



Civil Courage News

Journal of the Civil Courage Prize

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For Steadfast Resistance to Evil at Great Personal Risk

Sir Jeremy Greenstock to Deliver Keynote Address at Civil Courage Prize Ceremony

On October 27th, the Civil Courage Prize Ceremony's keynote address will be given by Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Train Foundation Advisor and until recently, Chairman of the United Nations Association of the U.K.

Prior to his long and distinguished career with the British Diplomatic Service, Sir Jeremy worked as an assistant master at Eton College from 1966 to 1969, when he left to join the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. As a senior official, he was posted in Washington D.C., Paris, Dubai and Saudi Arabia. During his career, he developed specializations in the Middle East, Transatlantic Relations and the United Nations.



Sir Jeremy Greenstock

Regarded as a career diplomat of impeccable integrity, Sir Jeremy served as Political Counsellor in Paris, and as the Director for Western and Southern Europe in London, which provided the foundation for his work on the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and on the Balkans, Cyprus and Gibraltar. He was the Deputy Ambassador in the British Embassy in Washington, the U.K.'s Director General for Eastern Europe and the Middle East and Political Director in London. He also chaired the European Union's Political Committee

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RBSS Wins the 2016 Civil Courage Prize for Risking Their Lives to Expose the Atrocities in ISIS-Controlled Raqqa

The 2016 Civil Courage Prize has been awarded to RBSS, "Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently." RBSS is a group of usually anonymous young men and women who secretly film the kidnappings, torture and murders carried out by the Islamic State (ISIS) in Raqqa, Syria, and expose these atrocities to the world.

Raqqa was a bustling and fairly prosperous city on the Euphrates River in north central Syria when ISIS took it over. Their powerful internet propaganda campaign attracted fanatical followers from all over the world, making Raqqa a stronghold of the Islamic State. The city's name has become synonymous with what *VICE News* refers to as the violence of "beheadings, immolation, enslavement of women and every form of barbarism."

Founded in April 2014 by seventeen Syrian activists, members of RBSS have become citizen journalists, risking their lives on a daily basis to document the abuses of the Islamic State. The group is considered to be a reliable, credible and independent source of news among Syria monitors and journalists globally.

There are now twelve members inside Raqqa; the rest are outside the city, with some working outside of Syria. Those inside post photos, videos, stories and news online from a secret location or risk internet cafes



monitored by ISIS. It is now too dangerous for them to post on Twitter and Facebook or talk to journalists. Members outside the city continue to contribute to social media and use fake names with journalists, since they can no longer trust anyone.

Open resistance and dissent are punishable by death, yet the group keeps sending digital images to the outside world, documenting life under the caliphate. Most use cell phones to film events, capturing the terror of those who live there and the caliphate's brutality.

According to one founder, Abu Mohammed, who had to leave Syria, "Cameras monitor anyone suspected of working for us. Since ISIS has branded RBSS as infidels, declaring them an enemy of God, if a suspect is caught in the street, they will be killed in front of everyone." Despite the loss of friends and colleagues, persistent death threats received by members in and out of Syria, and ISIS hacking the group's Twitter and personal email accounts, RBSS

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Letter From The Chairman

This quarter we had a retirement from our Board of Trustees: Ambassador John Menzies. He was stationed in the American Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1980, at the time of the first free elections there in generations. The present writer organized a campaign to send electioneering equipment – copying machines, poster-sized sheets, bullhorns – which they completely lacked, to the democratic coalition in the election. John Menzies agreed to receive this material – dozens of huge boxes – in his Public Affairs office, which might have been considered an undiplomatic act. Fortunately, it succeeded. The democratic force won. John later went on to higher diplomatic posts, and then headed two educational institutions. We will miss him.

Taking his place on our Board is George Biddle, who recently left the International Rescue Committee after a distinguished career there. This writer had been president of the Afghanistan Relief Committee, which merged with the IRC, and later led an IRC mission to Ahmed Massoud, “the Lion of the Panjshir,” who had become Foreign Minister after the Soviet army had been forced out of the country.

George Biddle was part of that mission, which went very well, except for the vexation of being successfully attacked by bandits on the road from Jalalabad to Kabul.

In any event, George, having retired from the International Rescue Committee, has formed a new NGO of international scope. We welcome him warmly to our Board.

Recent News of Past Winners



Yu Jie 2012

Author and Advocate for Reform in China

Yu Jie, China's prominent essayist, critic and a leading democracy activist, published his latest book in 2015. Entitled *Steel Gate To Freedom*, it is a biography of his friend, Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo, a Chinese dissident, poet and scholar. Yu captures the remarkable journey of Liu from Inner Mongolia to Beijing intellectual circles to Tiananmen Square, imprisonment, and the founding of Chinese PEN, all of which led to the famous image in 2012 of a stage with an empty chair in the Oslo City Hall holding only the medal and diploma of that year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, Liu Xiaobo.

Yu Jie's work has been banned in China since 2004 and while working on this biography, he was subjected to lengthy house arrest, kidnap and torture. He was threatened by Beijing security with a harsh prison sentence if he published the book.

Reviewers have applauded this "personal, affectionate, but also critical portrait of the famous dissident" as "the best biography available in a Western language," adding that Yu Jie's portrayal of Liu Xiaobo is "not a distant saint, but rather a real human being who comes to life in these pages."

In 2012, Yu left China with his wife and son, emigrating to the United States, where he continues to live and work.

The Story of The Civil Courage Prize

Many years ago, John Train became concerned with the situation of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the great Russian hero and author, whose works helped destroy the prestige of Stalinism. After being exiled, he had moved to rural Vermont, but was living in poverty. Train was able to obtain substantial private support for him, and accompanied him to London, where Prince Philip handed him a check in a Buckingham Palace ceremony.

Train, who delivered the English-language response at the ceremony, realized that there was no word in English for the virtue that Solzhenitsyn so nobly exemplified, but that there should be, perhaps “civil courage,” as distinct from valor in war. He resolved to create a prize for this virtue, and asked if Solzhenitsyn would like to receive it, or have it named after him, or be a judge. He chose the last, and acted in that role for the rest of his life. His son has followed him.

The prize, a substantial honorarium and a medal, is “for steadfast resistance to evil at great personal risk.” It was first awarded, in London, to Natasa Kandic, sometimes called the Serbian Schindler. Subsequent laureates have come from most parts of the world. One, Anna Politkovskaya, reporting on atrocities in Chechnya, was assassinated in the course of the very work for which she was honored, as were several others who were recognized posthumously, notably Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Giovanni Falcone and Raoul Wallenberg.

Civil courage is essential for a good society. Some few must step forward to challenge iniquity. Our hope is that by introducing the expression “civil courage” into the English language, and by holding up for general admiration heroes of conscience who exemplify it, we can encourage the good side of human nature.

To select the prizewinner, we invite nominations from an international list of distinguished organizations and persons. Our administrative office then checks to see if the nominee truly fills our qualifications. Once the nominations have been researched, they are reviewed by the Trustees and a short list is created, which is then sent on to our Advisors for ranking. Their choices are in turn considered by the Trustees, who make the final decision.

When the laureate has come to New York to receive the medal and the stipend, we introduce him to the press and to other organizations with similar objectives here and in Washington. He will probably make contact with twenty or thirty groups and hundreds of individuals. These encounters will fortify his resolve to continue on his difficult course and will help develop useful allies. It adds prestige to a good person pursuing a difficult goal to be able to invoke such connections. We have found that winning the prize confers a measure of protection to a laureate's life at home.

The hero of conscience is usually solitary: his companions are found in history books. He battles for a cause that even his friends may not understand or believe in, or dare to espouse. The noblest causes may be those that seem hopeless at the time. Civil courage empowers us to face the world alone.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock

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during the U.K.'s Presidency.

His final role in the diplomatic service was as U.K. Ambassador to the United Nations from 1998 to 2003, during which he chaired the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee for two years. In 2003, he led a Security Council mission to West Africa to assess the UN activities there.

While representing the U.K. on the Security Council he worked extensively on matters of peace and security in Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans, South Asia and, particularly, Iraq. He came out of retirement to serve as the U.K. Special Envoy for Iraq from September 2003 to March 2004, working within the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad.

In retirement, Sir Jeremy has served in both profit and non-profit entities. He was director of the Ditchley Foundation, a special adviser to BP, co-chaired the European Eminent Persons Group on the Middle East, served as governor of the London Business School, a Director of De La Rue Plc and as a Member of Council at Chatham House. He is the Chairman of Gatehouse Advisory Partners and of Lambert Energy Advisory Ltd., an adviser to MTM Capital Partners, the International Rescue Committee-U.K. and the NGO Forward Thinking.

R.B.S.S. Wins the 2016 Civil Courage Prize

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members continue to report on human rights violations within Syria.

A major threat to RBSS is the weapons-toting Al-Khansa female brigade, the caliphate's enforcers of women's morality. Women are required to wear a niqab (a cloth covering their faces), a hijab (a veil covering their heads and chests) and black shoes. They are beaten or slashed if they do not conform to ISIS standards of dress or if they are caught walking in the street alone.

The restrictions are in direct contrast to their lives before. There were female doctors, lawyers, and teachers and many women no longer wore hijabs. Men and women mixed together in cafes and restaurants. Under the caliphate's domination, women no longer work and are no longer safe; RBSS has filmed women being stoned to death. Many of the Al-Khansa brigade dress in disguise so those filming no longer know who is watching them. If anyone is caught, it means immediate execution.

There are no open schools or universities; no education with the exception of boys under the age of six. With schools closed, kids play in the street and ISIS members befriend them and give them gifts to entice them to join, or simply kidnap them. ISIS's imams dominate the mosques and children are sent off to the caliphate's religious institutions, where they receive religious indoctrination into an extreme form of Islam. Later they go to military camps, where they are taught to fight and carry bombs.

Founding member Abdalaziz Alhamza, 24, a former university student, fled Syria for Turkey and then Germany. In an article by David Remnick in *The New Yorker*, Alhamza spoke about conditions in Raqqa, "People have become so poor, the families so weak, that some give up their daughters to ISIS." In a *New York Times* article by Roger Cohen, Alhamza described the ISIS takeover, "In the beginning we didn't think it was that dangerous. We didn't think they would execute us." He goes on to say that "There are so many people, normal people, who want to live in a free, democratic Syria." He then speaks of commitment, "We won't stop. We have too many friends and family dead. The only way we will stop is if ISIS kills us all or we go back home."

With Special Thanks to the 2016 Civil Courage Prize Nominators

Tabassum Adnan
Activist/Founder, Khwendo Jirga

Ko K Aung
General Secretary, Civil Society
for Myanmar (US Chapter)

Amb. Glenn Babb
Train Foundation Advisor

Emadeddin Baghi
Iranian Journalist
2004 CCP Honoree

Sinee Chakthranont
Ashoka

Luigi deRosa
Soccer Coach, TV Commentator

Claire Fallender
Ashoka

Maria Salazar Ferro
Committee to Protect Journalists

Hoi Trinh
VOICE

Nancy Kamel
Managing Partner,
Strategic Expansion Solutions

Sarra Karzai
Innovation and Strategic
Investment Program
Coordinator, Vital Voices
Global Partnership

Sergei Khodorovich
2000 CCP Honorable Mention

Daniel Kovalik
Senior Counsel, United Steel
Workers

Dr. Michael Leeden
Freedom Scholar, Foundation for
Defense of Democracies

Regan Ralph
President and CEO, The Fund for
Global Human Rights

Rebecca Rimel
President/CEO, Pew Charitable Trusts

Suzanne Scholte
President, Defense Forum
Foundation; Chairman, North
Korea Freedom Coalition

Viren Shah
Saraswati Foundation

Suzanne Siskel
Executive VP and CEO,
The Asia Foundation

Dr. Bahadur Singh Yadav, Prof.
Dr. Ahmad Saghir Inam Shastri
Education Board Government of
Uttar, India; Visiting Professor,
Faculty of Social Science, Lucknow
University

For further information and updates on current and previous prizewinners, please go to:

www.civildcourageprize.org
twitter.com/TrainFoundation
facebook.com/CivilCourage@TrainFoundation

The Train Foundation

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Nina Train Choa
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Lisa Train
Advisor

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Advisor

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Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Past Honorees

- 2015 Claudia Paz y Paz
Prosecutor of Human Rights Abuses, Guatemala
- Yassmín Barrios
Presiding Judge in Ríos Montt Genocide Trial, Guatemala
- 2014 Nicola Gratteri
Relentless Prosecutor of the Italian Mafia
- 2013 Dr. Denis Mukwege
Physician and advocate for victims of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- 2012 Yu Jie
Author and advocate for reform in China
- 2011 Triveni Acharya
Defender of victims of human trafficking in India
- Lydia Cacho Ribeiro
Champion of abused women and children in Mexico
- 2010 Andrew White
Steadfast advocate for peace in the Middle East
- 2009 Aminatou Haidar
Champion of the non-violent campaign for self-determination in Western Sahara
- 2008 Ali Salem
Egyptian author and journalist. Voice for peace and reason in the Middle East
- 2007 Phillip Buck
Imprisoned in China for guiding North Korean refugees in their escape to freedom
- 2006 Rafael Marques de Morais
Journalist who exposed the slaughter of Angolans and the plundering of national assets
- 2005 Min Ko Naing
Long-imprisoned campaigner for democracy in Burma
- Anna Politkovskaya
Fearless reporter on atrocities in Chechnya, assassinated
- Munir Said Thalib†
Exposed disappearances and corruption in Indonesia, assassinated
- 2004 Emadeddin Baghi
Imprisoned for exposing assassinations of Iranian intellectuals
- Lovemore Madhuku
Lawyer persecuted for demanding constitutional reform in Zimbabwe
- Abdul al-Latif al-Mayah†
Iraqi political scientist and human rights advocate, assassinated
- 2003 Shahnaz Bukhari
Battler against the burning and other abuse of Pakistani women
- 2002 Vladimiro Roca Antunez
Champion of freedom, Cuba
- Gustavo Arcos Bergnes
(Honorable Mention) Early democracy activist, Cuba
- 2001 Paul Kamara
Editor and journalist fighting tyranny in Sierra Leone
- 2000 Natasa Kandic
Persecuted journalist and activist, Belgrade
- Sergei Khodorovich
(Honorable Mention) Solzhenitsyn collaborator exiled to hard labor in Siberia
- Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer†
Anti-Nazi martyr
- Judge Giovanni Falcone†
Assassinated while prosecuting the Sicilian Mafia
- Rosemary Nelson†
Civil rights lawyer, assassinated while defending accused persons in Northern Ireland
- Neelan Tiruchelvam†
Lawyer and educator, killed by a suicide bomber while working for solutions to Tamil-Sri Lankan conflict
- Raoul Wallenberg†
Saved thousands of Jews from extermination

† = posthumous

The Civil Courage Prize honors civil courage—steadfast resistance to evil at great personal risk—rather than military valor. The acts so recognized should have taken place deliberately, over time.

Nominations for the Prize are solicited primarily from non-profit, non-governmental organizations worldwide. Further information may be obtained from our website: www.civildcourageprize.org.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”

—Edmund Burke



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