

2:45 - 3:00 pm – **Coffee Break**

3:00 – 3:30 pm – **Dr. Elizabeth Vlossak, Brock University**

'Holding out for a hero: Remembering draft-dodgers in postwar Western Europe'

During the Second World War, hundreds of thousands of men across occupied Europe were drafted against their will to serve in the German Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS. To avoid fighting for the enemy, many of these 'reluctant soldiers' dodged the draft or deserted. After the war, attitudes toward draft-dodging and desertion varied. On the one hand, the men who had refused to fight were hailed as patriotic resisters. But for many, resistance remained synonymous with cowardice and unmanliness. This paper explores the various and often conflicting ways draft-dodging has been understood, depicted, and commemorated since the end of the war by focusing on three case-studies: the ceremony to mark the repatriation from Germany to Belgium of the body of a forced draftee; the memoir of an Alsatian forced conscript; and a recent feature film from Luxembourg about draft-dodgers.

3:30 - 4:00 pm – **Dr. Tarah Brookfield, Wilfrid Laurier University**

'Peace education as resistance on Grindstone Island, 1960s-1970s'

For nearly four decades Grindstone Island, a twelve-acre private isle located near Ottawa was a site for non-violence education. The impetus for Grindstone Island was the belief that Canada and the world was at great risk of being overcome by violence, be it the threat of nuclear warfare, the tragedy of the Vietnam War or the societal unrest caused by colonialism, racial discrimination, and poverty. Beginning in 1963, Quakers and likeminded facilitators offered summer camps and workshops on Grindstone for activists, diplomats, teachers, university students, and later expanded to include high school students and younger children. These programs often used experimental learning, including weekend-long roleplaying activities that invited creative and critical thinking about peace and social change. This paper combines political history and the history of education to understand the meaning and impact of the culture of peace developed on Grindstone Island in the 1960s.

4:30 - 6:00 pm — **Public Keynote Address – Dr. Lara Campbell, Simon Fraser University**

'War Resistance in Canadian History'

Every Canadian who has taken a citizenship test, answered a Dominion Institute history quiz, or watched a CBC news special has heard that the experience of war is fundamental to Canadian history and identity. While many historians were deeply critical of the previous federal government's emphasis on war commemoration, this was not an entirely new phenomenon. Traditional historical narratives have chronicled the formation of Canada through the experience of war, especially the two world wars. The historical narrative looks different when we centre stories of war resistance, including pacifism, opposition to conscription, support for draft resisters, and peace movements. Although the motivations for resistance to war differ over time and are shaped by religion, political ideology, ethnicity and race, and gender, together they constitute a long tradition of questioning state power and asserting the right and obligation to dissent.

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## Refusing to Fight: Reimagining War in Global Perspectives

Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts  
Brock University  
St Catharines, Ontario, Canada

October 11-12, 2018

### Day 1: Thursday, October 11

6:00 pm – **Opening Remarks** (Studio C – MW251)

Dr. Elizabeth Vlossak, Director, Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts and Associate Professor, Department of History, Brock University

Dr. Marian Bredin, Director, Centre for Canadian Studies and Associate Professor, Communications, Popular Culture and Film, Brock University

6:15 - 7:30 pm – **Public Keynote Address: Dr. Jonathan Vance, Western University** (Studio C – MW251)

'To Fight or Not to Fight: Reflections on Objectors and Dissenters.'

This paper explores notions of conscientious objection and dissent, particularly in Canada during the First World War. It seeks to understand what motivated dissenters, and exposes the consequences they faced for their objection, from social ostracism to expulsion. With rich detail drawn from case studies, it challenges our conception of conscientious objectors, and of the community they dissented from.

7:30-8.30pm – **Reception** (MW Lobby)

## Day 2: Friday, October 12 – Symposium (MW156)

9:30 - 10:00 am – **Dr. Christopher Zeichmann, University of Toronto**

'The Social Appeal of "the Deserter" in Early Christian Discourse (120-350 CE)'

Little evidence of military desertion or protest in Ancient Roman is told from a sympathetic perspective. The biggest exception to this are writings of pre-Constantinian Christians: The Acts of the Military Martyrs, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, and others agree that one cannot be a soldier and a Christian. These accounts are commonly read in a credulous manner, as though they were representative of general Christian attitudes about the military, thereby ignoring the ample epigraphic evidence of Christian soldiers before Constantine's conversion. This paper offers a preliminary step to explaining this deviation of opinion concerning military service between literate Christian intellectuals and the experience of many common Christians of antiquity by attempting to explain the appeal of 'the deserter' to Christian intellectuals.

10:00 - 10:30 am - **Ka Ki Alan Ho, McGill University**

'Saving the sovereignty: The non-violent suppression at 40 CE'

After the long span of civil war since 9 CE, Emperor Guangwu (r. 25-57 CE), the founder of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 CE), finally unified the entire China in 36 CE. This empire, however, was a decentralized power and the emperor relied on various magnate families and their regional power during the unification process. To reward those contributors, the emperor divided his realm into hundreds of states and ennobled his supporters as lords. In 38 CE the emperor attempted to establish kingdoms for his own sons but realized that there was not enough territory to do so. Subsequently, the emperor ordered a large-scale resurvey of the country, resulting in a rebellion by his supporters. This paper examines the suppression of that rebellion, and how Guangwu successfully avoided a major conflict with his leading supporters.

10:30 - 10:45 am - **Coffee Break**

10:45 - 11:15 am - **Grant Schrama, Queen's University**

'Iram Dei: Cowardice and the Refusal to Fight during the Crusading Period, 1095-1291'

The Crusades was a substantial military enterprise, involving the recruitment of large swaths of the European male population, who fought in areas such as Iberia, the Levant, Egypt, and the Baltic. There was a religious component to it, as well as an accompanying social ethos of chivalry, courage and military obligation. However, men did refuse to fight for various reasons and received multiple types of scrutiny as consequence. This paper explores the reasons why men refused to take part in the Crusades, and the reactions to such desertion or cowardice in the contemporary sources. Writers from the period noted that men who refused to accept the call to go on Crusade suffered from divine punishment, hostility from their wives and children, and possible excommunication by their local church and the Pope. This paper presents new research and interpretations of medieval warfare and the social implications non-participants experienced.

11:15 - 11:45 am – **Dr. Michael Driedger, Brock University**

'Refusing to refuse to fight: The long history of the Mennonite use of arms'

In the standard story of Christian history, Mennonites and Quakers belong in the category of the historical peace churches, the post-Reformation groups that refused on principle to fight in the defence of the emergent modern state. This story is correct in broad terms. But the details are more interesting and more complicated. They include the early 16th and 17th century 'radical' phases of Mennonites' 'Anabaptist' forebears' sometimes armed activism for a transformation of the corpus christianum; early revolutionary era 'peace' church advocates in the 18th century; and the 'peace church' soldiers of the Second World War. This paper questions the extent to which people who created and were born into 'peace churches' accepted peace church orthodoxy. It will highlight the tension between official group teachings and the actual lived experiences of group members.

11:45 am – 12:15 pm - **Maxwell Kennel, McMaster University**

'Epistemology of Refusal: The Critique of Redemptive Violence in Balibar and Wink'

This presentation outlines a philosophical and critical framework for thinking about the refusal to fight, addressing both the epistemic structure of refusal and the simultaneously descriptive and normative aspects of the critique of violence. With reference to Rene Girard's identification of violence with the sacred, Walter Wink's critique of redemptive violence, and Etienne Balibar's notion of counterviolence, this presentation makes suggestions about possible connections between the implicit metaphysics of refusal and the competing visions of realism and idealism. By attending to the refusal to fight as a kind of resistance to claims that violence is natural, normal, or value-neutral, this presentation foregrounds the competing normative visions of the authoritative call to arms and the dissenting refusal to fight.

12:15-1:15 – **Lunch**

1:15 - 1:45 pm – **Dr. Renee Lafferty-Salhany, Brock University**

"Yankee cowards, dare not fight:" Fear, desertion and indigenous-white relations during the War of 1812'

During the War of 1812, desertion from the US Army was frequently inspired by fear of indigenous warriors: rather than face these formidable and often mythically fearsome 'Indians,' dozens of men hid themselves during battle, refused to cross into enemy territory, surrendered without offering a fight and, on occasion, simply fled their posts and disappeared. While desertion is most often explored as a tactical problem affecting military manoeuvres in 1812, delving into these racially-motivated inspirations for the refusal to fight reveals the way that hostility toward, and deeply-rooted cultural fear of, Native peoples shaped the manner in which this war was fought. It also complicates our understanding of how the War of 1812 was mobilized in the (white) narrative of nineteenth-century American triumph and progress.

1:45 - 2:15 pm - **Panagiotis Delis, Simon Fraser University**

'Mass desertion of Christians from the Ottoman Army during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13'

Christians enlisted in the Ottoman Army who had deserted were, as civilians, forced to evacuate the Ottoman lands in Europe during the Balkan Wars and became part of the wider wave of trans-regional migration that was initiated by the recent catastrophe in the Balkans. The main difference between them and ordinary civilians, however, was that by betraying an Ottoman institution (the army), the Christian soldiers were stigmatized as traitors, only serving to confirm in Muslims' eyes the larger conspiracy narrative that portrayed all Christians as one and the same: 'back-stabbing,' dangerous neighbors who could not be trusted. This paper reveals that the radicalization of the Young Turks during the Balkan Wars, the mistreatment of Christians by Muslim officers and the lack of willingness to fight their co-religionists of the Balkan armies were the key causes that led to this outcome.

2:15 - 2:45 pm - **Jonathan Weier, Western University**

'Honourary Officers: YMCA Workers, Alternative Military Service, and the Question of Masculinity'

During the First World War, the YMCA played a significant role providing recreational, religious, educational and medical services to combatants, POWs and others affected by the war. YMCA secretaries were present in training camps, on battlefields, in rear areas, and in POW camps on every continent. While its national federations became closely associated with national war efforts, the YMCA maintained its identity as an international association committed to peace and cooperation. Its workers thus often found themselves in a difficult position. Many were young men who had chosen YMCA service over military service due to their opposition to war, commitment to Christianity, or poor health. Yet they were often responsible for maintaining the morale of soldiers and providing encouragement to continue to fight. While some YMCA officers remained committed to a peaceful outcome of the war, others felt intense pressure to support the Allies and joined the armed forces.