

BOOK REVIEW:

THE INSTITUTE OF PACIFIC RELATIONS Asian Scholars
by John N. Thomas, Seattle University of
Washington Press, 1974. (\$8.95)

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After World War II and the collapse of the Nationalist Government in China, conservative politicians in Washington began to search for scapegoats. Individuals and organizations were branded as Communist or pro-Communist with little or no evidence. Many men, such as John Service, John P. Davies, Owen Lattimore, and John Fairbank, were purged from the government or were temporarily curtailed in their scholarly research. Most of the organizations were destroyed as viable institutions. Of these organizations, the Institute of Pacific Relations has become a symbol in Asian studies for the unfairness of the Congressional inquiries during the Communist phobia of the early fifties. John N. Thomas analyzes the IPR's conflict with the conservative elements in the American political system.

The Institute of Pacific Relations was formed in 1925 and in the next two decades, under the leadership of Edward C. Carter, Owen Lattimore and Frederick Field, became pre-eminent in Asian studies in the United States. It sponsored scholarly research and books and published two influential journals, Pacific Affairs and the Far Eastern Survey. By 1945 the Institute had over 3,000 members and an annual operating budget of \$300,000. At the apex of its prestige, the IPR was suddenly attacked as pro-Communist.

Alfred Kohlberg, a retired businessman familiar with China, opened the attack in 1943. For the next several years he would privately finance the mailing of thousands of letters to Congressmen, businessmen, scholars and organizations charging the IPR with Communist sympathies. In 1950 Senator Joseph McCarthy picked up the charges and expanded them beyond simple criticism of IPR publications to a questioning of the loyalty of IPR personnel, particularly Owen Lattimore who had been the editor of Pacific Affairs from 1933 to 1941. The IPR and Owen Lattimore, first before the Tydings Committee in 1950 and later before the McCarran Committee in 1951, attempted to respond to the charges. The Tydings Committee was primarily concerned with the State Department; the McCarran Committee was investigating the IPR.

The McCarran Committee, a Senate subcommittee on internal security chaired by Pat McCarran of Nevada, was grossly unfair during its hearings in 1951. The Committee, packed with conservatives, did not even attempt to conduct an objective investigation of the IPR and its publications. The Committee defined pro-Communist

so loosely it would have included almost any liberal person or organization. No real effort was made to determine if the IPR was Communist controlled, but rather the Committee engaged in sensational charges and accepted without question any evidence supporting these charges, particularly testimony by former Communists. The members of the Committee appeared not to be really interested in the IPR per se but saw the investigations, and concomitant publicity, as an opportunity to block liberal or leftist influence in government at home and to create an atmosphere favorable to a hard-line anti-Communist policy abroad. The Final Report of the McCarran Committee proved only that a few former employees of the IPR, such as Frederick Field, had demonstrated poor judgement in their outside activities by failing to declare they were acting as individuals rather than IPR officials.

The McCarran Committee's investigations had several negative repercussions. The adverse publicity destroyed the IPR as a viable organization. Dependent on private and foundation contributions, funds dried up for the IPR and it was in dire financial difficulties by 1955. It was at this point the Internal Revenue Service attempted to revoke the organization's tax exempt status as a nonprofit organization. After five years of court battles the IPR won the case but it was a Pyrrhic victory for the battle destroyed it. Membership dropped to below three hundred by 1960 and the organization ceased to exist by 1961.

It is impossible to document the effect of the Communist phobia and prosecution by Congress on liberal Asian scholars. Those specifically attacked, such as Owen Lattimore and John Fairbank, obviously suffered. John Fairbank, for example, published six articles in 1949-1950. Between April 1951 and February 1957, the Reader's Guide lists only two popular articles by Fairbank. "Rehabilitation" by the American popular press did not come until 1960, when Life commissioned him to write a feature story on China. Fairbank's relative absence from popular literature during the fifties and early sixties illustrates his comment that some Asian scholars "lost the demand for our services" during that period.

In many respects this well-researched and written book by Thomas on the IPR simply whets the appetite for more. Hopefully, this is a beginning not the end of research on the IPR, the problems of Asian scholarship, and the liabilities of Congressional Investigation Committees.