ideologies that support unjust social systems shape individual psyches, and how ideologies are enacted consciously and unconsciously in macro- and microscopic interactions between patient and therapist. Panelists Neil Altman, Philip Cushman, Stephen Hartman, Nancy Hollander, Jennifer McCarroll, Andrew Samuels and Annie Stopford discussed two papers by Lynne Layton, “From Culture to Couch: Investigating a Social Unconscious,” and “Attacks on Linking: the Unconscious Pull to Dissociate Individuals from their Social Context.” Annie Stopford began the conference with an interview of Lynne Layton, in which Layton explained the concept of “normative unconscious processes” that she develops in the two papers. Layton assumes that cultural norms rooted in power differentials—gender and sexual norms, racial norms, class norms—are internalized relationally and erect barriers to what can be thought, felt, and articulated in speech. She further argues that because in certain ways they share the same dominant middle-class culture, therapists and their clients often adhere, consciously and unconsciously, to some of the same cultural norms. These norms not only condition thought, feeling, and behavior, but they create dynamic unconscious conflicts as well—because they require people to dissociate parts of themselves that are required for healthy human functioning. For example, traditional norms of white middle class femininity and masculinity required girls to split off agentic strivings and boys to split off relational ones. Such cultural demands, Layton argues, can generate particular kinds of clinical enactments, ones in which therapist and patient unconsciously collude in upholding the very norms that might in fact contribute to ongoing psychic pain.

The discussion ranged widely over a number of topics, only a few of which can I mention in this short review. Andrew Samuels presented a number of thoughts about what therapists can do when political material comes up in the session. Using an example of a patient who felt that Germany’s position on allowing Turkey to enter the EU reflected Germany’s racism and Islamophobia, Samuels asks the client about the history of his thinking on this matter, who influenced the thinking, how it connects with the patient’s class and education background. He asks how central the view is to the client and how intensely the client holds the viewpoint. He asks if the patient has fantasies or dreams about this material, and, finally, he wonders whether the patient imagines his view is congruent with that of the therapist or not.

Perhaps what was most powerful about the conference was the courage of the participants as they made questions about what is ideological personal, discussing the way their own everyday conflicts register in their bodies, in values clashes, in feelings of unease about privilege. For instance, one thread focused on participants’ personal experiences of class privilege or lack thereof. Annie Stopford spoke about what came up for her when a patient was talking about their class differences and remarked on her costume jewelry, a sign Annie wasn’t “a snob.” Annie’s response, an example of what she calls “thinking socialist and acting capitalist,” was to want to wear her better jewelry in the next session. She analyzed this as an ego reaction that, to her mind, transcends class, gender, or race wounds.

Jennifer McCarroll talked about the psychoanalytic establishment’s seeming indifference to the financial sacrifices training requires, and to the limits the expense sets on who can train. She described a dilemma that arose for her when she thought about raising the fee of a patient who was transitioning from a clinic to her private practice. The patient had made the choice to leave a lucrative profession and become a full-time writer; Jennifer wanted to respect that choice but was faced with her own financial burdens. A supervisor thought it would be good for the patient to have his fee raised; Jennifer opted not to raise it and to support the patient’s career choice. Adrienne Harris commented on one of her supervision groups in which fees have begun to be discussed in the broader context of money’s role throughout the analytic “exchange.” Lynne Layton felt therapists too often deny their dependence on patients—the fee being but one arena in which this dependence is made concrete.

Stephen Hartman noted that Layton’s case examples show that normative unconscious processes often register in affect and in body reactions. Layton speaks of the heebie jeebies, for example, an emotional and body reaction to the noise, people, décor, and quality of goods in lower class stores. When one of Layton’s patient talked about feeling betrayed by current US politics, the patient became alarmed that this wasn’t proper therapy talk; simultaneously, she noticed she’d put her feet on the couch and wondered if that was proper. Hartman concludes that a bodily urge “registers social norms in the body as a choice that must be made about how to desire.” The group discussed the way that we all stand in the spaces between being embedded in normative processes and observing them, and several participants felt that the best way to challenge normative splits between classes and races is to step out of our comfort zones and really encounter otherness.

Several threads presented more philosophical musings about ideology. Philip Cushman spoke of the ways that he tries to challenge Cartesian dualisms in the work he does with patients and students. A conversation arose about whether or not everything is ideological: is there any escape from ideology? Eyal Rozmarin took up the distinction between critical vs ideological discourse, and others debated whether such distinctions hold. Critical thinking, like ideology, takes place within a
Various “behavioral scientists” from psychology and psychiatry were brought in to help the development of this total institution devoted to complete destruction of the personality. In 2005 it was revealed by the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) and the New York Times that mental health professionals were serving as consultants on Behavioral Science Consultation Teams, BSCF (colloquially referred to as “biscuit” teams) at Guantánamo, designed to advise interrogators. These teams consult in every aspect of interrogation. As the New Yorker’s Jane Mayer told Democracy Now!, one psychiatrist determined that a particular inmate would be allowed seven toilet paper squares a day, while another inmate who was afraid of the dark was deliberately kept almost totally in the dark. Another consultant behavioral scientist, psychologist James Mitchell, recommended that interrogators treat a detainee in such a way as to generate a form of helplessness known as “learned helplessness.”

Authors M. Gregg Bloche and Jonathan H. Marks noted in their 2005 NEJM article that interrogations at Guantánamo are often designed to increase stress by means verging on, or even constituting torture:

“Military interrogators at Guantánamo Bay have used aggressive counter-resistance measures in systematic fashion to pressure detainees to cooperate. These measures have reportedly included sleep deprivation, prolonged isolation, painful body positions, feigned suffocation, and beatings. Other stress-inducing tactics have allegedly included sexual provocation and displays of contempt for Islamic symbols.”

They go on to note that:

“Since late 2002, psychiatrists and psychologists have been part of a strategy that employs extreme stress, combined with behavior-shaping rewards, to extract actionable intelligence from resistant captives.”

Recently, the United Nations Committee against Torture went further and stated that “detaining persons indefinitely without charge, constitutes per se a violation of the Convention” Against Torture. Thus, according to this official body, the existence of Guantánamo in its present form is itself illegal. They went on to join the many organizations and institutions, including most recently, the European Parliament, to call for Guantánamo’s closing.

[More information on the interrogation techniques used by American forces at Guantánamo and elsewhere, as well as on their effects on the psychological well-being of those subjected to them, can be found in the Physicians for Human Rights report: Break Them Down: Systematic Use of Psychological Torture by US Forces.]

Even leaving aside the general issue of whether interrogations of the kind conducted at Guantánamo are ever morally acceptable, the participation of mental health professionals in them is potentially in conflict with the ethics codes governing the psychiatric and psychological professions, those of the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association. The Abu Ghraib scandal with its graphic photographic evidence shone a bright spotlight on the abuses that occurred in American detention facilities in this global war, and after the horrors occurring at Guantánamo and the role of mental health professionals in them were widely reported on, silence by the American Psychological Association became more difficult to maintain. Pressure mounted for both the Psychological and Psychiatric Associations to do something about psychologists and psychiatrists aiding the torturous interrogations occurring at Guantánamo.

After an extended period of discussion and debate, on May 22, 2006, the American Psychiatric Association endorsed a policy statement that unambiguously stated that under no circumstances should psychiatrists take part in interrogations, at Guantánamo or elsewhere.

The American Psychological Association, in contrast, has adamantly refused to endorse any such statement, saying only that psychologists should behave ethically. Initially, the organization did what organizations often do when embroiled in unwanted controversy: they appointed a Task Force. The Task Force was given a broad mandate to look into what position the Association should take regarding psychologist involvement in national security interrogations in general. This mandate may have had the effect of diluting the Task Force’s focus on the abuse at Guantánamo and psychologists’ involvement in them.

This Presidential Task Force on Psychological Ethics and National Security (PENS) included members of the Peace Psychology division of the Association, but it included a majority (six out of nine voting members) of psychologists engaged in national security and military activities, several with connections to Guantánamo and to interrogations. Perhaps this composition explains why the membership of the Task Force was kept confidential, though one member claimed it was “because of concerns expressed about their personal safety.” Since this secrecy has been reported in the press, and notwithstanding explicit statements by Association officials that this membership was indeed secret, the Association recently has taken to denying that the PENS membership was ever secret, citing the apparent fact that it was listed on a certain website, if one had the idea to go there.

Among its membership the Task Force included Colonel Louie (Morgan) Banks, identified by Jane Mayer in the July 7, 2005 New Yorker as a psychologist involved in the Pentagon’s Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) program which trains military personnel considered likely to be captured in resisting extreme abuse by their captors. Strangely, for one serving on a policy-recommending body, Col. Banks was not even a member of the Association. Frank Summers, an activist in attempts to change Association policy, succinctly stated the problem with Banks being on the Task Force when he wrote in an email “Isn’t putting him on the TF equivalent to Cheney being in charge of energy policy?”

Like the membership and its process of appointment, information about the deliberations of the Task Force was also kept confidential; under considerable pressure from Association staff, members agreed to let the Task Force’s report stand on its own and not to discuss its deliberations. The report does indicate that agreement was not reached on several issues. Other accounts indicate that a weak initial draft was strengthened by pressure from unhappy Association members.

In June, 2005 this Task Force issued its final report. In a highly unusual procedure, the Association’s Board of Directors immediately formally adopted the report without the usual discussion and approval by the broader-based Council of Representatives. This report explicitly stated that it is ethical for psychologists to engage in national security interrogations:

“It is consistent with the APA Ethics Code for psychologists to serve in consultative roles to interrogation and information-gathering processes for national security-related purposes.”

While the report reiterated that psychologists should not be involved in any way in “torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment,” the Task Force stated that it was not charged to conduct any type of investigation, and thus
Thanks to the effort and organizing skills of a group of Los Angeles psychoanalysts, this city now has a wonderful new program that offers pro-bono psychotherapy services to soldiers (veterans and active duty) and their families. The Soldiers Projects grew out of the concern of Dr. Judy Broder as she became aware of the psychological difficulties many veterans suffer as a result of their war-related traumatogenic experiences and their families’ many conflicts and anxieties as they navigate the multiple challenges represented by a family member’s deployment, time away in combat and return/integration into civilian life. Many soldiers are fearful of accessing mental health services while on active duty, and thus clinicians in private practice can alleviate this problem by offering alternative treatment options. Dr. Broder proposed to the Trauma Center at the Los Angeles Institute and Society for Psychoanalytic Studies that it become the umbrella for a project that could attend to the needs of this community directly affected by their service to our country.

A steering committee was formed, composed of psychoanalysts from the various institutes in Los Angeles, and due to the hard work and perseverance of Dr. Broder and this work group, we now have about 45 mental health professionals available throughout Los Angeles and 20 in nearby Orange County to offer pro-bono services to veterans and/or their families. We are in the process of helping San Diego colleagues begin a similar program for their geographic area.

To help inform our volunteers about this particular population’s war-related experiences and needs, the Soldiers Project has organized training meetings with a variety of specialists in combat experience, the military’s structure and ideology and war-related PTSD. We have also organized programs featuring veterans’ personal testimonies about their military and combat experiences and their psychological responses to them. We had one program recently in which Drs. Kenneth Reich and Jaine Darwin spent an afternoon with us sharing information about their modifications to the Association’s Ethics Code after their report was issued, as they were to turn to clarifying some details in an Ethics Casebook entry, one of the non-military members, Mike Wessells resigned, stating: “Continuing work with the Task Force tacitly legitimates the wider silence and inaction of the APA on the crucial issues at hand. At the highest levels, the APA has not made a strong, concerted, comprehensive, public and internal response of the kind warranted by the severe human rights violations at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay.”

Wessells explained that he was not complaining directly about the Task Force, which: “had a very limited mandate and was not structured in a manner that would provide the kind of comprehensive response or representative process needed.”

Needed, rather, was: “a strong, proactive, comprehensive response” to go to support the camp that Amnesty International calls “the gulag of our time.” It made clear that the Association leadership never intended to put a stop to psychologists’ involvement in Guantánamo. To the contrary, President Levant was quoted as saying: “I accepted this offer to visit Guantánamo because I saw the invitation as an important opportunity to continue to provide our expertise and guidance for how psychologists can play an impressive Boston-area based program SOFAR (Strategic Outreach to Families of All Reservists – www.sofarusa.org). We have held seminars for the general public as well. For those mental health professionals who are working with this population, we provide ongoing peer-supervision groups.

We have developed ongoing contacts with many veterans’ organizations, with whom we periodically develop programs for the public and with whom we share resources. The veterans in anti-war organizations have been very helpful to us by providing many contacts that facilitate our work. There have been newspaper articles about our organization, as well as radio interviews with Dr. Broder. About a month ago Stars and Stripes, the official military newspaper, published an article about our work. The publicity has helped to spread the word about our services to veterans and to their friends and families who either may need our services or know others who do.

If you would like more information about this socially relevant and personally gratifying project, you can request a brochure at info@thesoldiersproject.org or phone 818 761-7438. Perhaps it will inspire you to develop a similar project in your area.
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appropriate and ethical role in national security investigations. Our goals are to ensure that psychologists add value and safeguards to such investigations and that they are done in an ethical and effective manner that protects the safety of all involved."

Eighteen months after the Abu Ghraib scandal brought the horrors occurring in American detention facilities to the world's attention, after even the mainstream press had numerous articles about how Gen. Miller of Guantánamo brought his special breed of brutality to Iraq with recommendations to "Gitmoize" Abu Ghraib, the Association Press Release contained no acknowledgement that anything out of the ordinary was going on at Guantánamo. As President Levant gushed:

"This trip gave me an opportunity to ask questions and observe a brief snapshot of the Guantánamo facility first hand," Levant stated. "As APAs work in studying the issues presented by our country's national security needs continue, this trip was another opportunity for the Association to inform and advise the process."

The Association's campaign to defend Guantánamo and psychologists' participation there continued under the next Association President, Gerald Koocher. One month after assuming office, President Koocher devoted his monthly Presidential column in the Association's APA Monitor to defending the organization and its refusal to do anything in response to the horrors well-documented as occurring at Guantánamo. In Orwellian fashion, he entitled his defense of inaction in the face of barbarity: "Speaking against torture." In this column he attacked Association critics while trying to change the subject:

"A number of opportunistic commentators masquerading as scholars have continued to report on alleged abuses by mental health professionals. However, when solicited in person to provide APA with names and circumstances in support of such claims, no data have been forthcoming from these same critics and no APA members have been linked to unprofessional behaviors. The traditional journalistic dictum of reporting who, what, where and when seems notably absent."

Thus, the ethical policy issue of participation of psychologists in the abusive activities at Guantánamo was changed to one of personal culpability; could it be proven that a given named psychologist engaged in a particular proscribed behavior. Through this ruse the Association tried to negate all press, United Nations, and NGO criticism. In the absence of an explicit ethics complaint against an individual, the Association would do nothing. As the Association officials knew well, the names of most psychologists offering their "services" at Guantánamo, as well as details on what those services are is a closely guarded secret.

In this same article President Koocher then used a common technique of embattled leaders as he implicitly attempted to rally the psychologist community against the hated other, the psychiatrists:

"Many of our psychiatric colleagues have offered interpretive criticism, although their professional association has yet to agree on an official position. One proposed draft before the psychiatric association includes an itemization of specific prohibited tactics they deem as torture. When carefully scrutinized, their draft bears a remarkable resemblance to our position, although no journalist has yet commented on this point. Likewise, no journalist -- including those critical of the PENS report -- has commented upon an interesting irony: Despite psychiatrists' opposition to prescription privileges for psychologists, the psychiatric association's list of forbidden coercive techniques omits any mention of the use of drugs, implicitly allowing such practices."

In a spring 2006 debate with a critic, Koocher utilized yet another defense that seems destined for greater use now that pressure is growing on the Association to act. He made a distinction between those psychologists providing health services to detainees, who, he claimed, were forbidden from using information thus gained to aid interrogators, and those behavioral scientist consultants who are not there to tend to detainees and are therefore free to aid interrogation. However, even Koocher had to admit that all psychologists are bound by the principle of "do no harm." He, of course, failed to explain how participation in the workings of an institution designed to destroy the personalities of those incarcerated there could ever meet the "do no harm" principle.

The campaign of the Association to deflect criticism of psychologists' involvement at Guantánamo has been unrelenting. Concerned members pressed for an independent investigation to clarify what psychologists actually did at Guantánamo, but the Association refused. Members, including the Association's Council of Representatives, pushed for a change to the ethics code stating that psychologists do not follow laws or orders when to do so would violate basic human rights, but were met with the argument that such a statement could be used against psychologist practitioners in lawsuits. The Association leadership announced that they would develop an ethics casebook entry clarifying acceptable and unacceptable behavior in psychologist-assisted interrogations, but have so far not followed through.

There matters stood when the June 7, 2006, New York Times brought word that the Association's position was carefully noted by the Pentagon, and that, from now on, the military would prefer psychologists over psychiatrists:

"Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, told reporters that the new policy favoring the use of psychologists over psychiatrists was a recognition of differing positions taken by their respective professional groups.

The military had been using psychiatrists and psychologists alike on behavioral science consultation teams, called 'biscuit' teams because of the acronym, to advise interrogators on how best to obtain information from prisoners.

But Dr. Steven S. Sharfstein, recent past president of the American Psychiatric Association, noted in an interview that the group adopted a policy in May unequivocally stating that its members should not be part of the teams.

The American Psychological Association has endorsed a different policy. It said last July that its members serving as consultants to interrogations involving national security should be "mindful of factors unique to these roles and contexts that require special ethical consideration."

For many activist psychologists in the Association who had patiently played the organization's game of Task Force, Board discussion, input here, input there, while no substantive change in Association policy occurred, this news was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. Members who had been urging caution and a one-step-at-a-time approach for months suddenly found themselves urging with continued on page 7
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holding dues. Within days, an email campaign to the Association’s President Koocher was launched and 300 emails were sent in 48 hours. Koocher responded with derision and condemnation, while explicitly endorsing psychologists’ duty to aid the National Security State. One version of the letter he sent:

“You are dead wrong.

The APA has not been silent.

The APA Board of Directors understands and appreciates that its members have strong opinions about psychologists’ involvement in interrogations, and that their opinions are not uniform. Please recognize that interrogation does not equate to torture and that many civilian and military contexts exist in which psychologists ethically participate in information gathering in the public interest without harming anyone or violating our ethical code. Please also examine press reports with healthy skepticism and seek facts, rather than reflexively engaging in letter-writing campaigns predicated on inadequate access to the data.

The Board has adopted as APA policy a Task Force Report, which unequivocally prohibits psychologists from engaging in, participating, or countenancing torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. As the basis for its position, the Task Force looked first to Principle A in the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, “Do No Harm,” and then to Principle B, which addresses psychologists’ responsibilities to society. Both ethical responsibilities are central to the profession of psychology. By virtue of Principle A, psychologists do no harm. By virtue of Principle B, psychologists use their expertise in, and understanding of, human behavior to aid in the prevention of harm. In both domestic and national security-related contexts, these ethical principles converge as psychologists are mandated to take affirmative steps to prevent harm to individuals being questioned and, at the same time, to assist in eliciting reliable information that may prevent harm to others. It is critical to note that in addressing these issues through a Task Force report, the American Psychological Association was responding to psychologists in national security settings who had approached APA seeking guidance in the most ethical course of action. The Board views as its responsibility supporting our colleagues and members who are striving to balance the prevention of harm with the collection of reliable information.

To join Section 9, and to renew your membership for 2007, please fill out this form and send it with a check for $40 ($20 for students and candidates) made out to “Section 9, Division 39, APA” and send it to:

Dr. Neil Altman, Treasurer, Section 9
127 West 79th Street #3, New York, N.Y. 10024

Your Name:______________________________________

Address:________________________________________________________________________

Phone Number______________________Fax Number: _______________Email address: ____________________________

Areas of interest:________________________________________________________________________

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particular set of values. How do we distinguish between oppressive ideologies and progressive ones? Is the practice of psychoanalysis a critical practice? Walter Davis argued that relational theory is an ideological discourse that legitimates contemporary capitalism, which spurred a lively debate about how the same theory can be tweaked in different ways such that it either supports or challenges mainstream thinking. Phil Cushman, citing Steve Botticelli, wondered if those of us who are politically left haven’t perhaps allowed ourselves to think that the dyadic therapy work we do is not only necessary but sufficient political work; both Steve and Phil were concerned that we have substituted therapy for political activism and that we have done so out of despair about broader political change. Nancy Hollander spoke of how important it has been for her to be a political activist; while some felt that the multiplicity of causes and lack of a movement that yolked those causes together make activism difficult, Nancy takes heart from the numerous movements that have arisen to fight the destruction that globalization has wrought on the environment, on third world economies, and on the working class and poor.

Adrienne Harris spoke about the fact that the professional classes are now the main creators, consumers, and conveyers of ideology. Several people spoke of the impossibility of our profession today as we negotiate the need to make a living within a world of increasing social inequality. Coming home after hours spent sitting in polluting traffic, Nancy Hollander offered the powerful observation that there is no escape from oppressive systems, and several participants agreed that it is most important to acknowledge the complex ways in which we are both damaged by such systems and complicit with them. I close here with Neil Altman’s sense that the gift that a good psychoanalysis offers is the demystification of the analyst’s power and the opportunity to speak truth to power. We look forward to our next conference to elaborate these and other ideas about the interface between ideology and the clinic.
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to do the right thing. The Board encourages its members who have different points of view on this or any issue to make their positions known, and welcomes the opportunity for further discussion of this issue at the August Council meeting.”

Ignoring the “you are dead wrong,” an introduction that was even more tasteless when used just a few days after the suicide of three hopeless inmates in the Guantánamo hell-hole, the note made clear to wavering members that the Association leadership intends to continue business as usual, that no action on the moral challenge of our time will come unless the members force it.

At this moment leadership in opposition was taken by the Social Responsibility section (Section 9) of the Division of Psychoanalysis (truth in packaging warning: I’m a member of this Section). Within hours of Section members receiving the Koocher email, members who had been willing to work within the Association structure decided that as one member put it in an email on the Section’s listserv, “It’s time for us to accept ... [the] view that the APA leadership is fully participatory in the problem of using obfuscation and propaganda to justify current military aims and methods.”

Quickly Section members decided to launch a petition drive demanding a change in Association policy. A Petition was quickly written and launched on June 15th [at http://www.thepetition-site.com/takeaction/483607021] and attempts began to spread the word to members throughout the diverse Association. [Another truth in packaging warning: I am one of the authors of the petition and am listed as its sponsor.]

In the weeks subsequent a range of organizations, including the Divisions of Social Justice uniting a number of Association divisions and others outside the Association, including Physicians for Human Rights and the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund initiated discussions on a coordinated strategy to change Association policy. Initial agreement was obtained on supporting attempts to have the Association, at its August 2006 convention, reiterate its statements that members should not participate in torture or abusive interrogations. As a result, the Association adopted a “Resolution Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.” This Resolution made no explicit mention of psychologist participation in interrogations and no change in Association policy toward interrogations followed from its adoption.

At this convention a small number of Association Council members introduced a new Resolution calling for a moratorium on psychological participation in coercive interrogations of “enemy aliens.” Various groups in the Association, recently including the Divisions of Social Justice, are currently pushing for adoption of this moratorium at either the February or August 2007 Council meetings.

I suspect that changing Association policy will require modification of the tactics thus far used by critics. To date, most objections from within the Association have been framed fairly narrowly in terms of the details of the ethics code and what it says, or should say, about psychologists participation in coercive interrogations. This approach gets one into the realm of legal reasoning and detailed interpretation of texts. As hundreds of years of legal argument demonstrated, such reasoning can lead to many different conclusions, depending on where the reasoner is trying to go. And Association officials have demonstrated their ability, even their genius, to bend moral reasoning to support their position that psychologists have a right, perhaps even a duty, to serve at Guantánamo and similar facilities. [See, for example, the decidedly different, but arguments presented by President Koocher in a Democracy Now! interview on June 16, , and by Association Director of Ethics Stephen Behnke, posted at around the same time: http://www.apa.org/releases/PENSSfinal_061606.pdf] While critics need to rebut these detailed arguments, the battle will not be won at that level. Just as major social changes are seldom decisively won in court without accompanying social changes occurring outside the courtroom, so Association critics must combine work within Association structures with a grass-roots mobilization of the membership and of the wider public.

The participation of psychologists at Guantánamo is not simply a professional issue. It is a major moral challenge for the very concept of using knowledge for good and not for evil. If this participation continues, psychology will have lost its soul, just as our entire country is in danger of losing its soul as we turn away from these evils being committed in our name.

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