

Application for Classification
As a Conscientious Objector
(for the U.S. Military Draft)

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Series II--RELIGIOUS TRAINING AND BELIEF

1. Describe the nature of your belief which is the basis of your claim and why you consider it to be based on religious training and belief.

I believe that God manifests his will within each man's conscience, and that it is each man's sacred duty to follow the dictates of his conscience. It is the individual's right (and responsibility) to live his own life in support of the principles which he holds to be holy. I am a pacifist. My conscience has told me throughout my life that to physically harm or, ultimately, kill another man would be the worst sin I could commit against myself and what I hold to be my manhood. I firmly believe that if we are to survive on this planet, we must (we will have to) adopt and adhere to non-violent means of settling our differences.

I further believe that all men are my brothers. I feel that I must love all of my fellow men, hating none for any prejudicial reason, and that I must seek to create a world of peaceful harmony by working with him. The Beatles speak for me in "Revolution" when they sing: "but when you talk about destruction, you know that you can count me out." I think I would rather allow the destruction of my self, if necessary, than be held responsible for the destruction of another man. I believe in creation, and creation for me implies non-violent means. I live for what I may some day be able to create for my brothers. All we really need is Love.

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2. Explain how, when and from whom or from what source you received the religious training and acquired the religious belief which is the basis of your claim. (Include here, where applicable, such information as religion of parents and other members of family; childhood religious training; religious and general education; experiences at school and college; organizational memberships and affiliations; books and other readings which influenced you; association with clergymen, teachers, advisers or other individuals which affected you; and any other material which will help give the local board the fullest possible picture of how your beliefs developed.

My religious training includes all the experiences of my life. I will try to outline briefly, however, some of the key events and influences which have made me a pacifist.

I was born and brought up within the Roman Catholic Church. Although I never attended parochial school, I received all the traditional sacraments of the Church, had my childhood philosophy practically dictated by the Church's teachings, and even thought for a number of years that I might have had a vocation to become a priest. I should state here that the Church no longer dictates completely to my conscience. I am aware of the "just war doctrine," but I myself believe that all wars are unjust.

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council have stated that the ultimate arbiter of a man's morality is his conscience, and my conscience tells me that I must not support, in any way that I can help, the continuation of man's violence toward his fellow man. In the Constitution of the Church in the Modern World Vatican II states:

In spite of the fact that recent wars have wrought physical and moral havoc on our world, war produces its devastation day by day in some part of the world...Contemplating this melancholy state of humanity, the Council wishes, above all things else, to recall the permanent binding force of universal natural law and its all-embracing principles. Therefore, actions which deliberately conflict with these same principles, as well as orders commanding such actions are criminal, and blind obedience cannot excuse those who yield to them. The most infamous among these are actions designed for the methodical extermination of an entire people, nation or ethnic minority. Such actions must be vehemently condemned as horrendous crimes. The courage of those who fearlessly and openly resist those who issue such commands merits the highest commendation...it seems right that laws make humane provisions for the case of those who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms, provided however, that they agree to serve the human community in some other way.

I have been influenced by many other of the world's religions, especially those of the Far East. I consider all the world's religions to be one, as does the Bahai faith, which I took up for a time while at college.

Personal experiences with violence have led me to believe that its use creates rather than solves many of the world's problems. My recollection of the last time I struck someone in anger is extremely vivid. I was very young- about thirteen. I have never been able to forget the expression on the face of the boy I hit as he doubled over with pain after a blow to the stomach. During

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the last ten years of my life since then, I have never again resorted to personal physical violence.

I myself have been struck by others since, however. While I was young my father used to strike me as a means of discipline. Consequently I resolved, while still a child, never to use violent means in attempting to achieve peaceful ends. As Martin Luther King said in his Letter from Birmingham City Jail, "...nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek." My conscience tells me that I must never use immoral means to achieve what may be moral ends, and I believe not only that violence cannot work but further that its use is immoral.

The last time I fell victim to the violence of another man was three years ago while I was studying for my college degree. The man was a friend of mine, a fraternity brother, a stand-out on the "Big Ten" football field. He hit me once. I did not defend myself. He broke my jaw. A poem I wrote about this experience follows at the end of this section. The entire episode, with the pain and frustration which followed, hardened my belief that non-violent means must be employed to settle my own personal problems and those of the larger world of men if we are to live happily, through love and in peace, in the fullest way possible.

I define this fullness of life through art, which I define as life itself, only usually at least a step removed. Much of my religious training, here viewing art as religion, has come from concerts and records, readings and books, and picture-takings and films. Following is a partial listing of those thinkers and artists and their works which have most influenced my religious beliefs,

MUSICIANS:

Jazz man John Coltrane, most notably in his profound offering to God, the record A Love Supreme.

Also jazz men Pharoah Sanders (Tahoud), Albert Ayler (Spirits Rejoice), and Sun Ra (The Heliocentric Worlds) in their musical definitions of spirituality.

The Beatles, in their musical statements (All You Need Is Love, A Day in the Life, Happiness Is a Warm Gun, etc.) on the nature of love.

Folk singer Donovan (Universal Soldier), the gentlest man I know.

WRITERS:

Mahatma Ghandi, who demonstrated before the world the effective power of non-violence (Ghandi on Non-violence).

The Rev. Martin Luther King, who demonstrated and preached the non-violent way within the context of Christianity (Letter from Birmingham City Jail, I Have a Dream).

Jesus Christ, whose life remains as one of the finest examples of the power of love (Bible)

Buddha, who taught men the lovely way to ego-freedom (The Teaching of Buddha, The Way of Zen)

Hermanne Hesse, whose novels (Demian, Steppenwolf, Siddhartha) show the relevance of the Buddha to Western life and the mystical Unity of All.

Albert Camus (The Stranger, The Fall) whose definition of the individual's role in society is for me the keystone of existentialism.

And the poets Kenneth Patchen (Selected Poems, The Love Poems) and Allen Ginsberg (Howl, Kaddish, Planet News) who have never ceased to write about the things I can feel with my whole being- the senselessness of war, the need for love among men on earth, the presence of God in man, and the continual resurgence of the beautiful in life. (Several of Patchen's poems follow at the end of this section.)

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FILM-MAKERS

As radio, television, and film was my major field of study in college, I have had the opportunity to see many films, and my philosophy has in turn been greatly affected by many of my favorite directors. Following is a partial listing of those films which have influenced my thinking on the morality of war:

Hiroshima Mon Amour, Night and Fog, Hurriel...Alain Resnais
The Little Soldier, The Riflemen, Alphaville, Weekend...Jean-Luc Godard
The Charge of the Light Brigade...Tony Richardson
Shame...Ingmar Bergman, The Battle of San Pietro...John Huston
General Della Rovere, Rome- Open City...Roberto Rossellini
Triumph of the Will...Leni Riefenstahl
Dr. Strangelove, or how I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb,
Paths of Glory...Stanley Kubrick, King and Country...Joseph Losey
Battleship Potemkin...Sergei Eisenstein
The Great Illusion...Jean Renoir
All Quiet on the Western Front...Lewis Milestone
Yellow Submarine...the Beatles
The War Game, The Hills of the Gods
I believe that it has been on film that war has been shown most realistically.

Months of Broken Jaw Day

(a poem I wrote in 1965, published in Sycamore magazine, Vol.1, No.1)

A half sleepy alarmed buzz
in the jaw
the morning of the day
which lasted months
of sugary Old cane
and unchewing gums
of clouded window pain
and headache hums
of bone dry rain
and brawling bums
that punch doctor's patients
and get blood
on everyone's sprained hands.

An Instantly perked Breakfast
between Carnation clenched teeth
the morning of the day
which lasted months
of Metrecaled banana bunch
and punchless rum punch
of soupy speckled green potatoes
and mushrooming Campbell tomatoes
of cherry pineapple chocolate shakes
and strainings through bones that break
at the thought of three inch wires
penetrating the eight brains
of everyone's jaw head.

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A bleeding eyed stumble
into jaw town
the morning of the day
which lasted months
of mumbled jumbled tellings
and embarrassed arm reaches
of classroom hell proddings
and unspoken speeches
of passionately tongueless kissings
and fastened breeches
which stayed that way
the whole months of day
in everyone's broken pants.

A tortured wait in the office
of the jaw
the morning of the day
which lasted months
of doctor's \$300 care
and priceless public hair
of waiting room observations
and similar facial frustrations
of lollipop stopped spankings
and then the wire yankings
which brought the mouth open
to talk of love
and allow everyone to make it.

The following poems were included in a television show I edited,
produced, and directed for a television course at college. It was
titled "American Poets on War."

Peace
or perish
The issue
is no longer
war-
it is nothing
less than the
complete and
certainly
unavoidable
extinction
of every form
of life
on this planet

...Kenneth Patchen

"And When Freedom Is Achieved..."

You have used a word
Which means nothing.
You have given a word
The power to send men to death.
Men are not free who are sent to die.
Only those who send them are 'free.'
You should have freedom stuffed down your fat throats.
...Kenneth Patchen

What Is the Beautiful?

The narrowing line.
 Walking on burning ground.
 Unrest in the outer districts.
 Needles through the eye.
 Bodies cracked open like nuts.
 Tents in the sultry weather.
 Rifles hate holds.
 Who is right?
 Was Christ?
 Is it wrong to love all men?
 Will flying fly?
 Will singing have a song?
 Will the shapes of evil fall?
 Will the lives of men grow clean?
 Will the power be for good?
 Will the power of man find its sun?
 Will the power of man flame as the sun?
 Will the power of man turn against death?
 Who is right?
 Is war?

...Kenneth Patchen

(from) *Army*

How can I love the Army?
 Doves honk it wicked!
 Nothing I know wishes a young man die
 (perhaps Army)
 One concise bullet aimed at the heart
 can never separate youth from youth
 (perhaps Army can)
 Even with all its helmets
 who can love the Army?
 (Army)
 Army walks the battlefield and does not retreat
 Army kneels before the boys who fell and
 revels in the fragrance of their gunpowdered mouths
 Army likes to hieroglyph the ground
 with fragments of lyric youth.
 How can I love the Army?

...Gregory Corso

(from) *The Death of Nick Charles*

We love only heroes. Glorious
 death in battle. Scaling walls,
 burning bridges behind us, destroying
 all ways back. All retreat. As if
 some things were fixed. As if the moon
 would come to us each night (&
 we could watch
 from the battlements). As if
 there were anything certain
 or lovely
 in our lives.

...LeRoi Jones

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I would like to end the poetry with another of my own:

Dirge of the Dead Sailors

O Death, thou all victorious ghost in man,
We are the vanquished singers of the sea.
We who were young once only
Saw the glory on your wings
Emblazon our Sunday prayers
And sweep from the skies our lives.
We who are locked in the sea salute you
And raise a flag to kiss the rising sun.
O Death, what brings you to the sun at all?

Blue, blue-green and brilliant
we chased the sea of dancing birds.
Leeward, windward, all that sea was amazing,
we were anxious.

March! March! March!
Over the rice and the Red River
and the shallows of the Yellow Sea
To that awful parallel of death and ambiguity.

Shoot! Shoot! Shoot!
Spread blood among the lilies,
on the ground, in the falling,
bamboo split and red-splattered
rhododendron
Running and firing all awry and dizzy on the hills.

There the flesh broke from our face,
our brains turned hot and numb.
There the blood choked in our ears,
we wore purple metals in our breast
and hung our hearts outside the bone.
There our bodies fell like dominoes
across the broken board of Asia.
There on the board the colors of our eyes accused us
and the whiteness of our face,
Until we touched the hand of another race
and philosophy filled the cartridge in our guns.
Here is a race whose eyes all bear the same color;
They are older and more tired of war.
Our eyes have not suffered like theirs.
We are yet too young and many-prismed
to understand the color of history.
When we lay our flag across another's grave,
Which of us returns to ask the age-old question,
"Is it lovely to die for one's country?"

I am a member of the Catholic Peace Fellowship and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and, in addition, have supported, at one time or another: SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Comm.), NOBE (Mobilization to End the War in Viet Nam), and the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference).

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3. To what extent does your religious training and belief restrict you from ministering to the sick and injured, either civilian or military, or from serving in the Armed Forces as a noncombatant without weapons?

The statement I signed in Series I (statement B) should make it clear to what extent my beliefs restrict me from serving in the Armed Forces in any capacity.

The Army Field Manual (FM 8-10, page 195) states in part: "The primary duty of medical troops as of all other troops is to contribute to the success of the command of which the medical service is a part." Contained in these words is a principle reason why I feel I cannot participate as a noncombatant soldier. My conscience will not allow me to participate personally in any war, or to give any sanction I can withhold from physical, moral, or psychological preparation for war.

I am, however, firmly committed to doing my share for my country, and my religious training and beliefs in no way restrict me from ministering to the sick and injured, civilian or military, in any civilian capacity.

4. Have you ever given expression publicly or privately, written or oral, to the views herein expressed as the basis for your claim?

I have given constant expression, both publicly and privately, to the beliefs outlined above. I have taken part in many public demonstrations against the wars of my time, for the most part here in the United States. The largest Peace demonstrations in which I have marched were those in Washington, autumn 1967, and Chicago, spring 1968.

I have spoken often of the views stated herein in private- far more often, in fact, than in public. I have attempted throughout the past years to carry the fight for eternal peace to those closest to me- my family and friends.

And, of course, I have never ceased to express my innermost thoughts to my self, put them privately to my conscience, which I do principally through poetry. Each of my poems represents an attempt to reach the Nirvana of inner peace.