

A REVIEW AND THE REVIEWS

BY CARL McINTIRE

COMMUNISM AND THE CHURCHES by Ralph Lord Roy; 495 pages; \$7.50;

PUBLISHED BY HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY

"An official manual of the United States Air Force charged in 1960 that Communists and 'fellow-travelers' had infiltrated the churches." This statement is in the first paragraph of the introduction of the book, *Communism and the Churches*. Also the first sentence in the conclusion, after 417 pages, reads, "In early 1960 the United States Air Force released a training manual that contained this accusation: ". . . there appears to be overwhelming evidence of Communist anti-religious activity in the United States through the infiltration of fellow travelers into churches and educational institutions." But the conclusion of Author Ralph Lord Roy, after a prolonged excursion into this field, categorically denies this. Roy insists that it is "absurd," and declares, "The Communist Party in America never did undertake a full-scale campaign to infiltrate the churches" (p. 421), and, "Today Communist influence within the American churches is near the zero mark" (p. 425).

Thus the Fund for the Republic has financed a book, the impact of which is to declare that there has been no effective Communist use of religion in the United States and to dispute emphatically the conclusions of the Air Force Training Manual, which is based upon findings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities of the Congress of the United States. From beginning to end the document is a thoroughgoing whitewash of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and leaders of the Council, and it seeks to discredit the anti-Communists in the religious field. The book could not possibly be called scholarly. It is a propaganda volume designed for the purpose of maintaining a predetermined position.

Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of the Methodist Church, who has been the center of so much controversy so far as Communist fronts are concerned, declares, "I recommend it with enthusiasm." John C. Bennett, dean of Union Theological Seminary and author of the five thousand-word letter of the Fifth World Order Study Conference calling for the recognition of Red China and her admission to the United Nations and peaceful coexistence with the Communists, declared, "The book will clear the air of much nonsense."

The reviews which have already appeared in various ecumenical journals have been glowing in their praise.

The liberal New York Times had its review done by the editor of *The Christian Century*, Harold Fey, who is a member of the Roy clan.

Presbyterian Life, official organ of the United Presbyterian Church, could not speak too highly of the book.

It is true that the liberal, modernist, leftist church interests in the country have been somewhat defenseless and they welcome enthusiastically a book that gives them a thorough vindication.

In our review of this volume, we shall consider first, outstanding instances that show the bias of the author and his unwillingness to present all the significant facts, which would alter his conclusion; second, his attitude toward the documentation produced by the security committees of the United States Government; and third, his attempt to discredit the "detractors" or the anti-Communists.

I. AUTHOR'S BIAS

A. Metropolitan Nicolai

An outstanding instance of the Communists' use of religion was the tour of the United States by Metropolitan Nicolai, the second ranking churchman of the Russian Orthodox Church. Nicolai came in June, 1956, as the honored guest of the National Council of Churches. He used the NCC's platform for Communist propaganda!

Roy discusses this development and concludes his report by emphasizing, "Most important at Greenwich, Connecticut, he [Nicolai] condemned the Communist Party's materialism," which, he said, denies 'all that we regard as holy.'" The collaboration with Nicolai was a part of keeping "the channels of communication open."

Roy recognizes that Metropolitan Nicolai had been accused of being a "Soviet agent" — which he places in quotation marks and which he obviously does not accept. He then dismisses the opposition as "hecklers," "professional antagonists of the World Council of Churches who seized upon every opportunity to vent their hatred against Protestant leadership" (p. 269). "Hatred"?

Mr. Roy does not mention the testimony of Peter S. Deriabin, a major general of the Soviet secret police who gave his reports before the House Un-American Activities Committee and also in a feature article in *Life* magazine, March 23, 1959, in which he identified Metropolitan Nicolai as a Soviet agent and called him "a state security agent of long standing." Yet an *Associated Press* dispatch, June 9, 1956, when Nicolai was in the United States, reported that Nicolai "denied categorically tonight that either he or any other member of the Soviet religious delegation now visiting the United States had ever collaborated with the Communists." Moreover, previous to the visit of the official delegation of the National Council to Moscow in March, 1956, a translation of the speeches of Metropolitan Nicolai contained tirades against the West as they appeared in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*. This was widely circulated and this material was actually placed in the hands of the delegation that went to Moscow. These men were without excuse.

Speaking of American soldier boys, Nicolai said, "These civilized savages arranged shooting matches with living targets, binding peasants to posts with barbed wire and shooting each of them over the heart of the target. Reviving the customs of the young-fascists, young yankees photo-