

OWEN  
LATTIMORE  
AND THE "LOSS" OF  
CHINA



ROBERT P. NEWMAN

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*Philip E. Lilienthal*

Book

The Philip E. Lilienthal imprint  
honors special books  
in commemoration of a man whose work  
at the University of California Press from 1954 to 1979  
was marked by dedication to young authors  
and to high standards in the field of Asian Studies.  
Friends, family, authors, and foundations have together  
endowed the Lilienthal Fund, which enables the Press  
to publish under this imprint selected books  
in a way that reflects the taste and judgment  
of a great and beloved editor.

# OWEN LATTIMORE

AND THE "LOSS" OF  
CHINA

ROBERT P. NEWMAN

In March 1950 Senator Joseph R. McCarthy accused Owen Lattimore, a distinguished China scholar at Johns Hopkins University, of being "the top Soviet espionage agent in the U.S." The Senate Foreign Relations Committee exonerated Lattimore four months later, but for the next two years Pat McCarran and his Senate Internal Security Committee hounded him. McCarran's subcommittee issued a 5,712-page report, based on perjured testimony, claiming that Lattimore had been a "conscious, articulate instrument of the Communist conspiracy." McCarran then forced the Justice Department to indict Lattimore for perjury, bringing Roy M. Cohn to Washington to draw up the indictment. The FBI was ordered to the ends of the earth to find some credible witness who would testify that Lattimore had served the Communists. No such witness was found. Finally, in 1955 Attorney General Herbert Brownell dismissed the case.

Lattimore was a victim of the virulent witch hunts that took place in the U.S. in the 1950s after China, our friend and ally in World War II, went over to that reviled enemy, communism. Americans could not believe that China made this choice freely; its adherence to the World Communist Conspiracy must have been coerced by Soviet manipulation and domestic subversion by Americans. Some Communist mastermind in the American government had to be blamed for our "loss" of China. Lattimore, who had never been in the State Department but who had warned that

"This exhaustively well researched, lucidly written, and fascinating book on Owen Lattimore and the anti-Communist witch hunts in the late forties and early fifties chronicles a double American tragedy. Not only does it recount how careers of good and brilliant men were blindly destroyed, but how America was deprived of its most thoughtful and clear-headed China specialists. By writing *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China*, Robert P. Newman has made a giant step toward setting right this sorry chapter of U.S. history."

—Orville Schell

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