

= George McTurnan Kahin =

George McTurnan Kahin (January 25 , 1918 ? January 29 , 2000) was an American historian and political scientist . He was one of the leading experts on Southeast Asia and a critic of United States involvement in the Vietnam War . After completing his dissertation , which is still considered a classic on Indonesian history , Kahin became a faculty member at Cornell University . At Cornell , he became the director of its Southeast Asia Program and founded the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project . Kahin 's incomplete memoir was published posthumously in 2003 .

= = Early life = =

George McTurnan Kahin was born on January 25 , 1918 , in Baltimore , Maryland , and grew up in Seattle , Washington . He received a B.S. in history from Harvard University in 1940 .

Kahin married Margaret Baker in 1942 , but the marriage ended in divorce . During World War II , Kahin served in the United States Army between 1942 and 1945 , where " he was trained as one of a group of 60 GIs who were to be parachuted into Japanese @-@ occupied Indonesia in advance of Allied forces " . However , the operation was canceled after it was determined that U.S. forces would bypass the Indies after the Potsdam Conference . As a result , his unit was sent to the European theater . He earned the rank of sergeant before leaving the Army . Kahin 's interest in Southeast Asia developed during this period , and he learned to speak Indonesian and Dutch .

Kahin returned after the war to complete his M.A. from Stanford University , which he received in 1946 . His thesis was titled The Political Position of the Chinese in Indonesia (Kahin 1946) , describing the role of Chinese Indonesians in the new country . He continued to pursue of his interest in Southeast Asia , going to Indonesia in 1948 to conduct research during the Indonesian National Revolution . During his work , he was arrested by Dutch colonial authorities and expelled from the country . Kahin received a Ph.D. in political science from Johns Hopkins University in 1951 . His dissertation , titled Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia (Kahin 1952) , is considered a classic on Indonesian history .

= = Academic career = =

In 1951 , Kahin became an assistant professor of government at Cornell University . He received tenure and was promoted to associate professor in 1954 ; he became a full professor in 1959 . He became the director of Cornell 's Southeast Asia Program in 1961 and held the position until 1970 . Kahin also founded the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project in 1954 and served as its director until his retirement in 1988 . Between 1962 and 1963 , he became a Fulbright professor at London University . Kahin was a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences .

We voted for the maintenance of academic freedom , believing that without that essential quality there can be no relationship of any kind between blacks and a university , because without that quality you don 't have a university .

? George McTurnan Kahin , April 25 , 1969

On April 19 , 1969 , Cornell 's Afro @-@ American Society occupied the Willard Straight Hall student union in protest against " the university 's racist attitudes and irrelevant curriculum " regarding racial issues . The university was divided between proponents of the inclusion of the principles of social justice in course instruction and advocates of academic freedom for the faculty . This clash affected the Department of Government , where Kahin and a number of professors defending academic freedom resided . Many of these professors had considered leaving the university due to the administration 's policies promoting racial justice , and many did following the end of the occupation . The following week , the Department of Government organized a teach @-@ in on academic freedom , and Kahin was invited to speak at the event by department chair Peter Sharfman . Historian Walter LaFeber would later remember his remarks as " the most eloquent speech about academic freedom I have ever encountered anywhere up to that time or since that

time " .

= = = Vietnam War critic = = =

Kahin was a leading critic of the Vietnam War and opposed United States involvement . He participated in a teach @-@ in in May 1965 and led the anti @-@ war position . Later , he co @-@ wrote The United States in Vietnam (Kahin & Lewis 1969) with Stanford professor John Lewis , a publication which helped to turn people in academia against U.S. intervention in Vietnam . It was one of the most comprehensive studies of American involvement in the war to date . According to Kahin and Lewis , American policy was based on a distorted view of Vietnam . " Vietnam is a single nation , not two , " Kahin and Lewis argued , and " South Vietnam constitutes an artificial creation whose existence depends on the sustained application of American power . "

When U.S. Senator George McGovern campaigned in the 1972 presidential election on a platform to end the war , Kahin became his foreign policy adviser .

= = = Khmer Rouge controversy = = =

Kahin , along with his graduate student Gareth Porter , was optimistic about the prospect of a takeover of Cambodia by the communist Khmer Rouge . In early 1975 , Kahin predicted of a Khmer Rouge victory : " I know of no basis for assuming that there is going to be a major bloodbath . " He also spoke highly of the Khmer Rouge leadership , particularly Khieu Samphan , whom he called " a very talented person . "

Following the victory of the Khmer Rouge and the brutal evacuation of Phnom Penh , Kahin backed Porter 's attempts to discredit reports of the mass killings . In his foreword to Porter 's book Cambodia : Starvation and Revolution , Kahin argued that Khmer Rouge policies " were not , then , applications of some irrational ideology , but reflected pragmatic solutions by leaders who had to rely exclusively on Cambodia 's own food resources and who lacked facilities for its internal transport . "

= = = Relations with Indonesia = = =

After Kahin was expelled from Indonesia in 1949 , he helped young Indonesian diplomats Sumitro Djojohadikusumo , Soedarpo Sastrosatomo , and Soedjatmoko during their work at the United Nations and in Washington , D.C. He also developed a close relationship with Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta , the first President and Vice President of Indonesia . In his book Subversion as Foreign Policy (Kahin & Kahin 1995) , he attempted to clear former Prime Minister Mohammad Natsir , with whom he also developed a personal relationship , of any involvement with a rebellion movement against the Indonesian government . The book also described a " destructive relationship " between the United States and Indonesia during Sukarno 's presidency .

Kahin helped develop Indonesian studies in the United States at a time when the majority of material on Indonesia was held at Leiden University in the Netherlands . At Cornell , he introduced a postgraduate education program for diplomats from around the world who were in the middle of their careers . He also helped many Indonesian intellectuals , including Deliar Noer and sociologist Selo Soemardjan , obtain education in the United States . Several of Kahin 's students and associates , including Herbert Feith , went on to establish similar programs at the universities where they subsequently taught .

At one point , the United States blocked Kahin 's passport , and the Suharto government in Indonesia also denied him a visa . In 1991 , Indonesian foreign minister Ali Alatas awarded Kahin the Bintang Jasa Pratama (English : Medal of Merit , First Class) for his work as a " pioneer and precursor of Indonesian studies in the U.S. "

= = Death and legacy = =

Kahin died at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester , New York , on January 29 , 2000 . Several

months after his death , a memorial service was held in Ithaca , New York , for him and to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War . A memoir which he never completed was brought to publication by his wife Audrey Richey Kahin (Kahin 2003) . Kahin is also survived by his son Brian , daughter Sharon , sister Peggy Kahin Webb , and two grandchildren .

Kahin was a major influence on the foreign policy thinking of Sandy Berger , United States National Security Advisor under President Bill Clinton . He is the namesake of Cornell University 's George McT . Kahin Center for Advanced Research on Southeast Asia , dedicated in his honor in 1992 .

= = Major publications = =

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Hinton , Harold C. ; Ike , Nobutaka ; Palmer , Norman D. ; Callard , Keith & Wheeler , Richard S. (1963) [1958] , Kahin , George McT . , ed . , Major Governments of Asia (2nd ed .) , Ithaca , NY : Cornell University Press , OCLC 326028 .

Wilson , David A. ; Silverstein , Josef ; Feith , Herbert ; Parmer , J. Norman ; Klein , Wells C. ; Weiner , Marjorie & Wurfel , David (1964) [1959] , Kahin , George McTurnan , ed . , Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia (2nd ed .) , Ithaca , NY : Cornell University Press , OCLC 501777 .

Kahin , George McT . & Kahin , Audrey R. (1995) , Subversion as Foreign Policy : The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia , New York : The New Press , ISBN 1 @-@ 56584 @-@ 244 @-@ 8 .

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Kahin , George McT . (1986) , Intervention : How America Became Involved in Vietnam (1st ed .) , New York : Knopf , ISBN 0 @-@ 394 @-@ 54367 @-@ X.