

# Suppressed China Book Sees the Light Again

12-10-74

By ALDEN WHITMAN

A book printed in 1960 and then destroyed under still obscure circumstances by its publisher, Macmillan, has been published by Harper & Row and Octagon Books. The work is "The China Lobby in American Politics," by Ross Y. Koen, a specialist on East Asian affairs. His book was strongly critical of the China Lobby, a disparate group of Americans and Nationalist Chinese who sought to influence United States foreign policy toward China in the decade of the nineteen-fifties.

A few copies escaped Macmillan's effort to recall those already distributed, and they became an underground classic, according to Dr. James C. Thomson Jr., curator of the Nieman Foundation at Harvard and a member of the East Asian Research Center at Harvard. "The volume at Widener Library [at Harvard] was chained to a desk," he recalled yesterday.

Barbara Tuchman, the historian, said that she had searched for a copy in the preparation of her biography of Gen. Joseph Stilwell "and finally unearthed one in the Brooklyn Public Library."

The book was originally suppressed, according to Miss Tuchman, at the prompting of Chinese Nationalist officials. This was also the version of events, with some embellishments, recited by Mr. Koen in a telephone interview this week, and the version, too, of Prof. Richard C. Kagan of Hamline University, St. Paul, who wrote an introduction to the Harper & Row-Octagon book.

#### Now a Private Consultant

Mr. Koen, who was professor of government and politics at Humboldt State College in California in 1960 and who is now a private consultant in Sacramento, gave this account of his book's death and resurrection from letters and papers in his files.

He was commissioned to write "The China Lobby in American Politics" in 1958 and received a total advance of \$500. The manuscript was accepted after having been scrutinized by a number of China specialists and by Macmillan lawyers. Some 7,500 copies were printed and bound and scheduled for release in March 1960. Some copies were sent to reviewers and libraries.

About two weeks before publication date, Bruce P. Brett, company president, informed Mr. Koen that the Chinese Nationalist Embassy had threatened a libel action if the book were published. The offending sentence, in the preface, asserted that there was strong evidence that high Chinese Nationalist officials and some Americans had collaborated in illegal narcotics traffic in the United States. No persons were named.

Although Mr. Koen doubted that a libel suit could be sustained, he agreed to modify his language, and Macmillan wrote to those who had received copies, seeking their recall. The publisher also agreed to issue a revised book.

Subsequently, according to Mr. Koen, he was asked to make further changes of substance, which he declined to undertake. Copies of the book were thereupon destroyed by Macmillan.

Professor Kagan, in his preface to the "new" book, asserts that "working through the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, the KMT [the Chinese Nationalist political organization] prevented the book from being published." Mr. Koen supported that charge in his interview, but conceded that he had no documentary evidence for his accusation. Professor Kagan said he lacked documentation. Both said that circumstantial evidence was, in their view, considerable.

State Department and C.I.A. spokesmen had no comment.

#### Can't Find Records

Officials at Macmillan, Inc., successor to the Macmillan Publishing Company, said they could not find records of the incident. Efforts to reach Mr. Brett, who has retired, were unavailing. Robert A. Barton, president of Macmillan's present book division, said yesterday that it was "possible" that Mr. Koen's book had been destroyed, but he professed not to know the details. He did, however, acknowledge that the book had indeed been "with-drawn."

Eight years after the death of Mr. Koen's book, he succeeded in obtaining the rights to it from Macmillan. In the agreement, however, he was obliged not to mention Macmillan's name in reprinting the

book, nor to describe in writing details of its suppression.

Having obtained the rights, Mr. Kogan offered his work to several publishers, and it was accepted by Harper & Row in 1971. According to Mr. Koen and to Elizabeth Jakob, an editor in Harper & Row's Torch Book paperback division, the original book was reprinted, ironically on recycled paper, after a few modest changes were made in the text with the author's approval. The original controversial passage has been retained, Harper & Row, meanwhile, sold the hardcover rights to Octagon. Mr. Koen received \$1,000 as an advance against royalties.

The revival of Mr. Koen's book has been praised by many China specialists, including Dr. Thomson, who said, "The book is a highly important account of a central aspect of our China relationship." Another who said he was heartened by the book's reappearance was O. Edmund Clubb, the Columbia scholar and former United States Consul in Peking.