



Oyé! Oyé! For all Peace activists and drama teachers.

Get into the act:

If you are planning a special event to present Conscience Canada's DVD "Work for peace, stop paying for war", you might like to take a look at S-T-O-P, a new play written for Conscience Canada by Montreal book and song writer, Marguerite Bilodeau. This 40 minute play (available in English and French) blends information and humour. The action takes place in a Montreal family living room and revolves around income tax, military spending, peace marches, Afghanistan, army recruitment and Raging Grannies. It ends with the showing of Conscience Canada's DVD.

Linking this play with the work "Work for peace, stop paying for war" DVD would be a great way for schools, colleges and other groups to offer a positive alternative to military recruiting efforts.

You can order a copy of the DVD through the Conscience Canada website:

www.consciencecanada.ca

To order the play, please contact:

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- STOP-

WORK FOR PEACE

STOP PAYING FOR WAR

ACT 1

History & Casting: This story relates a 3 day period in March 2008, of a Montreal family surprised by the fact that one of the boys wants to enlist in the Canadian forces. It is also income tax time. We are in a double living room. Half is the den, the other the living room. There is a TV on the left and a desk on the right. The curtain rises , and we see the father, Conrad Laviolette cranky with pot belly, 53 yr. old man sitting at his desk trying to do his income tax return while taking a beer. His wife, Lucy Laviolette, emotional and well informed 52 yr. old lady is putting order in her newspaper clippings, while Alma Lafleur, a 75 yr. old, young looking calm grandmother, is tackling a cross word puzzle. Samuel is the very active 21 yr old son.

Characters: Conrad Laviolette : father
Lucy Lafleur Laviolette : mother
Alma Laviolette : Conrad's mother
Samuel : son of Conrad and Lucy.

(There is a heavy silence broken only by Conrad's grunts and groans of despair.)

Lucy: Come on Conrad, this isn't the first time you've had to face the annual income tax struggle.

Alma: *(joining in the teasing)* Yeah Conrad, you...

Conrad: *(annoyed)* Hey! Stop pestering me with your comments. It's enough that I have to fill in these stupid papers without having to listen to your cackling. Mother do your cross- word and Lucy, you stick to your paper clippings. OK?...I have to balance my revenue and expenses because our government wants to squeeze the last cent out of poor folks like me.

Alma : It's always the same story Lucy. If we had the means, we could take a trip to Cuba during this wretched period and relax. Then Conrad would have the peace of mind to fulfill his civic duty.

Conrad: Civic duty my eye! If I were a rich man, I'd hire a tax expert to do it. Can anybody tell me who the bureaucrat was who invented this brilliant system? I'll bet Grandfather Leo didn't have to pay income tax.

Alma: He was too poor; but I can tell you that in 1917, a new Tax Bill was passed to help pay the cost of that First World War.

Conrad: To help pay for war? And today I'm still paying for war! Darn it! *(And he takes a slug of beer.)*

Lucy : Calm down Conrad, your blood pressure will go up again.

Conrad: *(continues to be hyper)* I'm paying for the war and for what else?

Lucy: Conrad , you know damn well it's not only for war.

Alma: Leave him alone. He knows that without our taxes, our government can't survive and I feel very fortunate to live in such a peaceful country.

Lucy: You're right Mother, we are lucky. When I think of Iraq and the terrible quality of life the Iraqis live in, we are lucky... Now it's Afghanistan and we're spending millions of canadian dollars for military equipment.

Alma: What hurts me most is that Canada doesn't have the same peace missions as before. I was so proud when Prime Minister Pearson received the Nobel Prize for Peace, because he created the Blue Berets, the United Nations peacekeepers to help bring peace in Egypt after it's invasion in 1956.

Lucy: I don't want to hurt your feelings, but there is only a handful of these U.N peacekeepers

now.

Alma: I know. Your brother John told me the other day that there are now less than sixty of them, and to think that when he was with with them in the nineties they were over a thousand and remember how worried I was for him!

(We hear noises and footsteps....in comes Samuel.)

Samuel : *(feeling nervous)* Hi everybody! What's for lunch? I'm hungry.

Lucy: *(seeing her son unusually hyper)* Lunch will be ready in about a half hour. What's going on?

Samuel: Oh. I've got an appointment at 2 PM. That's all!

Conrad: *(looking also worried)* Your appointment looks very important.What's going on?

Samuel: *(trying to look calm now)* I'm going to the Recruitment center to enlist.

Alma: *(shocked)* Oh no, not another one!

Conrad: *(shaken)* What did you say?You want to enlist?

Samuel: *(sits down trying to look cool)* Well...I don't have a job and I could finish my CEGEP.

Lucy: *(frightened)* Have you really thought about it Samuel? They could send you to Afghanistan and you could be blown up in one of those tanks. My God son! *(She exclaims.)*

Samuel: *(trying to be more reassuring)* Come on MOM! It could be fun ! I will make a lot of new friends, I'll travel, I'll learn a lot of new things, get myself a good salary, and of course I hope to be of help out there.

Conrad: *(to Lucy with sarcasm)* Maybe he'll learn to clean up his own room!

Alma: Samuel, you don't know what you're getting into.When your Grandfather Wilfrid came back from the war, he wasn't the same man. He saw too many horrors out there. He saw many of his friends being killed and having to kill others made it more painful but he had orders to kill .

Samuel: Did he ever kill anyone ?

Alma: *(nods sadly with a yes)* He ... never wants to talk about it.

Samuel: *(more assertive)* But Granma, that was in other times. Today it's different. We fight.... *(hesitates)* Ah! Gee! I don't know what I'll do, but all this adventure stuff intrigues me.

Lucy: *(trying to understand what he's going through)* Are you sure that's what you want?

Samuel: *(stretching out and getting up)* Yes... No. I... Look , I'm 21 yrs old. I should know what I'm doing.

Conrad: *(with a flicker in his eyes)* That's what we raised you for- to be a man.

Samuel: *(feeling more confident)* Look! I want to know what it's all about. O.K.?

Conrad: *(wants to show his confidence, takes him by the shoulsters and they go out together)* Yes son! Go find out, you'll see.

End of act 1

Curtain falls.

Time: Approx: 6 minutes

- STOP -

Work for peace
Stop paying for war

ACT 11

Dinner is over. Conrad, Lucy and Alma and Joe are seated in the living room. There are books and a wireless phone on the coffee table. Joe, a shy 27 year old McGill student is the son of Conrad and Lucy; wearing an Ipod and reading a book. Alma is reading a magazine. Wilfrid, is a sound 87 yr old grandfather, white hair, tall, and well built. Christine the 32 yr old daughter of Conrad and Lucy is a pretty and energetic Community health nurse. Vincent, Christine's 12 yr old son, is a hyperactive and bright boy. Jerry, Christine's new boyfriend; military from Kandahar, a 30 yr old confident looking man. Conrad and Lucy looking and feeling "down", are having difficulty accepting the fact that Samuel wants to enlist.

Characters : Conrad Laviolette, Lucy Lafleur Laviolette, Alma Laviolette, Wilfrid Laviolette, Joe Laviolette, Christine Laviolette, Vincent Laviolette, Jerry Beaudoin

Wilfrid: *(enters the livingroom)* Whats going on? You all look like you are going to a funeral.

Alma: Sam wants to join the army.

Wilfrid: Good grief! You're not serious! You must be joking!

Lucy *(sighs)* Yes, he went to enlist this afternoon.

Wilfrid: *(looking at Conrad)* And what do you think about that?

Conrad: *(shrugging his shoulders)* Well, he's not working, and can't find a job. It will give him something to do.

Wilfrid: Come on now! Doesn't it affect you more than that?

Christine: *(arrives with Vincent and Jerry. They have posters with slogans in their hands. They put them against the wall. Take their winter coats off and put them on the coat hanger)* Hi everybody! I would like you to meet Jerry Beaudoin. We met this afternoon at the Échec à la guerre anti-war march. *(Jerry shakes everyones' hand)*

Christine: *(looks at everyone)* Whats happening? You all look like you're in shock.

Lucy : Your brother has enlisted to go to war.

Jerry: *(forgetting his natural shyness)* What! Has he gone nuts! He's lost his head. I've just come back from Afghanistan...and...

Vincent: *(gets up, imitating shooting a machine gun)* Ah, cool! You're dead! Ratatatatatatatata!

Lucy: Oh Stop it! Vincent, calm down. *(Vincent sits beside his grand-father.)*

Jerry: Afghanistan is hell. It's really not a game Vincent.

Wilfrid: You're right about that son. I fought in the 2nd World War when it started in 1939 and I had to enlist. I was only 18 years old then.

Vincent: *(intrigued)* What does it mean to enlist, grampa?

Wilfrid: It means I was obliged to go and fight. I was healthy you know. I wasn't married, had no children. But in Quebec we were against being obliged to go to war, but we didn't have a choice.

Vincent: *(very impressed)* Do you still remember that war, Grampa?

Alma: *(very affirmative)* Does he remember? He still has nightmares about it. Cries out

sometimes.....

- Wilfrid:** It's true. I still dream of hearing bombs falling around me and wondering how many ...Oh! It's too terrible to talk about. (*Wilfrid puts his hand to his forehead and eyes, calms down and holds on to his wife's hand.*)
- Alma:** (*putting her second hand over his*) Poor you! Let's not talk about it anymore.
- Christine:** Today, we call that post-traumatic shock. A lot of people suffer from it. Right Jerry? Many haven't yet recovered from the Vietnam war and what a war!
- Lucy:** I remember that war because it finished the year you were born Christine, in 1975. It lasted 11 years. When it started in 1964 no one expected that it would last so long, and that so many Vietnamese and Americans would be killed.
- Alma:** It also destroyed a country. It's just like in Iraq today.
- Lucy:** (*feeling sorry*) Yes it's terrible! (*Then changing the subject*) But where are you two coming from?
- Christine:** I just told you Mother. I went to the Échec à la guerre anti-war march. That's where I met Jerry.
- Conrad:** (*with a forced air of boredom*) Ah yes, the marches. What real results do you get from marching? The politicians never listen. They always ignore us except at election time. Anything to get our votes...and then they don't give a damn.
- Lucy:** (*turning to Jerry*) You say you just returned from Kandahar?
- Jerry:** Yes, and I believe in marching. I spent 6 months with the 22^e regiment in Kandahar. It's a desert out there. Not a darn tree anywhere. The Afghans don't know whether to trust us or not. They're frightened of us as well as of the Taliban. They've been at war for 30 years you know.
- Conrad:** (*with a surprised look*) Really ?
- Vincent:** (*intrigued*) What's a Taliban, Jerry?
- Jerry:** It's a bit complicated Vincent. But I can tell you that the Taliban is the group that was governing Afghanistan before the 9/11 event.
- Vincent:** (*gets excited and imitates a crashing plane*) September 11th. I know what that's about. It's when the two planes crashed into the towers of the World Trade Center in New York.
- Jerry:** Right on Vincent, and those who did this were members of Al Qaeda who trained in Afghanistan. In revenge the United States declared war on Afghanistan.
- Wilfrid:** But wait a minute Son. It wasn't only for revenge but also to combat terrorism.
- Jerry:** Well, yes...of course. It's a complicated story. But one thing for sure, life with the Taliban was not easy, especially for the women and girls, and music was prohibited and so was dancing...
- Vincent:** Hey... no music!?! (*He gets up, hums a song and does a few steps.*)
- Lucy:** (*with a stern voice*) Really, Vincent, be more raisonnable. (*Vincent stops and goes back to his seat.*)
- Jerry:** (*ignoring Vincent goes on*) But before the Taliban, the Afghans were occupied by the Russians, and then...the Afghans with the help of the Americans chased the Russians away.
- Lucy:** All this is confusing. Can anybody tell me what our troops are doing there with tanks and armoured vehicles?
- Jerry:** (*showing signs of fatigue*) Well we're trying to convince the Afghans that we are their friends and that they are better off with us than with the Taliban.

Alma: Well I find it's a strange way to show your friendship. You close yourself in these huge armoured tanks and go around shooting at people and children.... of all people it makes my blood boil.

Lucy: *(a bit annoyed)* Stop it mother. If Samuel enlists....

Conrad: *(trying to help Lucy)* Well... Why don't we change the subject. *(Looks at Jerry.)* Hey, how about a good fresh beer?

Jerry: *(brightening up)* Yes , I'd love one Sir.

Lucy: Christine , there's juice in the fridge. Beer does'nt agree with me. Bring some for mother and Vincent.

(While Christine and Conrad go out, the others keep silent to reflect about what was said. Christine comes back with a tray of glasses filled with juice.)

Conrad: *(Comes in holding 3 bottles of beer, shares them, sits down takes a gulp, reflecting says)* **Hmm!** It's still maddening to think that part of our income taxes are spent for a war on the other side of the world. Ten years ago nobody knew Afghanistan existed let alone Islamic terrorists, and.. this guy...what's his name Bin Laden?

Christine: That's why we are marching Dad. We march...

Conrad: *(interrupting and cries out)* March, march! What good does it do? Its useless!

Christine: Gee Dad, are you ever in a bad mood. What's gotten into you?

Lucy: *(pretending to ignore her husband's mood)* Its true that our politicians don't often listen, but in 2003 when the neocons like Bush, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld and Cheney decided to attack Iraq, our Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien said NO to that war. No to the Americans. Don't you think it helped him to know we were on his side?

Christine: Thats right Mom, I remember. We marched in January 2003 along St. Catherine Street. It was cold as Siberia. There were 300,000 of us, entire families, lots of old folks, people of all races! That's when the coalition Échec à la Guerre, “Stop the war movement” was formed. Because of OUR determination ...

Conrad: *(sarcastically, condescending)* My dear girl!

Christine: *(annoyed by father's attitude)* Let me finish Dad. Yes, because of the persistence and determination of many Canadians, especially of the Quebeckers, the message, “ NO!” was heard. We won the battle that time. That's what marching can do!DAD!

Conrad: OK! OK! Christine you've got me convinced ;but it's not Chrétien that is leading now; it's Harper in cahoots with Bush.

Jerry: You're right , Mr. Laviolette, times have changed.

Wilfrid: *(taking interest)* Times have changed, and since September 11th, it's terrorism that is leading the world. When I was a young soldier, we fought against one another. Today there seems to be no difference between the civilians and the military. A bomb could explode anywhere, there is no more security no matter where you go.

Jerry : I think it's money, oil and fear that also lead the world, and warmaking is very profitable, even in Montreal where the military industries are numerous.

Lucy: Do you know that Canada ranks 6th in the world as an arms exporter? Why the other day I read an article.....

Conrad: Ah, Lucy, leave us alone with your newspapers. We don't know what to believe anymore; if it's propaganda or the truth!

Lucy: Propaganda or not, Conrad, you've got to admit that wars are prepared way before you hear about them.

Conrad: Ya! And to think that there is corruption everywhere, even in our country.

Alma: *(disgusted)* **And to think that during that time, our Canadians soldiers are getting killed and wounded in Afghanistan.**

Lucy: *(asserts herself more)* **Yes , and it's our government that is supporting that war with our dollars, millions of dollars! Canada is at war! Would you believe it! We Canadian citizens are at war! We are living a culture of war and violence. HM! Forget about a culture of Peace.**

Christine: **I'm a nurse and I give flu shots. If we could only find or invent a vaccine against corruption and war!**

Jerry: **Christine, maybe there is a vaccine.**

Christine: **Oh, yeah?!**

Jerry: **Yes, it's not one you can find in a syringe. It's a kind of vaccine consisting of patience and determination. It's called the culture of peacemaking.**

Conrad: **Peace Education! Culture! Come on Jerry! That won't work! It's like putting a mouse in front of giant cannon. You said 99 Canadian soldiers have already been killed and nobody seems to know when our forces will get out! *(Please update the number of soldiers killed.)***

Lucy: *(trying to help)* **Edith Butler used to sing this song .*(See annexed musical score)* “J'ai jeté à la riviere tous les fusils de la guerre, mais l'amour c'est bien plus fort que tous les canons de la mort.”**

Alma: **What does the song mean?**

Lucy: **It means “I threw all the guns of war in the river. But love is much stronger than all the cannons of death.”**

Jerry : **Mrs Laviolette, it's also true that canons of death can kill 1000 persons a day; and the costs are incredibly high. The war in Iraq already surpasses 3 trillion dollars.**

Vincent: *(looks up)* **Trillions? How many millions is that? *(Gets up to get a paper and pencil.)* How many zeroes are there in that number Grandpa?**

Conrad: *(hesitates)* **HM...I think it's 1 millions of billions. So you put 18 zeroes after the number 3.**

Jerry : **Yes , it's a lot Vincent. Plus... you musn't forget the cost of the injured Americans coming back from that war.**

Conrad: *(discouraged)* **Oh! All this is all very sickening. I'm going to bed.**

Lucy: **Stay awhile Conrad. We're waiting for Samuel. War is a serious thing....and now that Sam has enlisted, we're pretty much involved, right?**

Conrad: *(who sits down again in despair)* **What can we do about it? Do you think we can talk him out of it?**

Alma: **We could try , but we have to wake up and be well informed.**

Joe: *(with Ipod, and book on his knees, closes his book, takes off his earplugs, looks at everybody and says)* **I was at a talk last night. It was on the role of Canada in Afghanistan and about conscientious objectors...**

Conrad: *(again irritated interrupts)* **More talk!**

Lucy: *(annoyed again)* **Frankly Conrad. What a grouch you are tonight. Let him talk. He's hardly said a word all evening.**

Conrad: *(changes his attitude)* **Conscientious Objector! I like that word. I'm one of them. We should all object. *(Then in despair again)* But who would listen?**

Christine: *(ignoring her father)* **We're listening. Go on Joe.**

Joe: To summarize they talked about the United Nations being powerless regarding this war. Furthermore we're being influenced toward, a trigger happy "Rambo" mentality. We're americanizing our Canadian troops you know. Forget about our Peace mission idea in Kandahar. There you fight, you fire, you kill, you get killed, that's it that's all!

Jerry: Plus, the military and the Pentagon don't give a damn about the United Nations.

Lucy: Yes and I've been told that war has always been a macho affair without regard for women, and it's the women and children who suffer the most.

Christine: *(turning to Joe)* So Joe what did they propose at the end of the conference?

Joe: That we must create a counterweight of protest to stop this spiral of violence; and not forget to stop the influence of violence on television.

Vincent: *(gets up takes 2 books in each hand and slowly mimics a scale)* Counterweight! *(Then he puts down the books, and sits down.)*

Jerry: *(with index finger mimics a spiralling motion)* Stop this spiral of violence!

Christine: *(pointing at the TV)* And violence on television!

Conrad: Oh, I'm war weary! *(Looking at Vincent)* Coming to bed Vincent? Grandpa has had enough. *(He offers his hand and they leave.)*

Alma: Me too. Enough for today. Coming Wilfred?
(Wilfrid is sleeping in his armchair.)

Wilfrid: *(shaken by hearing his name)* What? Oh yes, I'm coming . Good night all. *(He gets up slowly, a bit wobbly in the legs.)*

Everybody: *(looking at him)* Good night Mr & Mrs Laviolette. *(A 5 second silence is held.)*

Christine: *(turning to Joe)* Those speakers had it right. We must wake up and speak out and protest!
(The telephone rings: RRRing! Lucy gets up to answer.)

Lucy : Hello, yes. Adèle! How are you?... You're coming Thursday? Yes, yes, OK! Thursday it is. Bye!

Conrad: *(opens the door in his undershirt)* Did I hear you right? My sister Adèle is coming? Things are bad enough as it is! She's such a chatterbox and with her, all is nice and beautiful.
(With a bit of anger he adds- Goodnight! And slams the door.)

End of act II

Curtain falls.

Timing:Approx. 14 minutes.

- STOP -

Work for peace Stop paying for war

Act 111

(Two days later. It's 8 pm. Conrad is at his desk. Lucy is reading the newspaper. Adèle age 70, Conrad's healthy looking bubbly sister.)

Characters: Conrad Laviolette, Lucy Lafleur Laviolette, Adèle Laviolette, Christine Laviolette, Samuel Laviolette, Jerry Beaudoin

(The doorbell rings : Ding Dong. Lucy rises to answer and opens the door. Adèle enters.)

Lucy : Adèle ! It's so good to see you! *(They give each other a warm embrace.)* That's all you have for luggage?

Adèle : You know me, I travel light.

Lucy : Give me your coat. *(Takes her coat and puts it on the coat hanger.)* Have you had supper? Would you like some coffee, a drink?

Adèle: No thank you. I've eaten . Everything is fine..

Lucy: Did you have a good trip? Did you come by bus?

Adèle : Yes by bus, looking at the beautiful landscape for three hours long. Oh! What a beautiful country we live in..... and it's good to get away from time to time! *(Adèle sits down looking around)* Where's Conrad?

Lucy: *(sits beside her)* He's finishing his income tax return. He'll join us later..

Adèle : And you Lucy, how are you? *(Observing her more closely)* My... you look tired, what is going on? Is Mother OK? The children, Samuel?

Lucy: *(She sits down, hangs her head with sorrow....Long silence.She raises her head, wipes away her tears.)* I'm really worried. Yes it's Samuel.. I don't want to lose him. He's in perfect health. To tell you the truth Adèle. I can't sleep anymore.

Adèle: *(surprised and anxious)* Samuel, my godson! What has he done this time?

(Adèle takes Lucy in her arms as she starts to cry. There is a long moment of silence.)

Lucy: *(Then releases herself sobbing says)* Monday he went to enlist at the Recruitment Center. He wants to go to Afghanistan, "see the action", "help out", as he puts it.

Adèle: *(Taking her sister closer to her.)* You're not serious? SH! SH! Take it easy Lucy!

Lucy: *(irritated)* Take it easy! How can I take it easy ? You don't have a son who has enlisted in the army and yesterday another one of our boys was killed in Kandahar.

(She gets up to search for a kleenex and returns wiping her eyes.)

Adèle: *(asserts)* Ah, the little rascal! I'm going to have a talk with your Samuel. After all, I am his godmother!

Lucy: *(gets up again blows her nose and goes to the filing cabinet and returns with a folder)* Look, here is a poem written by a lady- Jeanne Hubert , a grandmother who is a peace activist. It's a cry from the heart. It's exactly the way I feel right now. It's written in French but I'll translate it for you O.K?

Adèle : I'm listening. *(She puts her hand on Lucy's shoulder.)*

(We see Conrad turning towards the voices he hears from the parlor. He stays in his chair, disturbed, intrigued, listening and is upset to see his wife in such a state.)

- Lucy:** *(controlling herself)* ,It say's: **I hurt for the hate and blood spilt in war; I hurt for the sorrow felt by mothers and grandmothers for their children; I hurt for their children and for the violence that overtakes people. I hurt..... no. I** *(pause)* **I need a place to cry, to moan, to grieve and try to reach out...!** *(Lucy stops and looks at Adèle.)* **You know Adèle, that's exactly the way I'm hurting. I.....** *(Lucy cries again but not for long,she blows her nose, straightens up.)*
- Adèle:** *(saddened but stoic)* **I know Lucy. SH! We'll look at it later, OK? But it's very touching. Do you know this woman who wrote the poem?**
- Lucy:** *(starting to feel better)* **I don't know her. It was Christine who gave me the text which was read during an anti-war march last January 2008, on St-Catherine Street in front of the recruitment Center.**
- Adèle** *(surprised)* **Is Christine interested in that sort of thing? Is she a militant?**
- Lucy :** **I really can't say; but she certainly knows her business; especially since she met a young man who has been to Afghanistan.**
- Adèle :** **Oh! That explains it!**
- Lucy:** *(surprised)* **What do you mean?**
- (The door opens and Samuel enters quietly, somber looking.)*
- Lucy:** *(sees him and straightens up)* **Oh, Samuel!**
- Samuel:** **Yes Mom.** *(He notices how upset his mother looks.)* **Please Mom, don't get so upset, OK?** *(Then he goes to his aunt Adèle.)* **Ah, hello Aunty.** *(They embrace and he sits between them on the sofa.)*
- Adèle:** **Is it true what your mother just told me? Have you really gone and enlisted?** *(Pointing to his head.)* **What is going on in there?**
- Samuel :** *(a bit shy)* **Aunty, you just don't understand.** *(He hesitates and then continues.)* **OK, look. I don't have a job, soldiers are pretty well paid and I could finish my CEGEP, but.....**
- Adèle:** **But what?**
- Samuel:** **Well, to tell you the truth I'm all mixed up. While I was waiting my turn at the Recruitment Center, I spoke to people, asked questions and I'm beginning to think that it's not as exciting as I had imagined.**
- Adèle:** *(surprised, sits back)* **Ah, no?**
- Samuel :** **Ya... It makes me think of the time I was in the cadets.**
- Adèle:** **You didn't like the cadets?**
- Samuel:** **No well, what I didn't like was being shouted at, and for trivialities we were forced to do push-ups.**
- Adèle:** **Push-ups don't do any harm Samuel and being in the cadets is not like being in the scouts. But it seems to me that the cadets act more like child soldiers.**
- Samuel:** **Don't exaggerate Auntie, we didn't kill. We shot at targets. But it's true that they prepared us for the army. Everybody had to be the same, dress alike, think alike, like robots.**
- Adèle:** **That's not like you, Samuel.**
- Samuel:** **No....and....oh...what mixes me up more is that yesterday I met a former military officer from a military family. His father, his uncles and grandfathers were all in the army. When he decided to quit, it created quite a scene. He said the army is like a religion.**
- Adèle:** *(listening attentively)* **Did he tell you why he quit the forces. He must have had a good salary, good fringe benefits and good friends. It seems that having friends is very important in the**

army.

- Samuel:** Auntie, It would take too long to tell you the whole story, but he said he enlisted for the adventure, and to help people as well. But he witnessed too many horrors to continue; and do you know that there are a lot of suicides in the army ?
- Adèle:** People commit suicide everywhere Samuel. Not just in the army.
- Samuel:** I know, but when you enlist, they convince you that everything will be a great adventure, that you have nothing to lose and he also said that you'd be surprised to know how many are against this mission in Afghanistan.
- Adèle:** He said all that?
- Samuel:** Yes and he said that though you have a good salary and friends, you live in constant fear of being called and killed. Yet at the same time it's tempting to go and be part of the action you know.
- Lucy:** *(finally breaking her silence)* My goodness!
- Adèle:** So what are you going to do Samuel?
- Samuel:** *(having said his fill, gets up, and feeling a bit better; looks at his Mom and Aunty)* I'm not sure yet, but in the meantime I need to read over this document I got from the Recruitment Center. *(Turning to his Mother.)* Mom, I haven't had supper yet. Do you have anything ready?
- Lucy:** *(shaken out of her silence)* Yes, Samuel, I kept your supper. Look in the fridge and warm it up in the oven.
- Samuel:** Thanks Mom. *(and leaves.)*
- Lucy:** Adèle. Do you think he will change his mind? I don't know how to talk to him. I'm too upset about it.
- (Their conversation is interrupted by voices. Christine and Jerry arrive take their coats off, hang them on the coat hanger.)*
- Christine :** *(surprised at seeing her aunt, then embraces her)* Ah, Aunt Adèle. What a wonderful surprise. When did you arrive?
- Adèle:** *(gets up)* I just got here an hour ago. *(Looks in the direction of the young man.)*
- Christine:** Oh, pardon me! I would like you to meet my friend, Jerry.
- Jerry:** *(shakes hands)* Christine told me a lot about you.
- Adèle:** *(unaffected by his remarks)* I hear you just came back from Kandahar?
- Jerry:** *(with a half smile)* Yes Mam, a month ago.
- Adèle:** I'm not in favor of that war. Canada used to be a peacekeeping country.
- Christine:** *(turns toward Jerry)* Jerry, Aunt Adèle is a member of the Raging Grannies.
- Jerry:** *(intrigued)* The Raging Grannies! Never heard of them.
- Christine :** Come on Jerry. They were there at the anti-war march in front of the Recruitment Center. They're old....oh pardon me. I mean they are grandmothers ,who are known for their intelligence, energy, enthusiasm, humour and their spunk. They're women dressed up crazily, wearing large outrageous hats, gaudy shawls and so on....
- Jerry :** Of course I remember. They were also at another demonstration on the steps in front of Christ Church Cathedral. They sang protest songs in support of the environment, social justice and world Peace.
- Christine:** *(embracing her aunt again)* Oh, Auntie, I'm so proud that you're a Raging Granny!
(And they all sit down.)

Adèle : Thank you Christine. I joined the ranks a few months ago. I'm a rookie at this. It's another way of protesting against all the nonsense and violence that is driving too many people crazy.

Lucy : It drives me crazy too, Adèle.

Adèle : We've gotta do something Lucy. Especially since Harper and his Conservative government have been in power. *(She sees Conrad.)*

Conrad: *(arrives, gives Adèle a big hug)* Hi, Adèle, how are you.?

Adèle : Well! Very well thank you Conrad. I'm in good shape as usual.

Conrad : I can see that. Do you still do your 30 sit-ups every morning?

Adèle: You haven't forgotten that , have you? And you, are you still doing your push-ups?

Conrad: *(caressing his belly a bit intimidated)* I'm too busy! Let's change the subject OK?

Lucy: You've always been very active Adèle. I tend to be lazy!

Adèle: Lazy! You have brought up three beautiful children and you still work part time. Without knowing it, you are a peace advocate yourself. You struggled to make things right, to make your family happy and those around you.

Lucy : Me, a peace activist! I could never be a Raging Granny!

Conrad: *(teasing Lucy)* Well I hope not! Imagine you wearing one of those funny hats! *(He mimics with his hands around his head, as if he is wearing the hat.)*

Adèle: *(a bit irritated at her brother's comments)* And what is wrong with that?

Christine: *(to change the moods)* Aunty, sing us one of the Granny songs.

Adèle: *(happy to indulge)* We usually take well-known tunes and add our own protest lyrics like, *(and she sings to the tune of Frère Jacques)* Taxes unending, military spending, what a waste, what a waste, reinstate some sanity, spend it for humanity, work for peace, work for peace.

Lucy: *(After a few claps)* Sounds like fun!

Adèle: *(proudly)* Yes it's fun, but it's also a lot of work to help promote peace, justice and respect for all children, and for the future of mankind. *(Stops to think)* – You know we can't stay indifferent on these questions. If we're not careful we'll also be on our way to extinction. That's why I joined the Raging Grannies. We women have to learn to assert and express ourselves, instead of being oppressed and depressed.

Conrad : Aren't you exaggerating a bit Adèle? Have we really gone that far?

Adèle: *(with a slight cynical tone)* No Conrad, we are just killing each other.... Collective suicide. I call it.

Conrad : Yeah, well , OK, but I'm still sweating over these income tax forms.

Adèle: *(with a look of sympathy)* Yes, war and income taxes are quite an nightmare aren't they?

Conrad : Absolutely, Adèle, you got that right. Unfortunately, the two are related.

Christine: Bravo Dad, you're starting to understand that income taxes and war are linked together- We pay the war expenses with our taxes and Harper is cutting in many programs where sounds of military boots are not heard.

Lucy: I'm also shocked to see a part of my income going to military industry. Could we not have our taxes serve peacekeeping instead of warfare?

Christine: And how could we believe that a military response could defend us against terrorism. Seems to me dropping bombs and shooting about is truly terrorizing.

Jerry: I agree with you there Christine.

Adèle : **Canada spends more on armament than on all Canadians living on low income level.**

Conrad: *(getting up from his chair)* **I really have to get back to my income tax return...**

Adèle: **Just a second Conrad. I've something that might interest you.** *(She goes out and comes back with a few papers and a DVD. She gives one to Conrad.)*

Conrad: *(with a little sarcasm)* **What's this? A little propaganda?**

Adèle : **No, well yes, a little. It about a conscientious protest group called Conscience Canada. It started in 1983.**

Lucy: *(handing out her hand)* **Do you have one for me Adèle?**

Adèle: **Here you go, and here Christine, Jerry. One for all of you..**

Christine: *(takes it and reads the cover aloud)* **“CONSCIENCE CANADA, PEACE TAX RETURN 2007. IF YOU WORK FOR PEACE... STOP PAYING FOR WAR, Affirm your refusal to pay for war. Redirect a symbolic part of your military taxes. Redirect all your military taxes.”**

Conrad: **Does it mean I don't have to pay any income taxes?**

Adèle: **No, it means that the amount you pay for the war, goes to a trust fund for Peace.**

Conrad: *(gets emotional)* **I still don't understand. I could be penalized, arrested; put on the list as a security threat.**

Adèle : **Come on Conrad. I've been doing this for years without any problems.**

Conrad: *(still resisting)* **It's too complicated! Besides...**

Lucy: *(with DVD in her hands reads)* **“WORK FOR PEACE , STOP PAYING FOR WAR. CONSCIENCE CANADA.”**

Jerry: *(hands out his hand to Lucy, takes the DVD looks at it and continues reading it)* **A film by Conscience Canada and Sarah Zammit- 11 minutes. This fast-paced, informative, emotionally engaging DVD on conscientious objection to military taxation invites us to refuse financing war and to redirect our taxes to Peace.**

Lucy: *(gets enthusiastic)* **May we see it?**

Conrad: *(more enthusiastic)* **Ah! Now... that's something to follow up on! *(But he gets scared again,)* BUT...It's too risky.....and it's too much trouble and you need to have everybody doing it. Otherwise ther's no impact.**

(Samuel enters.)

Samuel: *(with a smirk on his face)* **Hello everybody! What are you doing? What's going on?**

Lucy: **Ah,Samuel! Come and join us. Adèle has this DVD about income tax for Peace. Do you want to watch it ?**

Samuel: **Well....Yes , but before I have something to tell you all.**

Conrad: *(intrigued)* **Oh, ya ?**

Samuel: *(with assertion)* **I thought it over and..... I've decided not to join; I prefer to wait and see.**

(Every body applauds.. Lucy gets up to embrace her son.)

Conrad: *(is sceptic again)* **Wait a minute son. What are you going to do in the meantime?**

Samuel: *(staightens up)* **I'm going to finish my CEGEP, and that I can do without the army.**

Christine: *(not satisfied,nervously says)* **Wait a minute. You said wait. Wait for what Samuel?**

Adèle: *(anticipating this reaction)* **Hold on a minute. It's very important what Samuel said. Wait, yes I'm all for waiting. We should wait until our government changes it's policy and returns to peacekeeping missions. Back to good old fashioned common sense, and let's stop trying to please the Americans.**

Jerry: *(assured)* **Mrs Laviolette, I'm pleased to see you're not against the army.**

Adèle: **I'm not against the armed forces in principle, I'm against what our Canadian troops are doing in Afghanistan. All this makes me sad and furious! We must put pressure on our governments.**

Adèle: *(she goes takes the DVD from Jerrey and says)* **Let's look at this DVD . O.K?**

Conrad: *(becoming impatient again)* **If it takes more than 10 minutes, Adèle, I.....**

Adèle: *(smiling)* **Exactly 11(eleven) minutes Conrad. OK with you?**

Lucy: *(enthusiatic)* **Go head Adèle. (Looks at Christine) Christine will set it up.**
(Christine does that and everybody , audience including watches the film.)

The curtain falls

THE END

**Marguerite Bilodeau,
Peace activist, Montreal, Summer, 2008**

**Timing: Act 111-Approx. 18 minutes.
Total time : Approx. 30 minutes + 11 minutes of DVD = Approx. 40 min.**

N.B. Special thanks to Edward Napier, Ploughshare member; for helping me translate this work, and to Maryse Azzaria, Conscience Canada member, for their precious and continuous support and collaboration during the creation of this play. To them and many others who stood by and believe in Peacekeeping, thank you.

Marguerite

NOTE:

Suggestion :After the showing of the DVD, and applause, the public could be informed before hand that a 15 minute period of questions will be planned for those who are interested to know more about it. The public could perhaps be given a mini CC form accompanying the program as they arrive in the theatre. And the DVD could be given after to those who wish to have a copy?