



Psychologists for Social Responsibility

Advancing Peace and Justice for More Than 25 Years

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PsySR to Analyze Ethics of Psychologists' Involvement in Intelligence Interrogations With Grants from Open Society Institute and Arca Foundation

Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR) today announced grant awards from the Open Society Institute and the Arca Foundation to develop a *Psychology and Military/Political Intelligence Casebook for Interrogation Ethics*. The *Casebook* will address a broad range of ethical issues surrounding psychologists' involvement in interrogations, for example:

- situational, financial, and career pressures on psychologists
- interrogations in combat zones where coordination with local counterterrorist police is necessary
- discrediting of dissident personnel through clinical assessment of psychopathology

Pertinent historical cases, such as the CIA behavioral modification *Project MKULTRA* will also be explored, because procedures tend to persist in organizations.

PsySR psychologists, retired intelligence professionals, and human rights scholars will meet in June 2008 to identify concrete scenarios in which psychologists might contribute, directly or indirectly, to interrogations of terrorist suspects. Advisors and casebook commentators – including military ethicists and historians; additional military interrogators and other intelligence professionals; and social, cultural, international, organizational, clinical, and trauma psychologists – will analyze the moral implications of these scenarios through the lenses of psychological ethics and military ethics.

The *Casebook* evolved in response to public outcry over credible reports of psychologists' involvement in abuse of detainees in United States custody. The American Psychological Association (APA), the nation's largest professional organization of psychologists, has been rocked by controversy over its June 2005 policy of permitting psychologists to advise on interrogations in detention centers that do not adhere to international human rights standards. The psychologist organizers of the *Casebook* include leading critics of APA policy on this issue.

The *Casebook* represents a pathbreaking collaboration between peace psychologists and intelligence professionals in an articulation of cases and joint moral analysis. Ray Bennett, an army interrogator recently retired after over 20 years' experience, explained:

“What has largely been missing from the discussion of interrogation are the voices of seasoned professionals trained in interrogation. ... We want to tell you specifically what institutional changes are needed to prevent torture. Good intentions, and even good laws, are not enough. They have to be translated realistically into good operations. But we need you to include interrogators to participate in the discussion. I know you'll be surprised by how many of us are on your side.”

The *Casebook* organizers welcome input from psychologists, human rights scholars, and military and intelligence professionals.

The *Casebook* is a project of Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR). The Open Society Institute is the major funder for the project, with travel funds provided by the Arca Foundation. The project director is social psychologist and oral historian Jean Maria Arrigo, PhD, a dissident member of the 2005 APA task force on Psychological Ethics and National Security (PENS). The *Casebook* co-organizers are retired counterintelligence operative David Debatto, now a correspondent for Salon.com, and Stephen Soldz, PhD, Co-Chair of the PsySR End Torture Action Committee and professor at the Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis. PsySR President-Elect Jancis Long, PhD, will participate as liaison to PsySR, and Joe Gorin, PhD, a member of the PsySR's End Torture Action Committee, played a leading role in funding the project.

PsySR is an independent national organization of psychologists, students, and others who are committed to using psychological knowledge, insights, and skills to build cultures of peace with social justice. Founded 26 years ago amidst the nuclear peace movement, PsySR develops and promotes resources for creative, non-violent approaches to some of the most pressing social issues of our time. Its national office is in Washington, D.C. For more information, see <http://www.psysr.org>.