

Work For Peace... Stop Paying For War

Conscience Canada



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Resisting War, Learning Nonviolence

BY JAN SLAKOV

Is Canada some “kind of hippie commune where conventional norms - like the definition of conscientious objector set out by the UN High Commission of Refugees - do not apply”? This is what author Terry Glavin suggests, in expressing his outrage that politicians would support the right of US war resisters to seek refuge in Canada.

Many members of Conscience Canada (CC) would fit the traditional definition of “conscientious objector” but most of us, certainly those of us on the board, want to support war resisters even if they are not complete pacifists. Indeed, war resister Jeremy Hinzman has accepted our invitation to speak at our AGM on March 27 in Toronto (see page 2 in this newsletter) and we look forward to seeing a good number of CC members and other peace activists there.

We want to support anyone who decides they can no longer participate in the violence of war, even if they were not drafted. After all, if someone grows into such a conviction, does that make their conviction any less valid than that of someone who may have held a similar conviction



Jeremy Hinzman

tion from a younger age?

One of the things I have always valued about the leadership of CC, including back when Edith Adamson was president, was its commitment to go beyond merely opposing war, to insist that nonviolence is not merely the absence of violence, but a power we can cultivate. Len Desroches described this notion very well in his book, *Love of Enemy: The cross and sword trial* (Dunamis, 2002):

“It is crucial that we stop trivializing nonviolence and refuse the false choice of ‘nonviolence or force’. The true choice is between the force of hatred/violence and the force of love we call ‘nonviolence’. Addressing

the problem of violence, the moderator of the World Council of Churches’ Central Committee was quoted in the March 2001 issue of the *Anglican Journal*: ‘We do not judge those for whom, in extreme situations, when hope for justice and dignity has disappeared, the use of force as a last resort may become necessary.’ No! force must be used immediately, not as a last resort, when we are confronted with serious injustice: the soul force of nonviolent resistance, with its many powerful tools.”

Desroches then recounts a wonderful story which illustrates vividly how beautiful and inspiring this “force more powerful” can be. He has given us permission to share it so contact us if you would like us to mail or e-mail you a copy and we hope to get it posted on our website (www.consciencecanada.ca) soon.

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CONSCIENCE CANADA 2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) OFFICIAL NOTICE

Date and time: Saturday, 27 March, 2010 at 3 pm

Place: Toronto School of Theology, 47 Queen's Park Cres. E., Toronto

Speaker: Jeremy Hinzman, US war resister

AGENDA:

- I. Approval of the Minutes of the 2009 AGM (available upon request)
- II. Review of the work done by Conscience Canada during the year;
- III. Election or confirmation of board members. The four officer positions required by our by-laws are: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, in addition there can be Board members at large. Standing for election are: Murray Lumley, Anna Kirkpatrick, Jan Slakov, Don Woodside, Benno Barg, Jonathan Seiling and Mary Groh.
- IV. Presentation and Approval of the 2009 financial statements - (available upon request)
- V. Appointment of auditors for 2010.
- VI. Other business

VII Talk by Jeremy Hinzman, beginning at approximately 4 pm.

All CC members and friends are warmly invited to attend the AGM.

The present AGM Notice, included in the newsletter and sent to all the members' addresses on record, constitutes the official notice, as required by the Conscience Canada Inc. by-laws. Please let us know if you want to receive a copy of the by-laws electronically or by mail.

If you cannot attend the meeting in person, do not forget to send your proxy below for your vote, either by post or by e-mail to:
consciencecanada@consciencecanada.ca

I, (please print) _____, a member in good standing of Conscience Canada, do hereby grant my proxy vote for the 27 March, 2010 Annual General Meeting of Conscience Canada to: _____ or in their absence to any Board Member of Conscience Canada.

Signature: _____

“Anything worth doing is worth doing badly. If I'd waited until I knew what I was doing, I wouldn't have gotten anything done.”

~ Muriel Duckworth

A B O U T

This newsletter is produced by Conscience Canada, a non-governmental organization which has worked since 1978 to:

- increase Canadians' awareness of the connection between taxes and war
- divert taxes away from war
- support creative nonviolent conflict prevention and resolution
- promote conscientious objection legislation

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of Conscience Canada.

An electronic version of this newsletter is available at www.ConscienceCanada.ca. Please let us know your preference.

B O A R D

Benno Barg, Mary Groh, Anna Kirkpatrick, Murray Lumley, Jonathan Seiling, Jan Slakov, Don Woodside

An Inspiring Historical Perspective on Peace Tax Work in the US

A Persistent Voice: Marian Franz and Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation. Edited by David R. Bassett, Steve Ratzlaff & Tim Godshall. Cascadia Publishing House, Telford, PA. 21 pages. \$22.94 Canadian. To order, Call: 1 (800) 631-6535 or Fax: 1 (519) 747-5721

For 23 years Marian Franz was Executive Director at the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPTF) in Washington, D.C. She lobbied congress men and women and headed up initiatives for peace tax legislation. Marian died in 2006, before she could publish a collection of the columns she wrote every few months for the NCPTF newsletter.

These varied and inspiring short essays (47 of them, each about two pages in length) have now been published as the main focus of this book. They are preceded by Contemporary Voices on Conscience,

War and Taxes, essays by 6 supporters of NCPTF. An appendix includes an historical timeline on the development of Peace Tax Fund legislation, and 2 of the bills which have been brought to the Congress.

Muriel Duckworth died on Aug. 22, after more years than most of us have lived, of inspiring peace and justice activism. One of her favourite quotes follows:

*“My heart is moved by all
I cannot save
So much has been destroyed*

*I have to cast my lot with those
who age after age, perversely,
With no extraordinary power,
reconstitute the world.”*

~ Adrienne Rich
from *The Dream of a Common Language*

Conscience Canada

Membership Application / Renewal

Member: Open to any person committed to supporting Conscience Canada’s objectives and who pays an annual membership fee of \$10. This entitles you to receive CC’s newsletters and to vote on all issues at the Annual General Meeting. All “life memberships” dating from an earlier system are honoured.

Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation (COMT): Member who, in addition to the membership fee has deposited funds into the Peace Tax Trust account maintained by Conscience Canada.

Send in your new or renewed membership today. (Address correction requested)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Annual membership: (\$10.00/yr)	\$	_____	
Donations to Conscience Canada	\$	_____	-
Peace Tax Trust Deposit (full or symbolic)	\$	_____	
total funds enclosed	\$	_____	cheque payable to Conscience Canada

Receipts will be issued for donations of \$ 25 or more and for all Peace Tax Deposits.

I’d like to help. Contact me about volunteering for Conscience Canada

Send me: free copy/ies of the CC info material (pls: specify or give purpose)
 More (fewer) copies of newsletter Electronic version only

Mail to: Conscience Canada, 901-70 Mill St. Toronto ON M5A 4R1 Visit: www.consciencecanada.ca

Worth Reading

BY MARY GROH

A Woman Among Warlords by Malalai Joya. Simon and Schuster, Canada, October 2009. 229 pages. \$32.99

At a time when there is so much hand-wringing about our role in Afghanistan, it is a gift to hear from Malalai Joya. She is a young Afghan woman (31) dedicated to the well-being of her people and putting her life at risk as she pushes for democracy. She calls unequivocally for the withdrawal of all foreign troops.

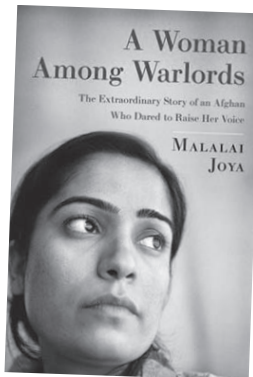
The picture of Afghanistan she paints in her recent book with the above title is grim indeed. The war to oust the Soviets in the 1980's was followed by the war amongst the warlords for control of the country, followed by the takeover of the Taliban in 1995, followed by the U.S. led war on terror after 9/11 which continues up to the present. The vast majority of the people have been reduced to living in extreme poverty and insecurity, and are ruled by a government controlled by the same bad actors of the 90's civil war.

Malalai had the opportunity for schooling while growing up in a refugee camp in Pakistan. As a teenager she began teaching women in the refugee camp to read. Her father, a freedom fighter against the Soviet occupation, inspired her to become an activist. She joined an organization to help improve the lot of women, and undertook the dangerous "underground" life of a teacher of girls in Herat, which was under Taliban control.

When her organization wanted to open a medical clinic in Herat,

Malalai got the grudging consent of the Health Ministry but without any guarantee of security. Besides the clinic she started up an orphanage, and both provided such needed services that Malalai became well known in Farah province as a person who genuinely worked for the good of the people. She was elected as a delegate to the Loya Jirga (council) which was to approve a new constitution for Afghanistan.

Her first speech at the assembly lasted about 90 seconds before her tirade against the criminal warlords was cut off. Such uproar ensued that she was forced to leave under guard. Her popularity has remained strong though, and in the first parliamentary elections (in 2005) she easily won a seat, becoming the youngest member in what she calls The House of Warlords.



It didn't take long for her to be suspended from parliament, as a result of her unvarnished criticism of other members (whom she sees as war criminals). Despite several assassination attempts against her, Malalai continues to speak out both at home and abroad. In Toronto in November she sounded the same angry young woman that comes through in the book—loud and hard-hitting in her prepared speech. When speaking person to person, however, or greeting the audience, she speaks gently, smiles, and is beautiful.

What are her convictions on non-violence? Martin Luther King is one of her heroes and she quotes him several times in the book. In life she is a caring person, sought out by the abused and suffering. When she received a phone call that her orphan-

age was being attacked by some armed fundamentalists she instructed her security people not to kill anyone. In the turmoil, some of the attackers were injured, but her team transported them to the hospital in the clinic's ambulance. Some of these men became her supporters. She has refused volunteers wishing to take up arms to kill her enemies, saying guns are only for self-defence, and war and violence is not the way to achieve peace and democracy. But she still claims to have been inspired by Palestinian rock-throwing children!

Malalai's dream for her country includes the disarming of warlords and all fundamentalist groups, and an end (by the UN) to the inflow of weapons from other countries. She calls for real humanitarian aid that reaches the grassroots, expressing impatience with the plethora of NGO's presently in the country. She acknowledges the possibility of more civil war following the withdrawal of NATO troops, but has faith in the people's genuine desire for education and a progressive secular government. Several times she says "The power of the people is the power of God." It will take time for the warlords, the drug lords, the Taliban to lose their hold in the country; she knows she may be killed before her dreams for her country can be realized.

This book is written as autobiography in excellent idiomatic English, thanks to Daniel O'Keefe, a Canadian peace activist. It is a book for anyone wanting to be informed about the present sorry state of Afghanistan, especially the shocking plight of the women and children. And it is a book for all working to make a better world and needing inspiration for what can be done by one courageous person.

Resisting Military Recruitment

CBC Radio's "The Current" read out (on Nov. 3 '09) most of the first paragraph of the letter below, written by CC board member Murray Lumley*. It was in response to an interview with special counsel to Quebec's CSQ union organization, Alain Pelissier.

"I agree with Mr. Pelissier. Military recruiters have no place in high



Logo of the Campagne
d'opposition au recrutement militaire

schools, nor colleges and universities either. The students are just too young and have no life experience to see through the lies recruiters present. Most soldiers in armies around the world including Canada and the U.S. are made up of eighteen to twenty year olds. I watched the documentary "Standard Operating Procedure" and have listened to young U.S. "war resisters" who fled to Canada speak about being told one thing and then being sent to Iraq. They told about young soldiers being placed in situations where they were required to make terrible life and death decisions. It just reminds me that it is old men who decide on wars and it is young men and women who are trained to kill

and then die in the wars. If I had my way military recruitment could not be done on anyone younger than thirty years of age. If this were the case there would be very few armies.

Police forces came up in your interview and I agree again. Police are charged with defending our written laws. As soon as a war starts between armies, any law is disregarded - even human natural law - and I am referring to "rape" being used as a tool of war by soldiers. I also have read "Human Smoke" and it is clear that there was no high ground among any of the combatants of World War II. Churchill was quite willing to bomb civilians and did so even before the Luftwaffe bombed London. Churchill approved the use of poison gases on Iraqi villages in the twenties. The wars of the twentieth century should have taught us that war and recruiting for war should be outlawed."

"I agree with Mr. Pelissier. Military recruiters have no place in high schools"

Quebec has an active coalition of student groups and unions working to keep military recruiters out of schools (see: www.antirecruitment.info/?q=fr/node/179) and the Canadian Friends Service Committee has produced an excellent brochure for young people thinking of joining the military. You can find it at: <http://cfsc.quaker.ca/pages/docu->



Photo on the cover of the CFSC brochure

ments/Consideringjoiningthemilitary.pdf for call (416) 920-6213. For more information look up "Operation Objection Canada" on the web.

There are special programs for recruiting and training First Nations youth, including: CF Aboriginal Entry Program, Bold Eagle and Raven. Some First Nations people are proud of how many members of their community participated in previous wars and welcome recruiting efforts but others see military recruiting and gang activity as exploiting an indigenous warrior tradition of resistance to colonization and injustice. More information is available on the internet. One useful site is: <http://warriorpublications.com/?q=node/24> .

*Note: Members of the board asked Murray how he manages to get so many of his letters into the media. He had two suggestions: 1) Write as soon as you are moved to write, even if the grammar is not perfect. 2) Share your letters with others. This may inspire others to write too and it makes sure that even if your letter isn't printed, it can still have an effect.

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Our website has other resources for those interested in finding out more about nonviolent options for promoting security, including the Report on Nonviolent Alternatives to Canadian Defence and Security of 2004 and Deanna Douglas' article, *Expanding our Toolbox: Non-violence in the real world* in the Fall

2005 issue of our newsletter. We have also helped distribute 2 excellent books which delve into this question in depth: *Canada @ Peace: Coactive security* by David E. Hubert and *Allow the Water: Anger, fear, power, work, sexuality, community* - and the spirituality and practice of nonviolence by Leonard Desroches.

One of the reasons our society is

so addicted to militarism is surely that most people have no real sense of how powerful nonviolence or the force of love can be. We learn about Vimy Ridge or D-Day, but how many of us are familiar with stories of nonviolent resistance, such as how thousands of potential victims of the Holocaust were saved thanks to courageous, nonviolent assistance, or closer to home, how groups have organized successfully to gain the right to vote, or put an end to discriminatory laws, or save natural areas and local communities from mines, dumps and other potentially disastrous projects? Certainly, not all nonviolent struggles are successful but there is one form of "success" that all nonviolent struggles share: insofar as people use the tools of nonviolence, and eschew violence, they do not end up doing precisely that which they are supposedly fighting against. I know of no war where any side succeeded in fighting without committing atrocities; we are poignantly reminded of this danger now, as news surfaces of how the Canadian government violated the Geneva conventions by turning prisoners over to Afghan jails where they were tortured.

We are compiling a list of resources for those who want to learn more about the power of nonviolence, in time for our AGM. If you would like a copy of the list, or if you have suggestions for it, please contact us at consciencecanada@consciencecanada.ca or call Jan Slakov at (250) 537-5251.

Jan Slakov has been editing the CC newsletter for some 7 years. She thanks all those who contribute to its creation and distribution, and those who take the time to read it.

INTRODUCING

Two new board members:

Jonathan Seiling, who has a degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from Conrad Grebel U.C., recently completed his PhD in History. He teaches in the area of Christian history and one area of focus concerns violence and non-resistance in the Reformation period. He is currently working on a collection of texts, translated from German and Latin, that indicate the lively debate in Europe during the 1500s concerning religion, government and nonviolence. His teaching and research take him from the University of Waterloo to the University of Toronto, Brock University, the First Mennonite Church in Vineland, ON (and other places too, no doubt!) and he has also found time to focus on questions of particular interest to Conscience Canada. But guess what? He says, "My real full time job is husband/new dad, one for which I'm constantly uncertain if I have the right qualifications, although it's lots of fun most of the time." He hopes to help raise the profile of CC within the arena of academia.

Mary Groh joined the board just this past fall, but she has been active with CC since the 1970's, when she first heard about it from Edith Adamson. She no longer has taxes to redirect, but her support has continued over the years, in particular in helping with newsletter mail outs. Besides being involved in church and community activities, she is a gardener, preserver, reader, hand-crafter and cyclist (like other much younger members of the board!) Mary would be happy to continue as a "behind the scenes" CC supporter, but sees the need for CC to have more support on the board, and has accepted to become our president in order to ensure that CC can continue to provide assistance to conscientious objectors to military taxation.



Recent photo of
Mary Groh

Our new layout person: Din Yalonen

Finding someone to do the formatting of the Peace Tax Return and our newsletters has not always been easy. Din Yalonen is supportive of CC's goals and has been willing to do this layout work for a reduced rate, for which we are grateful. Din is the singer for The Soles band, whose music has made it onto quite a few radio stations across North America, with very positive reviews. Interestingly, one of their songs was inspired by a uranium mining blockade in eastern Ontario which some CC board members have supported as well. To view some of Din's art and hear some Soles music, go to: www.dinarts.com



Din Yalonen