

of mass communication under government regulation to defame church institutions or leaders, to subject church loyalty to the poison of innuendo; to differentiate between religious groups in point of patriotism, and thus to undermine religion itself, the centuries-old nature of the American people as a religious people, and the essential unity of our nation in its life and freedom.

11.

Such efforts and practices not only are a patent violation of the free exercise of religion as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, but also are violations of that Amendment's guarantees of freedom of expression and opinion and of every citizen's right to discuss openly and without fear the practices and policies of his government. They set a pattern which is profoundly un-American and which, unless opposed and checked, can inculcate familiar totalitarian methods for manipulating the people's mind.

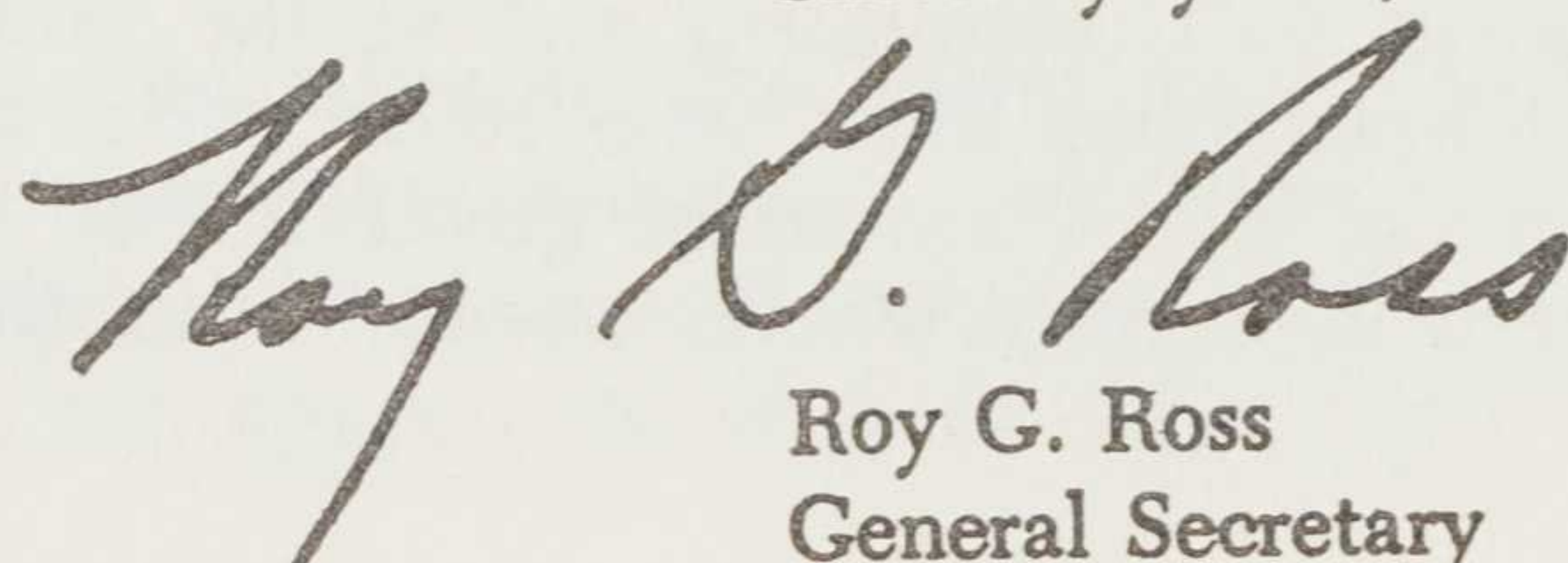
The very purpose of the Bill of Rights was to secure religious liberty and those associated liberties from the invasion of civil authority, and to place them beyond the reach of political or official control, or of private malevolence insinuating itself into media operating under government sanction.

12.

Precisely because of the National Council's unalterable loyalty to these American constitutional principles, it insists not only on the right but also on the duty of the churches and of religious communions and their members to study and comment upon issues, whether political, economic or social, which affect human relations, the dignity of the individual, and the right of all men everywhere to liberty under law and justice.

To serve these noble and thoroughly democratic and American ends, the National Council conducts itself as the cooperative medium through which thirty-three Protestant and Orthodox communions in the United States focus the light of the Christian Faith on all phases of American life; and American concern. That it may so serve fully and loyally, the National Council will continue to oppose not only communism and any other form of tyranny over the mind of man, but also all efforts public or private, to subject the churches of America and their representatives to any ordeal of suspicion, innuendo and hysteria.

Sincerely yours,



Roy G. Ross
General Secretary

Again we hear the allegation that the Government is defaming the church. Such a thing is not in the Air Force Training Manual. What is significant is that no effort is made to deal in answer with any specific statement of the Air Force Training Manual. We hear about the "poison of innuendo," and how this Air Force Training Manual controversy is alleged to be destroying "the essential unity of our notion."

What else is left for the National Council of Churches to think up in relation to the Air Force Training Manual controversy? How much simpler it would be for the National Council leaders to invite and welcome a full investigation by the security forces of the United States Government into the Red's use of religion, with the confession that they would be happy to find out if there were any Communists operating under cover in their churches! If the National Council is unalterably opposed to Communism, this should be its first recommendation when questions of this kind are raised and evidence appears to support such a conclusion. What has the NCC to hide? Is it that the Reds are determined to be shielded?

11.

Again we return to the First Amendment of the Constitution. We read a dissertation on "every citizen's right to discuss openly and without fear the practices and policies of his government." What this has to do with the Air Force Training Manual controversy is not apparent. Nobody has questioned the right of the National Council to attack the Air Force or the Air Force Training Manual; in fact, it would be helpful if the Council did discuss the merits of the Air Force Training Manual's statements and not engage in what is obviously intended to divert attention and try to make the issue something different from what it actually is.

12.

Again, the National Council expounds not only "the right but also . . . the duty of the churches and of religious communions and their members to study and comment upon issues, whether political, economic or social." Actually, it is because the National Council has been doing this sort of thing that a lot of people, aside from the Air Force Training Manual itself, have begun to question the soundness of the NCC's position in relationship to our free society. The National Council has gotten itself into difficulty because in its pronouncements it has taken positions which are far to the left and support the socialistic reordering of American society.

This letter to the Congressmen, therefore, consists of some strong affirmations, but makes no effort whatsoever to meet the questions raised by the Air Force Training Manual. As a matter of fact, one can read the letter and wonder if it has any connection at all, directly or indirectly, with the Air Force Training Manual. It does reveal that the leaders of the National Council of Churches are terribly distressed. Obviously, they have a right to be, when they are unable to do any better job of satisfying the Christians in their churches in regard not only to the material in the Air Force Training Manual but to the documentation, facts, and literature which are being distributed far and wide throughout the country by what the National Council calls "the noisy detractors."