

WHY MEN CONFESS. By O. John Rogge. (New York: Nelson. Pp. 298. \$3.95.)

The evaluation of the Chinese indoctrination process used on Americans during and immediately after the Korean War remains a topic of lively interest, and the search for antidotes to this kind of indoctrination gives purpose to continued studies of its nature. The dissemination of the Code of Conduct by the Defense Department, with its strong emphasis on training, has resulted in many attempts to synthesize current knowledge of the process in manageable and teachable form. But an oversimplified and distorted popular concept of "brainwashing" has become so well established, not only with the man in the street but with many whose association with intelligence work should make them more sophisticated or at least better informed, that the problem of furnishing a better foundation for understanding, combatting and resisting Communist indoctrination becomes formidable.

Kinkead's In Every War But One,¹ written in support of the Code of

¹New York: W.W. Norton. 1959

Conduct, explicitly discounts any occult art of brainwashing, but in its straining to dramatize the need for better morale among enlisted men it bypasses the problem of preparing air force or intelligence officers, for example, for the kind of interrogation and indoctrination they may face as prisoners of the Communists. But if Kinkead's viewpoint is too narrow, it is almost impossible to round out the picture by pointing to books with a wider vista or with more specific applicability to the intelligence

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specialist. The more general books range from the obviously well-intentioned but scientifically inaccurate ones of Hunter to those like the quasi-scientific but highly controversial Rape of the Mind by Meerloo. The definitive book on the indoctrination process particularly as it pertains to the intelligence specialist is yet to be written.

Why Men Confess is certainly not the definitive book, but it does represent an important contribution to a growing literature. It treats the Communist process as one manifestation of a standard inquisitional method used by others today and in the historical past, and it becomes therefore an encyclopedia of the history of confession and a sort of concordance of literary allusions to the confession process. It does not have the journalistic polish of Hunter or Kinkead or the sensationalism of Meerloo. The skill of a practiced lawyer has been applied to produce what is in effect a brief on the subject as seen from his experience and reading. His experience is largely in the "confessions" of the criminal courts, which are so often fallible and sometimes dictated by pathological motives; his reading has been historical, literary and scientific. As far as can be determined, he has been both catholic and thorough in these researches. Consequently, even though fault can be found with some of its conclusions, his work is very useful as a source book.

It is apparent that Mr. Rogge is more at home with historical and literary research than in evaluating scientific articles. Except in citing the Senate testimony of experts and the descriptive (rather than

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evaluative) paper of Hinkle and Wolff,² he uses scientific authorities

²Communist Interrogation and Indoctrination of 'Enemies of the States,' "AMA Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry, August 1956, Vol. 76, pp 115—174.

inappropriately. His rather heavy emphasis on psychoanalytically based concepts that are at worst obscure and at best controversial is unfortunate. The book would be more solid if he had stuck to the approach he used with his literary and historical materials. Dostoevski, Gogol, Beck, and Godin represent much more effective documentation for his position than Reik, Berg, or Freud. Perhaps this criticism would not be necessary were it not for the blurb on the dust jacket (for which the author is presumably not responsible) "...Mr. Rogge tells us all that psychology knows about the compulsion to confess."

Mr. Rogge uses his encyclopedic concordance to argue the thesis illustrated in the following quotations:

The inquisitional method, which the communists have exploited for a quarter of a century, is a throwback to the past and should be abandoned, especially in view of the growth and power of modern states. (p. 29)

Neither the system of legal proofs nor the use of physical force will explain the many confessions to communist, French and clerical inquisitors. But there was one thing which the different regimes of these inquisitors had in common: the inquisitional system. (p. 199)

All roads led to the same conclusion: the primitive and irrational nature of most of the mind together with the power of modern states, our own included, make it necessary to abandon not only the

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inquisitional technique but also any of its challenged fruits. The world should have done with investigative authorities questioning a suspected individual, like a powerful parent interrogating a helpless child. The inquisitional system stands in the way of the development of equalitarian societies and the growth of human beings into mature individuals. (p. 246)

Woven into ~~his~~^{his} thesis and making up the climax is his belief that silence is a right of man that is basic, inviolable, and the only true defense against authoritarianism. The dust jacket promises a ^ufarther application of these ideas in quoting Mr. Rogge: "Why Men Confess is the first of three books on the subject of confessions. I am now working on the next, which will deal with the First and Fifth Amendments."