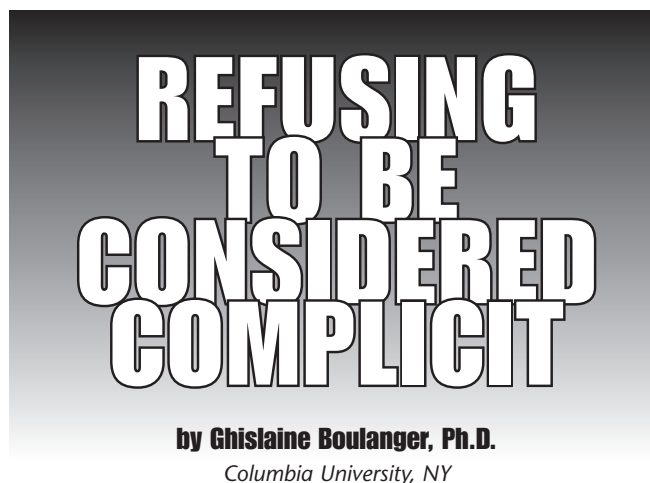


Christopher Bollas (1995) argues that a state, like a family, must be founded on the presumption that its citizens are governed by leaders who have their best interests at heart. He points out that to know that our leaders are ill-intentioned undermines our most profound assumptions about human safety. I want to extend Bollas' analogy to voluntary organizations where choosing to belong is surely predicated on the belief that the leaders represent the members' best interests. Bollas continues, "The politics of evil trades off this need" (p. 214), for much of the time we are complicit in overlooking our leaders' moral failures. This is the complicity of silence, the complicity of not speaking out when we can no longer believe in the good intentions of our leaders.

Over the last few years, many members of the American Psychological Association, and particularly members of Section IX, have had to acknowledge the fact that the elected and appointed leaders of the APA do not have the long term interests of American psychology at heart. It has become clear that our own vision of psychology as a profession and the one embraced by our professional association are starkly different. Many of us have reacted in anger, others have felt a profound sense of loss -- or both -- at the moral failure of this institution that is purported to represent not only our professional interests but also our professional identity.

By November 2006, the mounting evidence of the APA's bad faith had become overwhelming. For example, in June the APA's director of ethics had claimed to the NY Times that "psychologists helping military interrogators made a valuable contribution because it was part of the effort to combat terrorism" (Lewis, 2006). That a spokesman for our profession would publicly declare -- in the face of considerable research to the contrary -- that inducing terror, helplessness, and despair in anyone is a way of winning the war against terror left some of us incredulous. The corrupt process of the PENS Task Force was becoming increasingly apparent. The role psychologists continued to play in designing and implementing interrogations was being reported with increasing frequency in the media. A 2006 Resolution against Torture and

Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment that nonetheless allowed psychologists to violate ethical principles "if requested by a governing authority" was further proof of the APA's deference to the military and the administration. The fact that other professional associations were going on record as officially opposing their members' involvement in Guantanamo Bay and other sites where detainees were being held in violation of international human rights law was particularly galling, and even more so when the APA enthusiastically endorsed the presence of psychologists in these illegal sites, where they were said to protect the detainees. We were appalled by reading then President Koocher's disrespectful treatment of our colleagues' protests and found



his published columns on the question of psychological ethics to be at best naive and at worst disingenuous (see Gerald Koocher's President's columns in the February 2006 and July/August 2006 Psychological Monitor). The list goes on and on.

A combination of all these factors led some of us to decide individually not to pay our 2007 dues. After reading several postings on the Section IX listserv, I asked Diane Ehrensaft and Ruth Fallbaum to join me in creating a listserv for other psychologists who were prepared to take this step. (Martha Davis, a clinical psychologist but not a member of Division 39, made the fourth member of our Steering Committee.)

Making the decision not to pay dues was obvious, but for me personally going public about it was more difficult. I wondered if I was being impulsive. Psychoanalysts are supposed to keep talking and reflecting, not to take definitive action. Except that as psychologists we are

bound by our ethics to report abuse or potential harm to others. It may not be an accident that many of the psychologists who made the decision to withhold their dues in 2006 were already familiar with outsider status. Many, at least 15 of the first 27 members, were immigrants, and a disproportionate number were living alternative sexual lifestyles.

A website www.withholdapadues.com was developed to inform people about the reasons for and consequences of withholding dues and to serve as a portal to the withholdapadues listserv. The listserv gave us a forum in which to discuss further courses of action among ourselves.

At that time, many of us wrote to the APA individually giving a variety of reasons for our decision. Our letters elicited different responses; some got calls from the director of ethics, others got letters from various officials. I got three identical letters claiming that the APA shared my concerns but had different ways of trying to accomplish "our" goals.

The three letters stated that the APA would not "disengage as the American Psychiatric Association has done because disengagement sends an expressive message of disapproval and a refusal to be considered complicit." That was indeed the point of withholding dues, we did not wish to be considered complicit. In conclusion the writer said, "The cost of disengagement is that one loses any ability to influence policy -- one no longer has a place at the table and hence no longer a voice in the debate."

In their belief that they can exert a positive influence on much more powerful institutions, on the military, the CIA, and the Department of Defense, by working from within, and thus protect both the interests of their members and the prisoners held at Guantanamo, the APA has fallen into the classic collaborator's trap. When Marshal Pétain set up his puppet government in Vichy in 1940, he too claimed that he was protecting the interests of the French, even when it came to complying with the Nazi orders to hunt down Jews, intellectuals and other foreigners. In a recent analysis of attitudes at that time, Mumtaz Iqbal (2004) found that initially most of the French viewed those who stayed to share the pain of occupation as steadfast and courageous.

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Those who left were seen as disloyal, even cowardly. This perception took time to change. By implicitly questioning the loyalty and the efficacy of the American Psychiatric Association's decision not to collaborate with the government in Guantanamo, the leaders of the APA apparently saw themselves as the steadfast and courageous Vichy government.

Initially our decision to withhold dues made a lot of colleagues uncomfortable. Some argued that psychoanalysts are already so marginalized within the APA that this course of action further marginalized us. In fact, the withholding dues initiative reaches far beyond psychoanalysts--social psychologists, ethologists, clinical psychologists of many different stripes (not just psychodynamic ones), and academics, are all members. In a move oddly reminiscent of the APA's decision to work from the inside, some pointed out that by taking this step we would lose our influence over the APA. When I receive three identical letters, I know full well that individually I have no influence over the APA. But collective action has proved to be a different story.

This summer some members of Section IX together with members of the withholdAPAdues list formed Psychologists for an Ethical APA to plan and carry out a protest at the APA Convention in San Francisco. The protest website was striking, our rally was endorsed by over 20 organizations from Physicians for Human Rights to the ACLU, and individuals like Stephen Miles and Robert Lifton. Within 2 weeks of the website appearing, and less than a month before the Convention, the APA hastily produced a new Resolution against Torture, and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Punishment that was intended to substitute for Neil Altman's proposed moratorium on the use of psychologists in interrogations. This was a somewhat better resolution than the previous year's in that it banned over 19 specific torture techniques; it was accepted unanimously by the APA's Council of Representatives. Nonetheless, it left room for improvement. As the dissent continued, however, many of the loopholes left open in the final wording of the 2007 Resolution were closed in a letter from the Director of Ethics, Stephen Behnke, to Laurie Wagner, who had been active in crafting each of these resolutions. We believe that the continuing

pressure from the withholdAPAdues group and from other individuals working within the APA led to Behnke's clarifications, and we are waiting to see these clarifications become a part of the formal resolution.

Following the passage of the Resolution at the COR meeting in August, an amendment that would have limited the role of psychologists in settings in which detainees are deprived of adequate protection of their human rights to the provision of psychological treatment was soundly defeated. During the poisonous debate that preceded the vote on the amendment, Colonel Larry James, a psychologist who had command responsibility for the Behavioral Science Consultation Teams in Guantanamo, attempted emotional blackmail by arguing that if psychologists were not part of the interrogation process "people would die." A long line of psychologists argued, in a self-interested and illogical fashion, that if the amendment were passed it would soon come to include a ban on psychologists working in prisons and limit the scope of practice in general. The cheer (admittedly not a very loud cheer) that went up when that amendment was voted down was chilling. With the defeat of this amendment the APA ensured their continued collaboration with the military and the CIA in operating and maintaining detention centers in which the conditions of detention have been called tantamount to torture by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Since that morning and since the APA's repeated attempts to spin the outcome as a moral victory, the number of members of the withholdAPAdues list has increased by more than 130% over pre-convention levels. On November 7, the Steering Committee of withholdAPAdues sent the attached letter to the APA on behalf of 260 psychologists who had pledged to withhold their 2008 dues. Our numbers continued to increase through November. By the end of the year it is probable that over 300 psychologists will have formally joined us. I should also note that Frank Summers and Brad Olson are now members of our Steering Committee.

Curiously, the APA makes it possible for those of us who have pledged to withhold our dues to have it both ways; we can withhold our dues for up to two years without penalty. If we choose, we can resume paying dues without even paying back dues. During these two years, we can attend meetings as members and we can vote. We are neither collaborators nor defectors, or we are both. But we can make it clear to the

organization what the actual costs in terms of lost members will be if their policy does not change. In their wisdom (or is it in a desperate bid to keep their numbers high?), the APA have created a transitional space for us in which to work out the terms of our relationship with them. We are neither within the organization nor entirely outside it, we are trying on our nonmember status. We may not have a seat at the table, but we do have checkbooks and credit cards, the Internet, two websites and an active listserv and voting privileges (which many of us exercised this year for the first time) with which to signal our displeasure and organize our protest. And, one more point about the actual consequences of withholding dues, you do not have to be a member of the APA in order to have malpractice insurance.

In the short run, withholding dues relieves some of the helplessness we feel as we see an organization to which we were once proud to belong come under attack in the press and from human rights organizations. In the long run, many of us are prepared to forfeit our membership, which will happen after two years of not paying dues. In the meantime, there are many initiatives taking place through the cooperation of our members on the listserv: a referendum once again calling for the end of psychologist involvement in sites where foreign detainees are held without due process is being prepared. Students are reaching out to one another and scheduling teach-ins with local psychologists who are in the know; psychology departments (such as Earlham College) are sending resolutions to the APA condemning their ethics. A personal (not email) letter writing campaign to psychologists from members of the withholddues listserv is about to start in an attempt to educate rank and file psychologists, many of whom know nothing about this because the official APA publications mention nothing about the protests and continue to declare their opposition to torture. The withhold dues website answers frequently asked questions about ethics, about insurance, and about membership bylaws, in addition to providing links to many relevant documents. The ethicalapa.com website provides up-to-date information and media reports to the public and to psychologists who have not committed to withhold dues.

If, and as is looking increasingly likely, when we do leave the APA, remaining a member of Division 39 is a source of concern for all of us in

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Section 9. Division 39 has made provisions for members currently withholding dues to remain "friends" of the Division retaining all rights to membership in the division by sending a donation in the amount of their dues direct to the Division administrator. Nancy McWilliams has

appointed a task force to investigate ways in which those of us who will eventually forfeit our membership in the APA may remain officially connected to the Division.

Ghandi wrote that noncooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperation with the good. Whether you call it cooperation, collaboration, collusion or having a seat at the table, those of us who are withholding our dues have agreed not to cooperate with an organization that is in turn collaborating with a government that has run amok.

We will not be considered complicit.

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Iqbal, M. (2004), Collaboration and Resistance in Wartime Europe, 1939-1945, *Holiday* (11/11/2004)

Lewis, N.A. (2006), Psychologists Preferred For Detainees. *New York Times*, June 6, 2006.

Letter sent to the APA on behalf of 260 members of the WithholdAPAdues listserve:

Dr. Norman B. Anderson
American Psychological Association
750 First Street,
Washington, DC 20002-4242

November 6, 2007

Dear Dr. Anderson

We, the undersigned current members of the American Psychological Association, wish to inform you that we shall withhold our 2008 membership dues. For some of us, 2008 marks the second year that we are withholding our dues; for many others, this is a new and wrenching step. Every week more psychologists join us.

We are taking this step because the APA continues to give institutional support to the U.S. military and other government agencies that operate detainee sites in which international standards of human rights are violated. At its 2007 convention in San Francisco, the APA again condemned the use of torture and called on psychologists to refuse to participate in torture, while at the same time vigorously supporting the involvement of psychologists in detainee interrogations and intelligence gathering in facilities where, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, torture takes place.

We are greatly encouraged by Dr. Behnke's recent letter to Dr. Wagner removing some of the loopholes in the 2007 Resolution against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Punishment, and we look forward to seeing these thoughts implemented into firm policy actions. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the amendment banning the use of psychologists in detainee interrogations was not passed in August. We reject the APA's argument that the presence of psychologists in interrogations "ensures" ethical treatment. This policy compromises the moral standing of our profession, while it gives legal cover to military interrogators and professional support to practices that violate international law.

We call for an immediate halt to psychologists working in a non-therapeutic capacity in any facility in which human rights and the Geneva Conventions are violated.

Yours sincerely

Cc: Sharon Brehm, Ph.D. Alan Kazdin, Ph.D.