

A17.25.8

BEFORE THE BOARD FOR RELIGIOUS OBJECTION

In the application of :

ANDRE CROUCAMP

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AFFIDAVIT OF ANDRE CROUCAMP

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I, the undersigned

ANDRE CROUCAMP

state under oath:

1. I am an adult male and I reside at 95 Ark Royal, Pietersen Street, Hillbrow.
2. The facts contained herein are true and correct and save where is otherwise stated or appears from the context, are within my personal knowledge.
3. This is an application to the Board for Religious Objectors ("the Board") to be classified as a religious objector in terms of s72 D (1) (a) (iii) of the Defence Act 44 of 1957.



4. The grounds for this application, as well as an application for condonation of its late filing hereof follow.

MY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

5. My particular religious orientation may appear somewhat unconventional in the context of our Western culture. But it is not something new in the religious experience of humankind. I do not belong to any formalised religion and I do not believe in a Supreme Being in a conventional sense. But I nevertheless consider myself to be religious. It is further in conflict with my religious convictions to render any military service or undergo any military training or perform any task in or in connection with any armed force.
6. My life has been committed to searching for the Truth no matter what the cost. What I understand by the concept of truth is not an abstract intellectual idea or spiritual doctrine. I use the word truth to mean an accurate perception and experience of reality.





7. My search for this experience of reality has led me through studies of the world's great religions and philosophies. I have assimilated and tried to integrate the insights of mystics, psychologists, historians and scientists alike. Opening myself to as many available expressions of humankind's experience of life as possible, I have tried to trace the patterns that could give me clues to the nature of the phenomena we call 'humankind'. This search has led me to the point where I identify with the teachings and experiences of the so called 'mystics'.
8. The mystic tradition is characterised by the experience expressed in the idea that 'ALL IS ONE'. The mystic experience is universal, transcending exclusive formalised religion and transcending the individual's identity as a member of a particular gender, race or nation. It is the religious experience par excellence.
9. Ever since I was a child I had a strong sense of the numinous - which I interpreted as 'the presence of God'. I was brought up in a Christian home and interpreted my religious experience in the words and images of Christianity. I attended both Anglican and Methodist Sunday schools and had a genuinely transforming conversion experience at the age of eight.



10. In my eagerness to understand and develop my 'relationship with God' I opened myself to the whole gamut of Christian experience from the more conventional forms of Christianity to the Charismatic movement, which in those days was considered radical. Apart from the accepted experiences of 'receiving the spirit' and 'speaking in tongues' I also experienced premonitions, dreams, visions and insights. These images I could not reconcile with my Christianity. I refrained from speaking about them.
11. At high school I immersed myself in church activities and hungered after experience and knowledge. My Christian involvement included being Chairman of the Student Christian Association, devotional leader of Children's Special Service Mission and a leader in the local Sunday school and confirmation classes. My religious experience was never divorced from the rest of my life. I carried it with me wherever I went. My religious experience gave me immeasurable self confidence. It inspired my involvement in the community: I became a Springbok Scout, the cultural head of the school, played first team water polo, received colours for drama and numerous awards for cultural activities.
12. After school I studied for the Bachelor of Theology degree at Rhodes University. It was here that I began to develop





an interest in meditation and began to group my numerous experiences under the broad heading of 'Spirituality'. I was actively involved in the Methodist Society as its vice-chairman, pioneered a team ministry at Fort England Psychiatric Institution, and led a Christian Educational Theatre group that presented drama at schools, churches, on campus and in the streets.

13. When I had completed my degree I went to Cape Town as a Methodist probation minister. I was appointed as the resident minister of the Southfield Methodist congregation. This year was one of the most formative in my whole life. Apart from acquiring first hand knowledge of the Christian Religious Institution and eventually coming into conflict with it over the issue of homosexuality, I had a number of intensely mystical experiences. One involved my experiences with dying people and coming to terms with my own death. Another was a 10 day silent retreat at a Catholic Convent where I began to understand the purpose of my experiences.
14. It was also here that I began reading extensively on the various mystic traditions. My sincere desire to come to terms with my experience eventually forced me out of the conventional perimetres of my religion.



15. I found very little within my tradition to help me interpret my experiences and perceptions. I was faced with the dilemma of making sense of something alien to my intellectual frames of reference. I was at this stage unaware of the rich mystical traditions within my own faith, Christianity.
16. I commenced a ruthless intellectual and experiential search. I found certain experiences related in the writings of Eastern mystics that I could identify with. They spoke of a oneness that cannot be perceived through the senses of sight, touch, taste, smell or hearing; that cannot be understood intellectually; a oneness that cannot be proved empirically if only the senses and the intellect are being used to perceive; a oneness that cannot be expressed in words and is at best left to the metaphors and symbols of artists, poets and visionaries.
17. I easily recognised my experience even though it was being expressed in metaphors that I was not familiar with. I realised that while religions differed in their attempts to express and participate in the transcendent or 'divine'; that while their disciplines, rituals, myths, doctrines and ethics differed, the basic religious experience on the level of mystical participation was strikingly similar.





18. Two things attracted me to the mystic's path. On the experiential level I found that I could identify with it completely, and on the intellectual level I was attracted by its universalism.
19. My inspiration and directions were gained from many writings, most notably those of Allan Watts, D T Suzuki, William Johnston and C G Jung. These gave me the courage to journey further into my depths with a sense of trust in and being 'loved' by the transcendent. My religious beliefs are also based on the Bible and on the records of the great mystics as captured in various writings.
20. I speak of the transcendent but I cannot find words that accurately describe the reality I have experienced. Some individuals and institutions have used the word 'God' and the images that go with it to symbolise this reality, but ultimately, it cannot be objectified or rationalised, only experienced.
21. My experience of this reality was facilitated by the discipline of meditation, where I would enter the silence and become vulnerable to the transcendent without the distractions of other everyday activities. In the silence my superficial thoughts and feelings were stilled and I was able to confront undiscovered realms of myself; my interconnectedness with the rest of humanity; my oneness



with nature and my union with the transcendent (God, Brahman, The Void, The One, the ground of all being, the Absolute Truth as it is variously named).

22. Dr D T Suzuki talks about the 'great ocean' when referring to the transcendent and says, 'Here lies the great spiritual tragedy of man; the water of life is desired, and this water (actually surrounds) him, enters into every fibre and cell of his tissues, is indeed himself, and yet he does not realise it and seeks it outside himself, even beyond the great ocean'.

(Living By Zen - Pg 111)

23. My journeys were always preceded by some form of intellectual, emotional and sensory purging - a type of death followed by a descent into the chaos of the unconscious. This was resolved in an experience of the transcendent and a "resurrection". The death I refer to is the death of ego.
24. It was while I was in the army that I immersed myself in the writings of mystics. Zen and Taoism proved to be of special significance to me. Both are essentially atheistic but believe in the transcendent. By transcendent I mean that which is perceived as being beyond time and space,





the senses and the intellect, but not beyond experience; the inexpressible surd element of life witnessed by the world's great spiritual leaders and given symbolic expression in the world's great religions.

25. The process of entering the silence in meditation is a process of increasing self awareness, through which I become aware of the concepts of my mind and the behaviour patterns that limit my true potential to be one with the transcendent. I call these limitations my 'Self Concept' (the complex of concepts that define me in my own mind) - that which great teachers like Christ call people to sacrifice in order to be 'born again'.
26. The mystic experience enlightens one to the fact that one's concept of one's self is based on the questionable and fallible perceptions of the various frames of reference that dominate and determine one's experience of life. These frames of reference include parental conditioning, socialisation, fears, guilt, successes and failures, prejudice, habits, formal education, language and religious dogmatism.
27. I realise that certain aspects of my Self Concept are useful in equipping me for life, but should never be allowed to determine the way I experience life, or



alienate me from the transcendent. The more liberated I become from these limitations, the more able I am to perceive things as they are, unconditioned by preconceived ideas.

28. I have since discovered that this death-resurrection cycle is a universal religious experience. The shaman-neophyte before his empowerment enters the underworld to be dismembered by demons; the Christian mystic is crucified with Christ; the Buddhist mystic has all the concepts he previously held to be true destroyed by his master.
29. This death and rebirth cycle has become the central experience in my spiritual growth. It is, I believe, best expressed by Christ: 'I tell you the truth, unless an ear of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life'. (John 12 : 24 - 25).
30. All spiritual disciplines try in one way or another to revive and restore the element of the eternal in man ( the image of God, Atman, Buddha-nature, the higher self, authenticity ) by deconstructing one's concepts of one's SELF. In the mystical tradition this deconstructing





eventually leads to a growing 'lack of definition'.

31. This growing lack of definition is not only the realisation that I cannot be defined but also the enlightenment that I am actually part of life, not apart from it in any objective sense. The journey 'inwards' eventually leads me to that point in myself where I am interconnected with all things, where I experience the mystical truth that ALL IS ONE.
32. After such an experience I can never take sides in any objective sense - there are no sides, there are no opposites, all is one. My encounters are completely situational. I cannot support any system of absolutes - whether religious, moral, economic or political.
33. I cannot distance myself from the suffering of others. My experience has no clear boundaries to separate me from theirs. I can never be completely healed or liberated until the whole of 'creation' is.
34. I am convinced that freedom from suffering does not lie in material or emotional security, or in defending one system over another. True freedom lies in an awareness of who and what we are - not South Africans, not Christians, not black or white, left or right, male or female but humankind, in which we are all vital parts of each other.



35. The mystic journey contains the paradox of being broken to be healed, being emptied to be filled. In this respect the mystic journey gives rise to an overwhelming empathy. This empathy comes out of being 'broken open' to suffer others.
36. I found this experience very threatening. It was a journey into the wilderness where everything that gave me a sense of security was destroyed, and I was emptied. I realised that only when one clings to nothing can one be open to the transcendent.
37. This is the Christian concept of the "power that is made perfect in weakness"; the Zen concept of 'non-attachment' and what the Jewish mystic Martin Buber calls 'Holy insecurity'. It is the only way that I can be in the Now and allow life to flow through me. It is the only way that I can become that peculiar expression of the transcendent that I am and experience my at-one-ment with all of life.
38. My choice not to serve as a member of any army is born out of my commitment to compassion and understanding. It does not arise because it is a good idea, but because it is a reality that I experience in the depth of my being and cannot escape from.
39. When I am urged to love my neighbour as myself, it does





not mean that I should do to my neighbour what I would like to be done to me. There are many things that I would like done to me that my neighbour would detest. Instead, I believe that I must love my neighbour because ultimately, he is myself, I am part of him and he is part of me. I experience my being in union with all being and could never support a system that denies this basic truth.

40. I am able to embrace the differentness of another, even if they consider themselves to be my enemy. I do not believe that 'sameness' leads to 'oneness'. Only when men and women see the complementary parts of their own being in the differentness of another's will humankind be at peace.
41. It is not in escape from suffering that we are liberated. True liberation lies in full participation in the nature of things and through this selfless compassion one dissolves the ego, is released from self, from desire and from fear. And so I embrace the whole and am embraced by it.

#### CONCLUSIONS

42. I do not believe in a 'Supreme Being' or a 'God' in the conventional sense. These words are inadequate attempts to express (in terms of human knowledge) that which is

the source of all things and is ultimately inexpressible.


43. I believe in the transcendent universal truth that has expressed itself in all great world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Islam), but do not support any one exclusive religious institution in particular.
44. The essence of this truth concerns the integration (reconciliation) of all life. The great spiritual teachers like Buddha and Christ never advocated the formation of religious institutions. In fact they criticised them. Their message was one that transcended particular religious doctrines.
45. I believe that ALL IS ONE and my lifestyle is a spiritual discipline that facilitates a vulnerability to this transcendent truth. It is a lifestyle that is committed to compassion and understanding. These are my articles of faith.
46. People accept being conscripted into the SADF for various reasons: they believe in some abstract truth that is worth killing for; they see it as the only practical way to protect their security, their family, their 'people'; they find it expedient; they are pressurised or feel guilty; they actually enjoy it; they are afraid. These reasons do not motivate me.





47. I am motivated by my participation in the transcendent and the compassion it expresses through me. I am motivated by what it means to be a member of humankind and of this planet. For these reasons I cannot be part of the life and actions of any army in any way.

#### CONDONATION

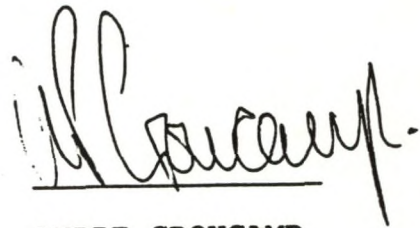
48. I ask the Board to condone the fact that this application has not been made within 30 days of my receiving notice to render military service in the form of a camp. After performing two years military service, I obtained exemption in respect of a camp in July 1988. However, I was again called up for a camp over the period 18 December 1989 to 16 January 1990 and was refused exemption (deferment) on 28 November 1989. Later in this month, I wrote to Captain JM Alho of the SADF informing him that I would not be able to serve in the SADF. I was later charged and appeared in the Magistrate's Court. My case was postponed to 26 and 27 March 1990.
49. I did not submit this application sooner because I was not initially aware of the fact that the Board could consider applications from persons with religious orientations like my own.
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50. It was only after I had appeared in the Magistrate's Court on a charge of refusing to serve in the SADF that my attorneys brought to my attention the possibility of being classified as a religious objector. I was informed that the Board was in fact giving consideration to an application of a person whose religious beliefs could be regarded as unconventional. As soon as I became aware of this I began to prepare this application.
51. Shortly after receiving the call up, and within the 30 day period I gave the SADF a statement for my file in which I clearly set out my beliefs. The person who received this statement apparently did not see my religious beliefs as qualifying before the Board.
52. I now believe that my religious convictions do qualify me for classification by the Board. For the reasons advanced above I therefore request condonation for the late filing of this application.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized capital 'D' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal stroke at the bottom.

CH





ANDRE CROUCAMP

THUS, DONE, SIGNED and SWORN to before me at JOHANNESBURG on this 23 day of March 1990, the Deponent having acknowledged that he knows and understands the contents of this affidavit, has no objection to taking the oath, and considers the oath binding on his conscience.

COMMISSIONER OF OATHS  
KOMMISSARIS VAN EDE  
DISTRICT/DISTRIK  
JOHANNESBURG



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