PREFACE

On June 15, 1954, the Government Printing Office (GPO) published *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer*, a transcript of the famous physicist's hearing before the Atomic Energy Commission's Personnel Security Board. More than thirty witnesses testified at the hearing, which was held over a four-week period in April and May. The text came to 992 densely printed pages. Shortly thereafter, the GPO published the reports of the board and the commission, along with pertinent correspondence, comprising an additional 55 pages. The transcript contained a number of typesetting errors, although surprisingly few considering the haste with which publication was arranged. All discussions of classified matters were deleted, and the deletions—of words, phrases, and sometimes entire pages—were indicated by asterisks.

The demand from libraries, scholars, and other interested parties soon exhausted the supply of the GPO's edition. In 1970, the MIT Press reprinted the transcript and the accompanying reports with a foreword by Philip M. Stern, the author of an exceptionally fine book on the subject, *The Oppenheimer Case: Security on Trial* (1969), and with a highly useful index. But the MIT edition, too, has long been out of print.

The version presented here consists of about one-fourth of the original transcript. I include much of the testimony of the centrally important figures—Oppenheimer, Hans A. Bethe, Edward Teller, Leslie R. Groves, Isidor I. Rabi, Enrico Fermi, and George F. Kennan—but provide briefer excerpts from testimony that was less significant. To convey the underlying rancor, I include some of the angry exchanges between the opposing lawyers, and between Oppenheimer's attorneys and members of the board. I omit, however, lengthy discussions of such matters as whether a transcript of a 1943 interview between Oppenheimer and an army security officer accurately reflected the lan-

guage on the tape recording. I leave out much that pertains to the past radical affiliations of Oppenheimer's friends and students in order to include most of the testimony that focuses on broad questions concerning ethics, morality, politics, loyalty, security, and international diplomacy.

My interest in J. Robert Oppenheimer goes back to the late 1970s, when I first read the four microfilm reels of the FBI file on the case. I have lectured on "The Ethical Responsibilities of the Scientist: The Case of J. Robert Oppenheimer" at Fermilab, the University of Illinois, the University of Notre Dame, Haifa University, the Weizmann Institute, Tel Aviv University, and at the Cornell University Department of Physics and Peace Studies Program, and have received many valuable suggestions from those in attendance. Hans A. Bethe and Dale R. Corson generously shared with me their recollections of Oppenheimer. I am indebted to Peter Agree who first encouraged me to undertake this project. I am particularly grateful for the sound advice I received from Sheryl A. Englund and Ange Romeo-Hall at Cornell University Press. I have had the good fortune to have had the index prepared by Jane Marsh Dieckmann. I also wish to thank my research assistants, Lauren Eisenstein and Charlotte Landers, who provided indispensable help.

I hope that this abridged version will do justice to the original, for no document better explains the America of the cold war—its fears and resentments, its anxieties and dilemmas—than *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer*. The Oppenheimer hearing also serves as a reminder of the fragility of individual rights and of how easily they may be lost.

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