

Table of Contents

Letter: Pol Pot is walking out of his grave1

DOCUMENTATION

- Phnom Penh Liberation.....2
DK'S Victory Commemoration.....5
Pol Pot's Sister.....6
Khuon Son.....9
Autobiography of Thiounn Prasit.....12
Chantrea Village Fell Into Destruction.....14
First Meeting of the Cabinet17
Wells of Victims in Pol Pot's Home Village.....22

HISTORY

- Voices From S-21.....24
The Perils of Neutrality.....27

LEGAL

- A Sampling of Documentary Evidence30
Legal Proceeding Relating to Crimes.....32

PUBLIC DEBATE

- Why the UN Must Be Involved.....35
Twenty Five Years Later39

FAMILY TRACING

- Meas Sarin Learns Her Cousin's Fate41
My Family Under the Leadership43
Koh Khsach Chunlea: An Island of Widows46

KHMER ROUGE ARTS

- KR Song: Commitment to CopyBack Cover



Copyright ©

Documentation Center of Cambodia
All rights reserved.

Licensed by the Ministry of Information of
the Royal Government of Cambodia,
Prakas No.0291 P.M99
August 2, 1999.

Photographs by the Documentation Center of
Cambodia and Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

The English translation edited by
Youk Chhang and Raymund Johansen;
Proofread by Julio A. Jeldres and Rich Arant.

Authors: Thomas Hammaberg, Craig Etcheson, David Chandler, Micheal E.Shipler, Kenton J.Clymer, Steve Heder, Samondara Vuthi Ros, Kalyany Mam. Staff Writers: Kalyan Sann, Sophal Ly, Sophearith Chuong. Assistant Editor-in-chief: Sokhym Em. First Deputy Editor-in-chief: Kosal Phat. Second Deputy Editor-in-chief: Sorya Sim. Translator: Bun Sou Sour. Editor-in-chief: Youk Chhang. Graphic Designer: Sopheak Sim. Distributor: Sopheak Try.

Letter:

POL POT IS WALKING OUT OF HIS GRAVE

Pol Pot quit the world on April 15, 1998. However, his demise does not bring closure to a history of horrors during which over a million lives were taken. Nor does his death mean a complete failure of the Khmer Rouge. The Communist Party of Kampuchea's Standing Committee and the high-ranking members most loyal to Pol Pot who assisted in establishing execution policies are in hiding today. Along with thousands of other Khmer Rouge cadre, who are also implicated in the mass executions, these officials are taking refuge under the umbrella of "national reconciliation". They are all trying to hide from their victims, as well as from legal accountability before society and history. Though of Khmer blood and origin like their victims, the defecting Khmer Rouge leaders remain a gang of people whose brains were washed and sharpened with Pol Pot's ideology. A small number of the top-ranking members of this gang committed the killing and torture of people they perceived as "enemies of Angkar".

The ideology unarguably enticed them to kill the enemies of Angkar on the ground was that "if you are to eradicate grasses, you must eradicate all their roots" or "keeping you is no gain, losing you is no loss". This ideology continues to have a deep impact on present-day Cambodia, undermining the rebuilding of the country based on the rule of law, democracy and human rights. This ideology remains in existence, deep inside their brains; it is an invisible partner of the former Khmer Rouge leaders, some of whom



are now in the government, functioning as decision-makers and setting down policies for Cambodian society. Although Pol Pot physically perished, he continues as an ideological and spiritual monster who sucks the blood and bone of the former Khmer Rouge leaders and threatens them to successfully implement those policies on a "100-percent Win" and "Great Leap Forwards" basis.

The Royal Government of Cambodia and its Assembly and Senate, have two obligations to address this state of affairs: 1) they must punish any Khmer Rouge leaders who established, assisted in establishing, or encouraged their subordinates to implement the policy of mass executions, and 2) they must provide social services in a timely manner to the families of the Khmer Rouge Soldiers, especially to women and children, in the form of social welfare, work assistance and education. A failure to carry out these two obligations would be tantamount to ignoring human life, and indirectly allowing the families of the Khmer Rouge defectors to live outside the rule of law in Cambodia. Moreover, failure to achieve these historical obligations not only means refusing to provide fair justice to the over one million victims put to death with such suffering and injustice; it also means opening Pol Pot's coffin and allowing his corpse, in effect, to strut right out into broad daylight. And that would cheer him up, serve as nice congratulations for his ever-lasting victory. We must not allow Pol Pot this posthumous victory.

Youk Chhang

PHNOM PENH LIBERATION

(Excerpts from document D00710, A Khmer Rouge commander's description of the liberation of Phnom Penh, as recorded by him at Khao-I-Dang refugee holding Center, Thailand, in 1979)

April 17, 1975: is the day of failure of the Khmer Republic and the day of triumph of the Khmer Rouge.

1. Military activities

Khmer Republic: Phnom Penh On April 17, 1975, at 05:00

◆ At 0100, there were two A2-jeeps of Division 3, with a white flag as a sign of peace driving from the Phnom Penh boundary along with an announcement: "We all have to throw down weapons and begin negotiations with the side that has just received peace. We have to raise the white flag-the sign of peace."

◆ At 01:30, there was an order from General of the Army Lon Nol to fire 105 mm canon as a sign of accepting peace.

◆ At 02:45, the front lines at the Phnom Penh boundaries absolutely had to demobilize, by collecting and placing weapons in respective military units.

◆ At 06:00 helicopters were flying away from Phnom Penh in a westerly direction. They were everywhere in the sky.

2. Military Activities: Phnom Penh April 17, 1975

◆ At 06:15 the Khmer Rouge soldiers marched into Phnom Penh.

◆ All were equipped with weapons made in

Peking's China.

◆ [They were] in black with a [Chinese style] cap, and rubber-sole sandals.

◆ [They] were in lines.

◆ In the direction of Wat Phnom

◆ Following the directed targets set by their party

3. The Khmer Rouge targets in Phnom Penh

1. Soldiers from Eastern Zone: [assigned] to enter by National Road 2

2. Soldiers from Northern Zone: [assigned] to enter by a newly built bridge at the head of Chroy Changva bridge

3. Soldiers from Northwest Zone: [assigned] to enter by National Road 5

4. Soldiers from Western Zone: [assigned] to enter by National Road 5

5. Soldiers from Southwest Zone: [assigned] to enter by National Road 3

6. Soldiers from Special Zone: [assigned] to enter by National Road 2

These six Khmer Rouge military groups from the six military zones met together at Wat Phnom Daun Penh.

3.1 The Khmer Rouge targets for people distribution

◆ The Khmer Rouge Angkar used the Phsar Thmei market as a central base for evacuating Phnom Penh dwellers to provinces categorized by zones.

1. Eastern and Southern areas of Phnom Penh: people in these areas [were to be] moved to Eastern



Zone: Prey Veng and Svay Rieng Provinces.

2. Eastern and Northern areas of Phnom Penh: people in these areas [were to be] moved to Northern Zone: Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom and Siem Reap Provinces.

3. Areas northwest of Phnom Penh: people in these areas [were to be] moved to Northwest Zone: Kampong Chhnang, Pursat and Battambang Provinces.

4. Areas southwest of Phnom Penh: people in these areas [were to be] moved to Western Zone: Kampong Chhnang and Kampong Speu Provinces.

5. Areas southwest of Phnom Penh: people in these areas [were to be] moved to Kampot and Ta Keo Provinces along National Road 2.

4. People’s Activities Phnom Penh:

April 17, 1975 at 06: 15

Into how many categories were the Phnom Penh dwellers divided?

1. Those who had trends, that is, who used to serve the Khmer Republic administration. This sort of people were very frightened. They stayed in their houses, waiting to hear news about the resumption of peace negotiations between the two sides.

2. Those who were not satisfied with the Khmer Republic under Lon Nol’s administration marched towards Phnom Penh to greet the Khmer Rouge. They were in lines along the both sides of the streets, shouting together: “Bravo! Bravo!”, which echoed throughout the city.

3. Those who were separated from family members, who had gone out for work, or for medical treatment in state-run or private clinics, were very anxious and did not keep moving along the streets.

As a result, some were killed by the Khmer Rouge, who had guns in hand.

4. Those who had joined the Khmer Rouge from the very beginning dressed in black and went out of their homes in search of their partisans. They moved here and there guiding and showing the way for the Khmer Rouge soldiers. They looked for individuals they had known or considered to be Lon Nol’s civil servants, etc.

5. Soldiers of the Khmer Rouge party from the six zones planned to met together at Wat Phnom On April 17, 1975 at 06: 30 the soldiers of the Khmer Rouge party attacked and broke through the front lines of Phnom Penh, dividing the city into zones from the gardens in front of the railway station to Chak To Muk river.

5.1

On April 17, 1975 at 06:45 the Khmer Rouge party of the Southwestern Zone announced, via Phnom Penh-based radio:

1. This time our party has gained victory a hundred percent throughout the country.

2. Our party needs to seek peace by peaceful means on non-party-ism basis.

3. Our party would like to invite excellencies, trended (i.e., Khmer Republic) groups, those in authority, and institution groups to meet together at the Ministry of National Propaganda. Reasons: To negotiate peace for the people throughout the country by peaceful means.

5.2

On April 17, 1975 at 07: 15, the Khmer Rouge party of the Western Zone announced via Phnom Penh-based radio:



1. Our party has gained victory a hundred percent over the traitorous Khmer Republic led by Lon Nol.

2. Our party obtained this victory at gunpoint.

3. Our party doesn't need to negotiate with any individual or party.

4. Traitors have to be defeated. No one will receive the failure for them.

5.3

On April 17, 1975 at 07: 30, the Khmer Rouge party (using three-wheeled motor-driven carts) announced via megaphone?

1. All people, please don't be chaotic, crossing here and there.

2. Enter your respective houses.

3. Be prepared for moving out of the city for a period of time, maybe three days.

4. Move three kilometers from the city.

5. Move by the ways directed by the party.

6. Don't need to bring along too many things.

7. [You] have three days to leave the city.

8. Don't walk in any direction but those set by the party.

6. Reasons for the party's evacuation orders

1. Angkar's need to sweep up enemies.

2. Prepare everything in accordance with the party's directions already set.

3. Angkar has a duty to protect the people's lives as well as the city.

4. Angkar had been alerted that Americans and their lackeys had prepared to attack our city by bigger fighter planes.

6.1 April 17, 1975 at 07: 45

◆ The Khmer Rouge soldiers moved along small side streets to expel Phnom Penh dwellers from the city. Anyone who refused would be shot dead.

6.2 The Khmer Rouge plans to check evacuees at the city's exits

◆ Each Zone had prepared check points and was responsible for the below-mentioned points. For each zone, there were three checkpoints.

◆ Examine and search for:

1. High ranking officials.

2. Soldiers of the Khmer Republic (led by Lon Nol).

3. Spies Sédok and Co. (groups of people in the Bureau of Investigation of the Khmer Republic).

4. Those who had defected from the party to the Lon Nol administration.

Observation: At that time, the Khmer Rouge party organization arrested 100 to 300 Lon Lon soldiers every day.

(First confession, first section)

We wanted to divide Phnom Penh into four [sections] as mentioned earlier.

1. The people living to the east of the Mekong River were divided into two categories:

a) The Khmer Rouge evacuated people living in the areas east of the Mekong River to Svay Rieng and Prey Veng Provinces by National Road 1. But many people did not follow Angkar's instructions. At Prek Nak Loeung, west of the river, some people started separating. Some made their way to Ka-am Sam Na, where upon reaching a cross road leading to Cham Bak, Ta Keo, along National Road 2, they tried to walk towards their homes in Ta Keo and Kampot. Some could not reach their assigned destinations, because the Khmer Rouge Angkar allowed them to walk for only 15 days from April 17 to May 1, 1975. By the end of that period, those who stopped at any place, would be allowed to live at that place.

b) The Khmer Rouge evacuated people in the areas north of Tonle Chaktomuk to Prey Veng and Kampong Cham Provinces along a newly built road serving the Chroy Changva bridge.

◆ Like people mentioned above, not all people arrived in Kampong Cham in due date set by Angkar. Because some tried to flee to their homes, when the final day came, they had to remain where they were.

(Continued)

DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA COMMEMORATES THE APRIL VICTORY

By Kosal Phat

A decision of the Central Committee, the top organ of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, dated 30 March 1976 (file D693, held at the Documentation Center of Cambodia), under the heading “Decision of the Central Committee on Issues,” states: “The triumph on April 17, 1975 is the symbol of our people’s bravery, who have struggled for the nation and classes before and after the war of American aggression”. The Standing Committee of Democratic Kampuchea declared the commemoration days of these historic events to be the following:

April 1, 1975: is the great triumph of Khmerization policy in the American war in Kampuchea and the failure of the Nixon doctrine to drive a wedge between Khmer and Khmer.

April 12, 1975: is the great basic victory over the American aggressor as the official representative of the imperialists has been expelled from Kampuchea.

April 17, 1975: is the most marvelous independence day. The programs for independence day (15, 16, and 17 of April) are both independence days and New Year’s days.

April 15 is a day of commemoration for the spirit of our heroes. (The later demise of Pol Pot on April 15, 1998 is a most mysterious fact). Flags must be flown at half mast. Read an editorial on radio to show the world how much our people have sacrificed. The editorial must be read once every hour. National anthem must be played once every hour. In addition, martial music must be played.

On April 16, we must welcome the victory, by describing the bravery of male and female soldiers and the main battlefields.

April 17 is the day of encouragement of commitment to build and defend the country with the speed of many great leaps forward. In the bases, people

have to be given three days off for political training.

Based on the programs stated in the above document, the leadership of Democratic Kampuchea had transformed the Khmer New Year’s Day into the Day of Victory over the American Imperialists and the day of political training for implementing the revolutionary organization’s policy of multiple great leaps forward. Officially, the freedom of meeting family members, and all scenes of the Khmer New Year’s Holidays were abolished.



Khmer Rouge Military Forces Entering Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975

Salot Roeung



**POL POT'S FAMILY:
TESTIMONY FROM HIS SISTER**

By Youk Chhang

question of why a Liberal Khmer befriended a Royalist provincial governor. Perhaps they were childhood friends. However, Pol Pot's family was somehow admired for having a grandfather who was a great warrior in the old days. More research is needed to determine Phem's real occupation whether he served as a military commander or a Liberal Khmer - or both.

As for Pol Pot's father, PHEM Salot, and his mother, Duk Nem, they both were genuine farmers with no other occupations. They died in Prek, Sbov village, Po Chen Tbaung sub-district where they were born.

During the Republic regime between 1970 and 1975, the village was used as a heavy artillery base by Lon Nol's soldiers. The commander-in-chief was Tep Ben. According to the villagers the Khmer Rouge guerrillas never attacked the village before the 1975 fall of the Republic armed forces. The people's representative was once Chea Chheng, and the sub-district

Salot Family

Pol Pot's grandfather's name is Phem. I do not know the names of Phem's father and grandfather. Neither do we have information about them. Phem had a son named Salot whose name was taken by Pol Pot as his family name, SALOT Sar.

Phem was a Liberal Khmer military commander during Sisovath's reign. At that time, he went into the resistance movement, where he lost his life. He was a friend of Dekchoa Thoang and Dekchoa Y, a former Kampong Thom Provincial governor. I did not pose the

chief was Seng Ny, who is now dead. In the village, there was a religious temple named Pov Pisey.

During the Khmer Rouge regime between 1975 and 1979, the village was emptied. Those inhabitants who dwelled north of the lake Steung Sen were expelled towards the north, those residing south of the lake were forced to move out further southwards. The village was occupied by Pol Pot's henchmen, including members of the Kuoy and Cham ethnic groups, who were supposed to be close to the Khmer Rouge.

During the People's Republic of Kampuchea

(1979-1989) and the State of Cambodia (1989-1992), the Cham and Kuoy people living in Prek Sbov village returned to their homeland in villages such as Tralek, Kaun Ka-Ek, Prasat sub-district, Baray district, Kampong Thom. Then, the villagers who survived the Khmer Rouge regime came back to live in their native village.

Prek Sbov villagers said that despite some intense offensives by Khmer Rouge soldiers in Kampong Thom, Prek Sbov village was never subjected to any threat. Furthermore, we were told by Yun Poak, administrative chief of Muniti Khet Kampong Thom of culture and fine arts, that in 1993 an uncle of Pol Pot (we did not ask what the man's name)

She happened to talk about Khun Meak's house in the Royal Palace. This name suddenly appealed my curiosity. And I asked her who is Khun Meak. She answered, "King Monivong."

"Khun Meak's house was a brick house, painted vanilla color. There was no real garden at Khun Meak's house. The palace had a very beautiful garden with all kind flowers. The dancers practiced their dances at throne hall. The carpets in the throne hall were very beautiful. I liked them very much. The throne hall smelled good, too. At night we had electricity. We never used candles in the throne hall.

"King Monivong was very kind to me. I was with him when he died. He was wearing nothing.



Salot Seng



Salot Sar



Salot Nhep

came from a refugee camp in Thailand to build a two-building house. The man used to commute between Kampong Thom and Pailin where he got money from Pol Pot through Y Chhean. He also got money at Stung district from Pol Pot's soldiers in Dang Rek mountain.

Meeting Saloth Rong, Pol Pot's Sister

It was raining when we arrived. The rice fields were very green. The road to the house of Granny Saloth Roeung, who is Pol Pot's sister, was very difficult. It was muddy and slippery. The road was too small for our 4WD so I had to go on foot to her house. She was lying in bed upon our arrival. Her daughter-in-law and grand children greeted us. Later her son came to join us.

[Later she said the King was wearing a white shirt and a sarong.] "I was wearing a mixed flower shirt with a black sampot," said Roeung. My hair was short and was not decorated with anything."

I asked if the King loved her hair. She kept teasing me for asking such a question. With a beautiful smile, she told me, "It is a secret ". When asked if she had slept with the King before he died. She did not answer, but smiled.

She said that the King did not like long or decorated hair. He loved short simple hair. When he saw women with long or decorated hair, he cursed at them.

"When he died in Bokor, I cried a lot. I missed



him. Even now I still miss him.”

I asked, Why do you miss him so much? What did he do to you?

She smiled again....”He gave me everything,” said Roeung with a charming smile.

“When I first arrived at the palace, the King gave me a diamond earring (tum-hou sized 3K). Three months later, he built me a house. He bought me a car, pieces of furniture, a bed and mattress, a make-up cabinet, and everything. He even arranged furniture for me, too. He also gave me the title Neakmaneang which is equal to Queen Monique before she became The Queen of Cambodia in 1993.” Roeung laughed and said that she had only her a bare body to move into the house.

Roeung said that every hot season (summer) the King always took her to visit Kampot province, and Bokor Mountain. During the rainy season, the king always took her to visit Trapeang Chornng, Pursat Province. “He always took me with him. He loved me,” said Roeung. I asked her, “Were you beautiful then?”. Roeung gave me no answer. She just laughed.... Roeung said, “He [the king] ate first and I ate after him. The palace had 3 persons to cook for the King (1 French, and 2 Cambodians.) A lot of people served the King during lunch, or dinner. I used to eat with him alone.”

I asked, “Where?”

“Bokor,” answered Roeung. “He bought me a lot of jewelry.”

I asked her if he King ever gave her flowers. She smiled and said that “we did not need to give flowers to each other because we already knew each other. The King wanted me to be a dancer, and I refused his order.”

“Dare you to refuse an order from the King?”, I curiously asked.

“The King could not win over my sweet begging,” said Roeung with smile. “I was so ashamed to be a dancer,” added Roeung. The King later agreed that I should not be a dancer.

I think she is still deeply in love with the King.

She knows what to hear. She did not admit that she had slept with he King before he died. But she was happy at the same time when I was persuaded that she was with the king when he died..... She kept giggling, smiling, and laughing when talking about the King.

I asked if the King ever gave her a handkerchief and she smiled. I asked if the King ever took her for hunting alone. She smiled again. She told me that my question was very personal. “This is my secret,” she said.

I asked her about the dance at the Palace. she told me to talk to Samey. “But she is dead now,” said Roeung. I pointed out to her how important it is to keep the history alive. She seemed to agree and invited me to visit her again.

I felt as if I was talking to a 20-year-old, beautiful and smart woman when talking to Saloth Roeung. She is still in love with the King. I am sure that the King had slept with her and later died on his bed at Bokor. She was with the King alone when he died.

Then she began to tell me about Pol Pot. Pol Pot left his family when he was 6. At 7 he came to visit the village. He wore a white shirt and white pants with wooden shoes. He liked to make joke out of his serious statements. He said what he meant. But he made joke out of it. Pol Pot was born in the Year of Ox (1925). He should be 72 years old by now. I was shocked to learn that Pol Pot was born in the year OX because I was also born in the very same Year of Ox, but just 3 generation later. Pol Pot and Khiev Ponnary came to the village for his father’s funeral, Roeung looked to me as a feudelist. She seemed to say to me that Pol Pot had destroyed her happiness.

Saloth Seng, Pol Pot’s oldest brother, is a real farmer. He told me that the KR had killed his only son at the age of 21. His son served the Lon Nol army. He will not forgive Pol Pot. Salot Nhep, Pol Pot’s younger brother. He said that Pol Pot was a lovely brother. I will take him back if he is found innocent. Pol Pot’s grand children who are now living with Roeung called Pol Pot “it.”

Khmer Rouge Military Forces Entering Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975



KHUON SON, ALIAS KOEM PHAN, PRISONER OF ANGKAR AND HIS ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE KHMER ROUGE

By Sophearith Choung

As with all “confessions” extracted under torture at Tuol Sleng, readers are warned that the truth of factual assertions cannot be assumed.

Khuon Son, also known as Koem Phan, was born in Ta Kheng Village, Meun Chey Sub-district, Samraong District, Svay Rieng Province, Region 23. In 1973 Koem Phan joined the revolution upon the introduction of his friend Saphong, then Deputy Political Commissioner in Region 23. Angkar later asked comrade Saphong to attend a training course in Ta Khmao. Saphong left Koem Phan with comrade Ya, Chief of Staff of Region 23. Comrade Ya tried to propagandize Koem Phan, saying: “Today you have to be clear that serving the revolution is a very tough job—strict discipline, no freedom of movement, no rank promotion, and poor living conditions.” Ya described network elements at high levels, including comrades So

and Thuch, and assigned Koem Phan to serve as his messenger for contacts with his ten-person anti-revolutionary group. The meeting focused on two plans: 1) to make the soldiers come along National Road 1, and 2) when the soldiers of comrade Major Yong come, don’t attack them.

Comrade Ya assigned Koem Phan to contact Thaing, secretary of Vietnamese Army Division 7, based in Wat Chantry, for grenades and bullets to carry out activities against the Khmer Rouge revolution. The Vietnamese agreed to offer three cases of grenades, one hundred M-79 rounds, and three cases of AK-47 rifles. After the contacts for military assistance from Vietnam, comrade Ya asked Koem Phan to call comrade Bunnarith, security chief of Rameas Hek District, to meet with him for plans and traitorous directives against the revolution. Ya assigned Bunnarith to bring



the ammunition from the Vietnamese military base east of Wat Chantry, under the command of comrade Major Thaing. The positions targeted for the attack were the Regional Commercial Warehouse at Boh Pring market, the sawmill, the paper manufacturer, and the lathe.

The contacts made in September 1973 were aimed at strengthening the relationship between the traitorous group and the Vietnamese side (Comrade Thaing and Teu Ngea) and creating favorable conditions for smashing the revolutionary forces in an attempt to return to the political order of the previous regime, in which there was rank promotion, high salary, and freedom of movement. Following this, there was a meeting that included Ya, Chief of Staff; Shel, Chief of Educational Section and political issues; comrade Rim, Chief of Educational Section and Military Chief; comrade Satya, Chief of Educational Section and Deputy of Political Section; comrade Suon, Secretary of Battalion 23; comrade Sen, Deputy Chief of Battalion 23; comrade Pen, Deputy Chief of Political Section Kh-23; comrade Sat, Chief of Political Section Kh-68 of Region 23; Saman, Chief of Political Section

Kh-35; and comrade Chea, Military Chief of Kh-90. The meeting focused on the following points: 1) don't attack Major Yong's forces so that it will be easy to join with them, and 2) carry out activities within revolutionary offices and all bases, and prepare forces for smashing the revolutionary forces.

In November 1973, comrade Ya assigned Koem Phan to serve as a messenger of comrade Shel, who later explained to Phan: "As messenger, you have to be diligent in bringing letters from one place to another." Comrade Shel asked Koem to bring a letter to comrade So in Ta So Sek Village, Samraong District, Svay Rieng Province, Region 23. Soon after reading the letter, So asked Koem to bring fifty grenades to his messenger, named Sean, to comrade Sun, messenger of comrade Ya, to comrade Man, spy of the Staff, and to comrade Kim Heang, on the medical staff of Region 23. Around that time comrade Chhan, deputy chief of Nhor Village, comrade Kim Heang, and comrade Man, threw the grenades at Tnaot Sub-district in an attempt to kill the deputy chief of the sub-district so that he could not report the activities of contacts with Vietnamese



Khmer Rouge Military Forces Entering Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975

soldiers in Ampel Village, Tnoat Sub-district.

From January to February 1974, comrade Shel asked Koem, comrade Sat, comrade Chea, and comrade Saman to join a meeting in Krasaing Village with fifteen other people. The meeting focused on two main points: 1) the need to go on with the 1974 plan to smash the Khmer Rouge revolutionary forces in all sections in Region 23 by grenades and guns, and 2) the need to prepare military forces so that contacts could be made with Major Yong's forces stationed in Svay Rieng Province in an attempt to destroy equipment and revolutionary property in Region 23.

In May 1975, comrade So, secretary of Region 23 called comrade Ya, Chhem, Shel, and Chet to attend a meeting held in Svay Rieng Province. There were 29 participants, namely: So, secretary of Region 23; Thuch, deputy secretary of Region 23; Sa Phat, member; Keo An, member; Chey Sary, member; Ya, Secretary of Staff; Chhem, Deputy Secretary of Staff; Shel, member; Chhet, member; Pon, secretary of Samraong District; Phan, secretary of Kampong Ro District; Sa Liv, secretary of Prasot District; Kuon, secretary of Svay Rieng District; Saman, secretary of Samraong District; Chann, deputy secretary of Prasot District; Ry Sya, deputy secretary of Svay Rieng District; Ritha, member of Prasot District; Satya, chief of political section; Thoeun, chief of Yovakak of Staff Headquarters; Suon, secretary of Artillery Battalion 75; Sen, secretary of Battalion 75, Logistics Section; Sa Kun, secretary of Staff's Investigation Section Kh; Ka Vorn, Deputy Chief of Staff, Regiment 113, Region 23; Pin, deputy secretary of Regiment 130; Sat, secretary of Regiment 90; Yan, deputy secretary of Staff's Investigation Section Kh; Sa Man, secretary of Regiment 130; Chea, deputy secretary of Battalion 90; and Saratt, deputy secretary of Battalion 73. After the meeting, Koem Phan heard comrade So say: "If the Vietnamese reach our forward troops, don't fire at them. Must be against the plan for three tons per hectare in order to prevent the country from developing, and must prepare our forces in favorable conditions, so that we can go on with out activity plan for 1975." Between June and July 1975, comrade Shel and comrade Phan made contacts with Toeung (a Vietnamese soldier), secretary of Division 5. When arriving at the targeted place, Koam Phan and the messenger of comrade Phan

waited outside and heard comrade Shel and comrade Phan say: "I come here to ask your comrade's forces to carry out activities in Kampong Ro District, Prey Voa Village 1, by entering the village from the north and use your artillery to attack and break through into Prasot District." As a result, the Vietnamese troops fired shells into Voa village, causing the farmers who were transplanting rice seedlings to flee in panic and leaving five soldiers dead.

In August 1975, comrade Shel and comrade Ya asked Koem to bring a letter to comrade Thaing, the Vietnamese division secretary stationed in Bat Trass. After reading the letter, Thaing told Koem Phan: "Brother Ya and Brother Shel asked my forces to enter Romeas Hek District for shelling." After the return of Koem Phan, comrade Ya, along with comrades Shel and Chhet, visited Saman's and comrade Chea's places east of Kampong Trach. They contacted each other by saying: "As to comrade Thaing's forces, I have asked a Battalion to deploy in Prey Ta Khop and you comrades have to keep in constant touch for our smooth cooperation." **(Continued)**

THE FIRST "OPEN PRINCIPLES" TO SWEEP CLEAN ANGKAR'S ENEMIES

- ◆ There are about one to five percent of hidden enemies burrowing inside our country. We must follow up their biographies and self-criticism, especially in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Embassies desire to know [our] leadership so that they can report to their countries, or for other purposes (an excerpt from a notebook dated from May 21, 1976 to January 5, 1979 of Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed by Ieng Sary alias Comrade Vann).
- ◆ Not less than 90 percent of workers, peasants, lower class farmers, and other worker classes in the rural areas sacrificed thier energy in the revolutionary war. Hundreds of thousands of lives were sacrificed. They devoted their properties, children, husbands, wives... (Extracted from a notebook of comrade Voa Savet, investigating cadre, 1975).



AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THIOUNN PRASIT

KHMER ROUGE AMBASSADOR TO THE UN 1975-1992

Translated by Kosal Phat and Irene Sokha



THIOUNN PRASITH

Our comrade in charge has reported that our class enemy has brought accusations on me. I would like to sincerely and wholeheartedly present my autobiography to the party as follows:

1. Family

Real name: Prasit
 Revolutionary name: Sarn
 Sex: Male, Nationality:

Khmer
 Marital Status: Married
 My wife's name: Krushna Thourei, French nowadays living in France.
 Children: 2 daughters and 1 son. My oldest daughter is 21 and now joined the revolution. The other 2 still under the care of my wife.
 Date of Birth: February 3, 1930, Phnom Penh.

- ◆ My grand father's name: Thiounn, feudal class and reactionary traitor serving the French colonist.
- ◆ My mother's name: Bun Chan Mouli, conservative and feudal class, still alive. Age: not known and perhaps over 70.
- ◆ My Siblings: My elder sister:
- ◆ Thiounn Choeun, doctor and Minister of Health.
- ◆ Thiounn Cheoum married. Her husband's name Chhean Vorm, capitalist class. His political background is not known and I have not seen him for years.
- ◆ My elder brother: Thiounn Chum (Comprador) capitalist. His political background is not known and I have not seen him for years.
- ◆ My elder brother: Thiounn Mom joined the revolution since 1951 and is working in the Ministry of Industry.

I am the youngest one in the family.

II. From 1930 to 1949

From 1935 (or 1936) to 1949:

I studied in Sisowath High School supervised by the French in Phnom Penh until Grade 6. Because I didn't do well in grade 6, the French principal decided to disconnect my studies there. My parent parents then decided to send me to Saigon to continue my studies at Chasseloup Labat High School.

From 1941 to 1945:

I continued my studies at Sisowath High School again until I graduated in July 1949. It was that time when the national patriotism idea developed in my mind. It was also the first time I had been in some contact with Cambodians. When I graduated in July 1949, the French colonist persuaded and indoctrinated me to serve them as my father and grandfather had done. To lure me, they granted me a tour trip coverage by sea to Manila City (the Philippines) and Hong Kong (July-August 1949).

III. From 1949 (September) to 1955 (December)

I continued my studied in France, in September 1949 when I obtained from the government half of a full scholarship for my studies until 1952 when the Royal Government cut off my scholarship, because I opposed them. My first intention was to study dentistry but I changed the major and undertook the study of medicine production and sales. After 2 years' study in this area, I again went on to undertake the major of transportation until late 1954. After my graduation, the Royal Government then assigned my to work in the railway station. I spent 6 months on an internship at a French railway station. Through the period of 6 years that I remained in France, I woke up to the consciousness of national patriotism against the French colonists. And I sought to bring about independence and a new era for Cambodia to become a socialist state.

In 1951, I joined the pro-Marxist and Leninist communique, which was founded in Paris by Comrade Brother Pol Pot, Brother Vann and Brother Khieu...etc.

Cyan Magenta Yellow Black
 100 100 100 100 50 50 50 50

I was constantly and closely involved in all activities until 1955. In 1953, with advice from these brothers, I decided to enter into the French party. In 1953, with advice from these brothers, I decided to enter into the French party. In 1953, the French Security Police arrested me and detained me for one day to interrogate me about activities of the Khmer Student Association, which strongly opposed King Sihanouk, who betrayed the people. At that time, I had only national patriotism, not yet class consciousness. My national soul was not at its peak yet because of my confusion between national and international patriotism. Therefore, I got married to a French woman in December 1954. The reason for such a decision is attributive to the education I received from the exploiting French feudal and colonial class. My wrong decision has caused me frustration and feeling of regret up to now. During my study in France, I didn't have any other friends other than you all within the Marxist and Leninist party. I had only one French friend whom I developed closed relationship with. This friend was involved in some political activities within the French party before but withdrew himself from the party a long time ago. He is also a friend of Comrade Ros Chithor (dead). He is now doing his normal business. Whenever I meet him, he and I never talk about Cambodia and he rarely ask me either. He just wishes to live a life of comfort.

IV. From 1956 to 1963

This is the period of internal chaos.

◆ I returned to Cambodia in late December 1955. I worked in the Railway station. The party advised me to organise a railway station cell and that placed me in charge of educating the staff and workers there. Then I kept receiving a lot of advice from the party and I was appointed Party Secretary of the railway station cell to secretly educate workers and to write for "Observer Newspaper".

◆ From November 1958 to April 1959: At the request from the Ministry of Railways and with the authorisation of the party, I went to do a study tour in Japan. At that time, I was aware of the traitorous activities of the traitors, Sam Sary and Dap Chhuon. I also found out the espionage activities of a Japanese man named Tada Toma among Khmer students in Japan.

◆ After my return from Japan, I worked in the party

railway cell until June 1961 when Sihanouk severely attacked me. The class enemy resorted to such attacks because the rebellious movement of the railway workers was growing greater and greater.

◆ The party had decided that I cut off relations with the party for a while (almost one year). The exploiting class administration transferred me to the Ministry of Public Works. In 1962, the party changed my function to undertake activities of the ruling class and foreigners. At that time, I became acquainted with a French colonel named Mare. Through this relationship, I received some information but later realised that he was a spy from the French Second Bureau (2B). However, it is owing to my keen observation that I did not break out our secrecy to him.

◆ In 1963, after the purge of 34 people, the party laid out a plan to send me to France for a while. At first, I was very worried because I did not know how to live in France. Because the situation was getting more and more tense, I requested that the party allow me to escape to France. The party then agreed. By that time, I saw an escape as a complicated matter for me. However, through my relevant educational background in France and through self-examination, I found out that the escape was suitable and would help alleviate the problems that existed in my life and for my entire family.

◆ In June 1963, after 2 months of persistent request for a visa from the administration of the exploiting class, I obtained a visa and departed to France along with my sister's daughter. My two children followed me in December 1963. I went to France via Prague as I wanted to take the opportunity to find out information about cities of the country widely known as a socialist state. I stayed in this city for 2 days waiting for a connecting flight to Paris.

◆ Over the past 7 and a half years, I have received a great deal of education from the party and have been involved in many activities against the Imperialist and ruling class. I have had a lot of experience with workers and intellectuals. Although the enemy actually investigated my activities and put pressure on me, I was still happy to struggle against them. However, at that time, I was very idealistic. I did not possess a clear-cut conception of class standpoint—still blurry. I still enjoyed life of the exploiting class.



CHANTREA VILLAGE FELL INTO THE DEVASTATION OF WAR

By *Sopheak Vichea Tieng*

(Continued)

Sarin went on to comment: “In 1970, more than a hundred people were killed and many injured. One of my cousins named Me Roeut died in 1970 while he was fleeing the village one evening at about seven o’clock. He ran across the rice fields east of Chantrea Village to find a bunker in which to hide himself. Unfortunately, he was killed by the bombing. Two tile-roofed houses next to my house were hit, leaving the owner, a woman, and her two children dead. The woman had been breastfeeding her son, Phet Ream, at the time. After the shelling, Americans brought some of the injured to Muk Va for medical treatment. Among them was grandmother Sorn, now dead, who was flown out for treatment and brought back in a car.

During the shelling, my family attempted to flee

toward Chres Village, but I got lost. I ended up in Tnoat Village, where I stayed for a short period of time in a villager’s house. When I was about to take my children to sleep under the house, it appeared that trouble was coming. On the instructions of villagers, I ran to find a bunker to hide in, but due to the narrow space of the bunker, its prior occupants complained and asked me to find another one. I and my family moved forward and found another bunker nearby, but it smelt so bad that we didn’t dare go in. A very short moment after we left that bunker, bombs fell nearby, causing me to nearly lose consciousness and leaving two of my children badly injured. My daughter Touch Seng, the first child, (born in the year of mouse), who had been carrying a pack of clothes on her head, cried out, “Help me, father!” When I heard her scream I saw that my daughter had been



Khmer Rouge Military Forces Entering Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975

horribly wounded in the stomach. This occurred in the fifth month of the lunar calendar, or about March-April, 1970. My wife then carried the child in her arms. Another child whom I was walking with was injured in the armpit. My son named Touch Say (born in the year of Rabbit) had a badly wounded foot. After my children were injured, I tried to hide in a bunker. Suddenly, three or more shells dropped. If we hadn't hidden in that bunker, we would all have been killed. I was very lucky. I was very frightened and screamed for help, but no one dared to help us. Every one was terrified, and no one could help anyone else. Everyone tried as best they could to hide themselves in their bunkers until the bombing ceased. I didn't know where to go because I was so confused. We spent the whole night in that bunker. At dawn, I brought my family to a camp. When we were about half-way there, the conditions of the wounds of my children showed me that they could not survive. So I left them alone in the middle of a valley east of Tnaot Thom Village. They were dying, so we just did our best to bring the surviving children to a camp called "Tnaot Buon Camp", located in Koh Andet Village, Chres Sub-district. Then I and my brother-in-law returned to bring my injured children to the camp, but it was too late. They were both dead. I took them for burial to a nearby area of the valley. When I left them alone, they were still alive. They asked me for some water. I gave them some, but not very much. I just scooped water with my hands and tried to drop it into their mouths. At that time they were losing consciousness, and the one who was wounded in the foot was bleeding heavily.

In 1970, all the Chantrea Villagers moved to Tnaot Buon Camp without bringing any of their belongings. They later returned to get some supplies, especially rice. Viet Cong soldiers hid

themselves where there were thick forests, preferably with bamboo. Every morning they transported sacks of vegetables to supply their soldiers, who were referred to by the villagers as "Bien Phong Soldiers". When attacks took place, the Viet Cong soldiers wouldn't allow us to run away. If they had, not many villagers would have been killed. If all the villagers left their homes and the Americans knew that only Viet Cong soldiers remained, the Americans would have shelled Chantrea Village without hesitation. The Viet Cong soldiers used us Cambodians as a protective shield. The Chantrea villagers could not return to their homes until the Viet Cong soldiers gave up and scattered. When they entered the village, the Americans gave the villagers sardines and dried rice. My brother Phan was among those given these things.

So Savon, 58, a farmer whose home is Chantrea Village, related as follows.

"When I was 12, I graduated from junior high school. I attended school for only five years. After graduation, I was forced to leave school to help alleviate my parents' work burden. Also, the school was very far from my homestead. In 1964, American B-52s began bombing Chantrea Sub-district. At that time I worked in the rice fields and stayed with my uncle in



Khmer Rouge Military Forces Entering Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975



Kok Tek Village. One day at 10 am, when I was threshing rice by trampling it in an area next to the house, I heard the sound of aircraft. A moment later, fighter planes began bombing the area. Then there were tanks and Thieu Ky (South Vietnamese) infantry entering the village from the south. This attack occurred in 1964, and left several people dead and many homes destroyed, including that of my father, Daek Net. In his house at the time had been two children, who were severely burned, and my cousin, Khieu Pon, a 40-year-old militiaman, who died.

In 1970, the bombardment was even more serious. The attack took place over three consecutive days, and people hid themselves in bunkers until they were practically starving. During these attacks, some people fled the village and tried to stay close to American bases. I fled Chantrea Village for other villages. Then I asked the Viet Cong soldiers for permission to return so that I could liberate my parents and relatives. Shortly after the attack, Americans and Thieu Ky soldiers made an announcement with loudspeakers from their helicopter asking the people to leave the village. The announcer was a Thieu Ky soldier who could speak Khmer well. However, the Viet Cong soldiers didn't allow the villagers to flee, because they feared for their own lives. The Viet Cong soldiers also hid themselves in bunkers with the villagers. At that time a pregnant woman was giving birth to her baby in one of the bunkers.

Between 1971 and 1972, no people were living in the village. Villagers were gathering in Chres and Chy Phou Villages in Chres Sub-district, while some others had escaped to Bavet. Before the war, Viet Cong soldiers had never caused destruction to the people's property. But after the war began in 1970 and the villagers began to flee, the Viet Cong soldiers removed the people from their homes and burned them down without hesitation. Upon entering the village, American and Thieu Ky soldiers caught chickens and took precious things, such as gold and silver, from the people. During that time, as a result of the presence of Viet Cong soldiers in Chantrea Village, the place was targeted for bombardment and shelling by the American and Thieu Ky soldiers. Many people died, and their homes, schools, pagodas and hospitals were destroyed. The war continued up until 1973. Due to the shortages

of food and other supplies, I and other people went fishing in a lake south of Teng Mao Village near the Vietnam border. Once when we were fishing with four other villagers, an American helicopter with two soldiers on board began strafing us, leaving one dead and myself injured in the right leg. Five other villagers fishing next to us were also killed, and two were wounded. The people killed included the sons of layman Ny, Sa and Rat. When the helicopter had been approaching, I had raised a white flag. I hadn't expected such a reaction, since previously when people raised a white flag, the Americans had not harmed them. The Americans had told the people to bring white flags along with them wherever they went, thus I hadn't tried to hide on the occasion in question. Sometimes an American helicopter checking for weapons would order villagers to stop and remove their clothes. The Americans did nothing harmful to them. If the travelers had something, they had to give it up. Unless they found weapons, the American soldiers would let the people go.

The fact that people lost their lives, their families, or their homes, hurt, but we persevered and endured the hardships."

Similar stories of Chantrea Village were recounted by other villagers, revealing the their suffering and that of our interviewees, namely Prak Sarin, Daek Net, So Savon, Saom Chhaet, Sok Lam, Hoeng Baoy, Sokh Cham Raen, Put Say, Phok Ten and Meas Hung.

The war between Vietnam (sic) and the United States left hundreds of villagers in Chantrea Sub-district homeless and caused severe food shortages. More than a hundred villagers died meaningless deaths. Many were injured, while others were left physically and mentally disabled. Based on our interviews, there were two helicopters shot down in Chantrea Village, while two pilots also died in Teng Mao Village, Chantrea Sub-district. In 1996, and again in February 2000, an American team conducted a search in Chantrea Village and Teng Mao Village, looking for the remains of Americans killed in action. Although the suffering and pain have not been forgotten, the villagers offered a warm and friendly welcome to the Americans, and tried their best to point out where the helicopters had come down.

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CABINET OF MINISTERS OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

Lecture of comrade secretary at the first meeting session of the Cabinet of Ministers on April 22, 1976

I. Picture of organization and essence of the government of Democratic Kampuchea

This is the first meeting session of our government of Democratic Kampuchea. We have ended the former government, which is in the framework of National United Front, and formed a new government in a new framework and new circumstance. The real nature of the government is a “government of genuine workers and farmers of the Communist Party of Kampuchea”.

Therefore, we start by showing a new image and a complete responsibility to the country and the people, the revolutionary army, and to the world, both friends and enemies. It is not the coalition government any more. Misconduct, right conduct, good points and bad points, gaining and losing benefits inside and outside the country, of friends or enemies, are our responsibilities.

To reveal the nature of our government is to show our responsibilities, the heavy and complete burden of our country. If we see the things clearly, we will be impressed. We will strengthen and extend the spirit of responsibility for all activities in all fields throughout the country.

Therefore, members of the government and committees of all sections have to firmly grasp the real nature of our government and our duties, and try their best to fulfill their duty based on the party's

guidelines. To grasp the party's guidelines is to grasp the party's organizational standpoints and requests in order to carry out the political principles perfectly and correctly.

The world knows our duties. Thus, we have to fulfill the duties appropriately so that we can receive trust and support from the world, and even the enemy who are also afraid of us.

This is the framework of the government. The framework for each ministry also has the same characteristics. That is [we] have to fulfill the duties thoroughly and completely based on the guidelines of the party for strengthening and maximizing the forces, particularly for encouraging the public to be actively involved in our revolutionary work.

II. Existence of, and reaction of the world to, the organization of the new government of our Democratic Kampuchea

There are two reactions of the world to the new government formation: dissatisfaction from imperialists





Khmer Rouge Military Forces Entering Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975

have difficulties in all fields. And they hoped that they could encourage the involvement of the public to support Sihanouk. Therefore, we would have to share areas of administration with Sihanouk. Khmer Rouge and Khmer Blue would have to be mixed together. “Don’t let the Khmer Rouge control any area alone”. This is the plan of American imperialists and other imperialists, including the Soviet Union. If we still work with Sihanouk, there will be no positive progress. They [imperialists] still seek

and satisfaction and support from friendly countries.

1. Negative reaction

American imperialists and their lackeys already mentioned, are not satisfied with us. They always seek chances to scold us.

a) Main reason for dissatisfaction is the fact that we have been following the correct revolutionary path and our revolutionary movement is in progress. We have strengthened and extended ourselves. They could not gain victory over us in political consciousness, organization, military, economic or diplomatic fields. They have gradually been defeated and are not able to do things harmful to us.

b) One of their political failures is that soon after we had liberated, they hoped that Sihanouk and his partisans still had great influence. Sihanouk and his partisans still have the ability to remobilize forces to provoke troubles against us, making us

chances to attack us from the west and the east. But, they will vanish day by day until the day of Sihanouk’s resignation. They had hoped that Sihanouk and his partisans would raise a flag to fight against the revolution. On the contrary, Sihanouk didn’t. When Sihanouk resigned, there was no reaction from the world. The world of our friends warmly supported us. This makes them even more irritated.

c) Another failure is the fact that spiritually, they



Khmer Rouge Military Forces Entering Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975

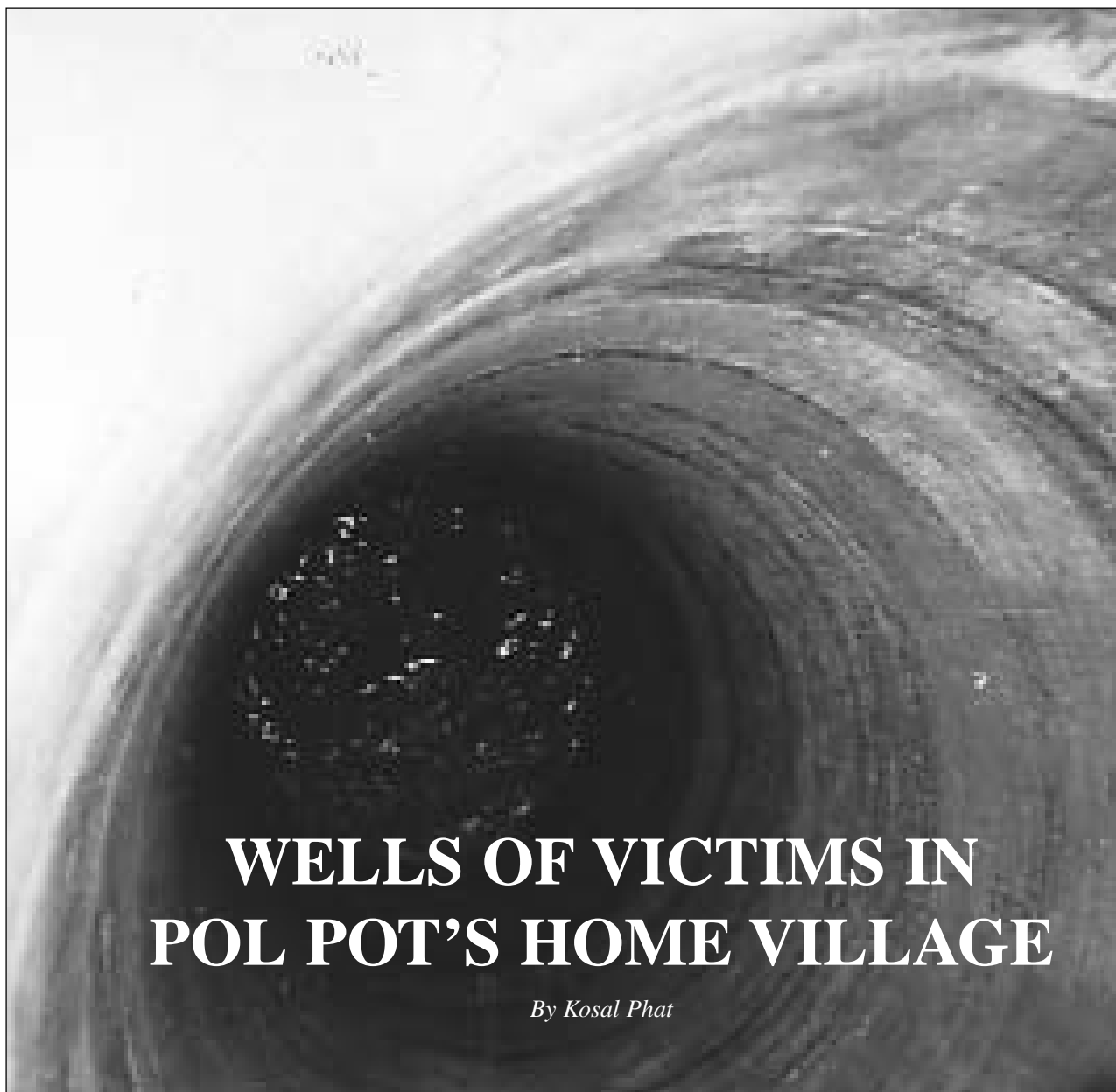


Khmer Rouge Military Forces Entering Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975

cannot infiltrate into [the revolution] due to their corruption and debauchery. That's why their press has stated that Kampuchea makes revolution in a different way from Vietnam and Laos. It means that Vietnam and Laos might be able to infiltrate into their revolution because they could maintain the basic characteristics of corruption. It was because they could bury themselves with such characteristics that they were able to cause political, economic, and military troubles. For us, they cannot do so. Thus, they can only scold us. In this field, it is not strange. On the contrary, if they applaud us, we must be vigilant. They will not applaud us unless they can manage to infiltrate [into our revolution].

Our revolution, compared to the ones in the world, receives less insults. During Lenin's time, the Soviet Union was heavily insulted and cursed day and night—twenty four hours a day. In the Stalin era, insults also occurred. This was also the case during the Chinese revolution. It was ten or fifteen years after the Chinese liberation that relationships with some countries were

made. But insults will happen for only a time. Before it was true that they had cursed at us, but now their scolding is no longer effective. The world's progress, in which the 'revolution' is comprehensible, may be one of the reasons. This is an objective factor. For a subjective factor, we have a correct standpoint. We do not perform as an actor; do not boast; and do not export the revolution to frighten people. We uphold independence, peace, neutrality and a non-alliance standpoint. As a result, we have succeeded in maximizing forces and isolating the enemy. As such they find it hard to curse at us. We are scolded once or twice a month. It is good for us, because the insults keep us simmering. If they stop scolding us, one month or one year later, we will gradually get cooler and cooler; slower and slower, and lose vigilance. So, we pick up this point to warm our standpoints. Although we perform good deeds, if American imperialists, CIA agents, reactionaries, still exist in the world, they will openly and secretly fight against us. This is to be



WELLS OF VICTIMS IN POL POT'S HOME VILLAGE

By Kosal Phat

After the Khmer New Year 1997, the mapping team of the Documentation Center of Cambodia visited Stung Sen district of Kampong Thom, which is the home district of Pol Pot. In Stung Sen district, there is a massive killing site, which is called “Wat Kdei Daung” by the villagers of Kdei Daung.

In the Democratic Kampuchea Regime, there was not the name Stung Sen district. This district appeared to be categorized as part of Kampong Thom provincial town, which was under the direct control of the “State Angkar”. According to the Political and Administrative Map of the Democratic of Kampuchea

published in the Reading Book for Class 2 by the DK Ministry of Education in 1977 “Kampong Thom provincial town is the center of Kampong” and it has five districts: Baray, Santuk, Kampong Svay, Sandan, and Stong. The book reads, “Regions and towns particularly allocated by Angkar must work in direct relation with the State Angkar.” Since Stung Sen was included as part of the provincial town, what happened here was linked to the State Angkar. The killing site of Wat Kdei Daung is located in short distance from the center of the provincial town. Even though it has been more than twenty years since the Khmer Rogue



committed the brutal acts on people, a few survivors clearly remembered what had happened here.

Mr. Chou, aged 83, was the first person to move into Wat Kdei Daung village after the January 7, 1979 liberation day. He saw the well filled with corpses and bones scattered around near four wells. The smell was so pungent. Some time later, people knew of it and they rushed to search the remains for gold and jewelry that could have been left with the victims before they were dumped into the wells. Mr. Chou said that he was happy to find a bunch of nylon strings to tie his buffaloes. Later in between 1980-1981, the Genocidal Crimes Research Committee of the People's Republic of Kampuchea arrived and exhumed the remains from the wells. Mr. Chou estimated that the Khmer Rouge here killed about 600 victims. The remains were held in a stupa in the compound of Kdei Daung pagoda but only a small proportion of the remains are still there now. The rest were lost or destroyed due to lack of care and

unprotected exposure for so many years. Mr. Chou said that one small well is 2 meters in diameter and 11 meters deep.

Mr. Pong aged 62 told us that there was no prison here during the reign of the Khmer Rouge. Most of the victims were officials from the previous regimes and their whole families. They were transported in trucks from other cooperatives and the town. He saw such events three times. Each time, there were two trucks full of people were driven into the village heading toward the four wells. The people usually call these four wells Anduang Khmaoch, the wells of corpses.

This preliminary finding has been properly documented. Photos of informants and wells were taken and informants' accounts were recorded for the purpose of preserving the history of the killing fields of Cambodia. However, the truth of which Khmer Rouge leaders were legally responsible for the crimes at Wat Kdei Daung requires a more meticulous investigation.



Photo: Hong Hun, female combatant arrested October 1976.

Voices from S-21

Chapter One: Discovering S-21

By David Chandler

(Continued)

Guided tours of S-21 were first organized in March 1979, but for over a year, as the museum took shape, only foreigners were admitted because, as a PRK Ministry of Culture, Information, and Propaganda document from 1980 asserted, the site was intended primarily “to show...international guests the cruel torture committed by the traitors to the Khmer people.” In the meantime, Mai Lam and his associates were slowly transforming the site into a museum. In July 1980 the ban on Cambodian visitors was lifted, and tens of thousands visited S-21, many of them seeking information about relatives who had disappeared. They consulted hundreds of enlarged mug shots of prisoners

on view on the ground floor of the prison, which formed a major components of the museum display. As Judy Ledgerwood has written, many of the visitors were also “searching for meaning for, for some explanation of what had happened. A visit would not have been an easy task; people who went through the meseum in the first year said that the stench of the place was overwhelming.” Some thirty-two thousand people visited the museum in the first week it was open to the puplic. By October, 1980, over three hundred thousand Cambodians and eleven thousand foreigners had passed through the facility.

Mai Lam always had high ambitions for S-21. He wanted to establish a museum and organize an archive that would be useful to the Cambodian people and would prevent them from forgetting what had happened under “the comtemptible Pot” (a-Pot). One of his more melodramatic exhibits was a large map of Cambodia, composed of skullswith the rivers shown in blood red. In the early 1980s, after S-21’s killing field at Choeung Ek, west of the capital, had been excavated under his direction., he supervised the exhumation of thousands of bodies and ordered the construction of memorial stupa at the site, fronted with grass and filled with skulls. Talking to Sara Colm in 1995, Mai Lam said:

For seven years I studied...to build up the Museum...for the Cambodian people to help them study the war and the many aspects of war crimes... For the regular people who cannot understand, the meseum can help them. Even though they suffered from the regime, as a researcher I want them to go [to the museum]. Even though it makes them cry... The Cambodian people who suffered the war could not understand the war—and the new generation also cannot understand.

For many Cambodians, as Ledgerwood points out, there are problems of “authenticity” in a museum established by foreigners to press home fortuitous parallels between the “genocidal regime” of DK and Hitler’s Germany. At the same time, for the survivors the vast and seemingly random cruelties of the DK regime easily became encapsulated in the museum’s displays. Nazism seemed as good a label as any other for the horrors that the survivors of the regime had undergone. The indifference of the DK officials to their victims, exhibited in room after room, recurs in the memories of many survivors. Cambodian’s

interpretations of the Pol Pot era slip easily into Manichean frameworks that make the poor history but are emotionally satisfying and consistent with much of what they remember. This point has been driven home by the French psychiatrists Jean-Pierre Hiegel and Colette Landrac, who worked in Khmer Rouge refugee camps in Thailand in the 1980s:

It is always more comfortable to have a Manichean vision of the world, for that allows us not to ask too many questions or at least to have the answer readily at hand. In this fashion, representing the Khmer Rouge as an homogenous group of indoctrinated fanatics, the incarnation of absolute evil, responsible for all the unhappiness of the Khmer people, is a reductive vision of a complex phenomenon but one which a good many people find satisfying.

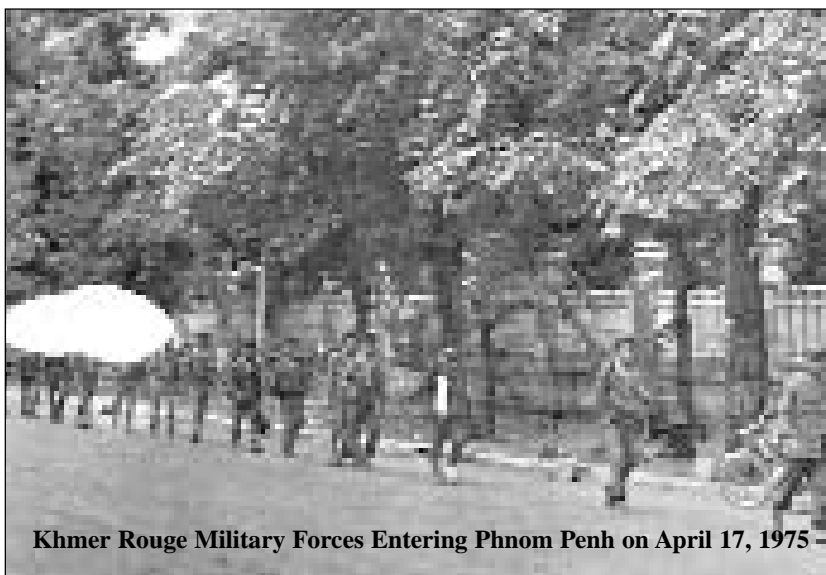
Within just such a Manichean framework, the PRK regime worked hard to focus people's anger onto the "genocidal clique" that had governed Cambodia between April 1975 and January 1979. While the new government based its legitimacy on the fact that it had come to power by toppling the Khmer Rouge, it was in no position to condemn the entire movement, since so many prominent PRK figures had been Khmer Rouge themselves until they defected to Vietnam in 1977 and 1978. The continuing existence of DK's leaders and their armed followers on the Thai-Cambodian border, however, gave the Vietnamese a rationale for keeping their troops in the country and allowed the PRK to label its political opponents as Khmer Rouge.

Like their predecessors in other Cambodian regimes, PRK spokesmen arranged history to suit their day-to-day requirements. In their formulations, the Cambodian Communist movement had been an authentic revolutionary one, up to and including the liberation of Phnom Penh in 1975, when the movement had suddenly and inexplicably spun out of control. This contorted narrative enabled the PRK to celebrate the socialist "triumph" of 17 April 1975 while condemning the people who brought it about. PRK historiography also stressed a long-standing official friendship between

Khmer and Vietnamese movements and regimes that was hard to locate in the historical record. These tangled readings of the past made sense to Party faithful. After all, only an authentic revolutionary movement could have defeated that United States; and, once the wheel of history had turned, no such movement could have been so cruel to ordinary people or could have opposed the genuinely revolutionary Vietnamese. These ex post facto explanations, however, were of little interest to most nonrevolutionary Khmer. They found it easier to focus their memories on "the contemptible Pot," whose bizarre, unpardonable crime was not that he had been a Communist (or a "fascist") but that he had presided over the deaths of so many of his own people. If the Vietnamese wanted to call Pol Pot a fascist, people would go along with it, without knowing much about the subject. Thus, talking with Lionel Vairon in 1975, the S-21 survivor Pha Thachan, by then a general in the Cambodian army, stated:

Yes, what happened under Pol Pot was "Communism," but it was of a "fascist" kind, and it surpassed fascism. In fascism the Germans never killed their own people, they only killed foreigners. They killed French and Poles and so on. Pol Pot on the other hand killed his own people, three million of them. The fascists never did this.

In annual "day of hate," the government mobilized public opinion and refreshed people's memories of the DK period. On these occasions, anti-Pol Pot demonstrations were organized for school



Khmer Rouge Military Forces Entering Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975 -



Praying For the Dead Inflicted By The Khmer Rouge Violence: Wat Lngeun, Daun Sa Sub-district, Svay Rieng

children, PRK officials made speeches condemning the DK, and Vann Nath and other survivors of S-21 were called on to recite their experiences at the prison.

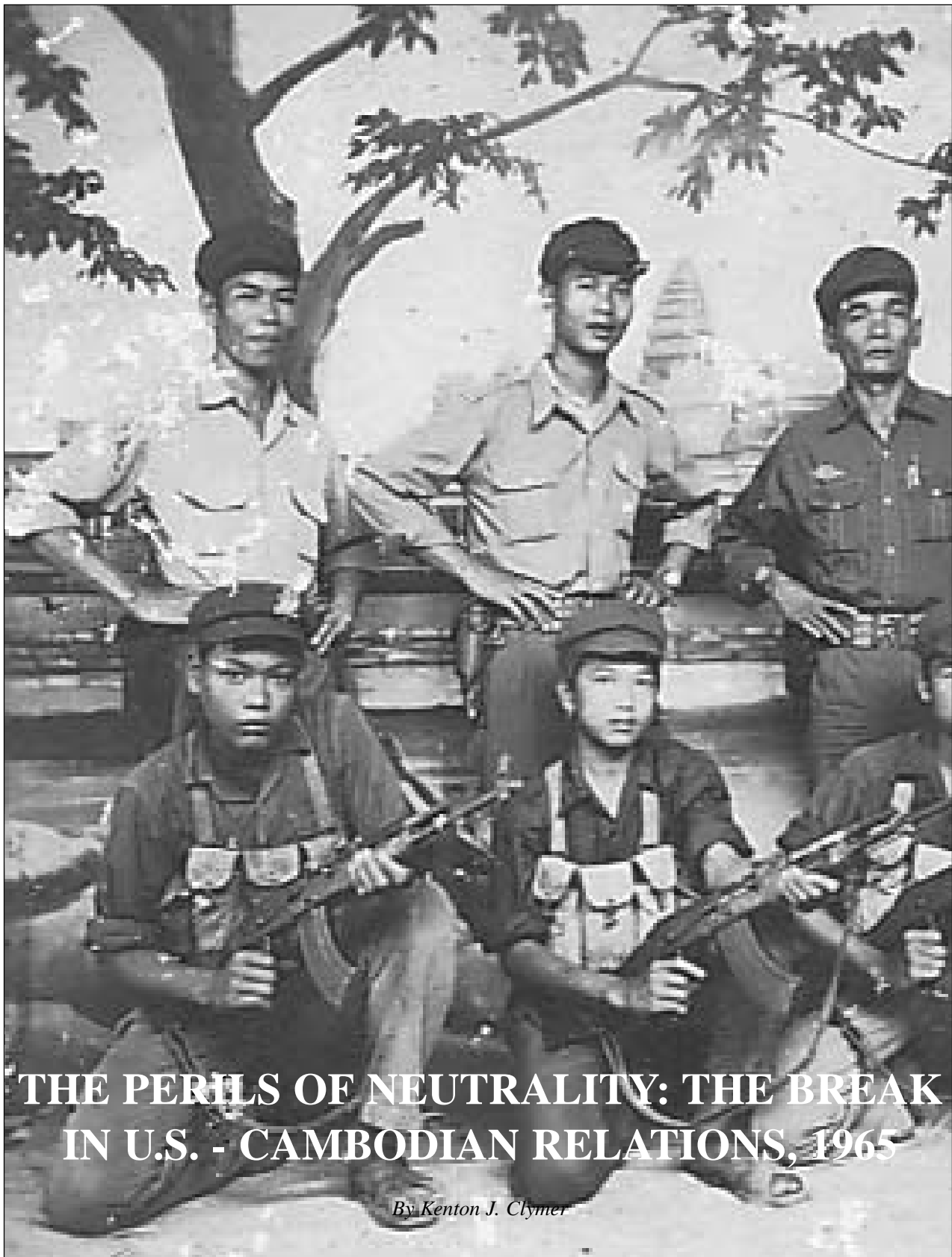
By the mid-1980s visitors to the archive, relocated to the second floor of one of the western buildings at Tuol Sleng, were impressed by the mass of documentation collected there. Many of the dossiers were over a foot thick. Hundreds of typed and duplicated. Glass-fronted cabinets in the archive were stuffed with cadre notebooks recording political meetings, military seminars, and sessions of paramedical training. Stapled “summaries” of confessions, stacked in piles, sometimes ran to hundreds of pages. Journalists and scholars were encouraged to photocopy confession texts and other materials. In the 1980s, the human rights activist David Hawk assembled a daunting collection of materials from Tuol Sleng that provided ample evidence of the extrajudicial crimes of the DK regime. His efforts and those of others to bring DK’s leaders to justice then and later were stymied by Thai intransigence and political considerations. Thoughts about bringing the Khmer Rouge leaders to trial gathered steam again in the 1990s as the Khmer Rouge movement lost momentum.

After 1989, when the Vietnamese withdrew their troops from Cambodia, the fate of the archive, and even of the museum, looked uncertain. In 1991, Cornell

University, noted for the richness of its Southeast Asian library holdings, proposed to catalogue and microfilm the S-21 archive, which came under the Ministry of Culture’s jurisdiction. The work was completed in two years. A full set of the microfilms was deposited in the Cornell University library; another set was retained by the museum.

The microfilmed materials cover 210 reels of film, including eleven reels of retakes. The reels contain all the confession texts discovered at the site, including those by foreign prisoners (filmed on separate reels). Foreigners’ confessions were primarily those of Vietnamese prisoners of war but also included statements from Thai and Vietnamese fishermen, some Vietnamese civilians, and a handful of American, British, and Australian sailors who were arrested when their boats strayed too near the Cambodian coast.

Among the most revealing confessions in the archive are those of seventy-nine former workers at the prison. Twenty-four of these prisoners had been interrogators, and twelve had been document workers. Most of the others had been guards. These texts provide valuable biographical data about the young men working at the prison. They are also helpful in documenting work patterns at S-21, the style of interrogations, and the practice of torture (tearunikam) there. **(Continued)**



THE PERILS OF NEUTRALITY: THE BREAK IN U.S. - CAMBODIAN RELATIONS, 1965

By Kenton J. Clymer



Appearing to confirm that American analysis, Sihanouk announced two days after the demonstration that a Cambodian delegation would go to Hanoi to negotiate a non-aggression pact and a boundary accord. Should then negotiations be successful, Sihanouk stated, he would recognize the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The discussion in Hanoi went badly, however. Sihanouk accused the North Vietnamese of acting just like the Thais, and the danger of a complete break with the United States faded. For the time being Sihanouk decided to ignore previously issued ultimatums threatening to break relations if a Geneva conference was not called. Sihanouk's various gambles had failed, and the prince was prepared for the time being to watch and wait. The immediate crisis had passed.

Now some State Department officials thought it would be wise to be more conciliatory toward Cambodia. Rusk prepared a friendly letter to the Cambodian foreign minister and even raised the possibility of inviting Sihanouk to visit the United States on his way to France. But due to opposition within the government, Rusk's letter remained undelivered, and the prince was not invited to visit Washington.

How much a more forthcoming attitude on the part of the United States would have improved relations by this point is uncertain, given the depth of suspicious on both sides. The American assessment that Sihanouk's actions derived from his leading of the balance of forces in Asia and Vietnam in particular was perceptive. In addition, Sihanouk acted in response to internal politics. In any event, little was done to alleviate the underlying causes of tension. In May 1964 Sihanouk accused the United States of sabotaging road machinery that Cambodia had purchased to repair the Khmer-American Friendship Highway and charged that an American scientific expedition searching for the rare wild cattle, the Kouprey, had killed the animals and ravaged the

forests. More serious, two more border violations occurred at Taey and Thlork. The United States consistently characterized these border actions as regrettable but placed primary responsibility on the National Liberation Front for using the border areas as sanctuaries. Just as consistently Sihanouk denied that the Viet Cong operated from Cambodian bases. He characterized Taey and Thlork incidents as "acts war" and made a formal complaint against the United States and South Vietnam to the United Nations Security Council. Later in the summer Sihanouk accused the United States, South Vietnam, and Khmer Serei rebels of dropping poisonous chemicals on parts of Rattanakiri and Svay Rieng provinces; over one hundred villagers died.

In late August and early September another important series of border incidents occurred in which South Vietnamese planes strafed the village of Koh Rokor and Cambodian boats on the Mekong River; ground troops also attacked. These raids, along with renewed reports of chemical attacks and the first American bombing of North Vietnam in response to the Gulf of Tonkin incident, deeply angered Sihanouk. The prince refused to receive the new American ambassador, Randolph A. Kidder. Rusk ordered Kidder to leave Phnom Penh. He never returned, and the border raids continued.

With relations again fast approaching a crisis, the United States suggested joint discussions in New Delhi, and the Cambodians accepted with "surprising swiftness". This was the one constructive effort made to confront the issues during this entire period. The talks began on 8 December 1964 and ended ten days later without an agreement. The United States blamed Sihanouk's stubbornness, while the prince claimed that the United States had agreed to the negotiations only to improve its public relations position. "We no longer have any reason to waste our time and money in continuing to play out this comedy with them," he stated. American officials feared that the collapse of

the talks might result in violent demonstrations at the American embassy or perhaps in a diplomatic break. Relations were so poor that when the Polish representative on the International Control Commission was gravely injured in an automobile accident near Phnom Penh airport, local people at first refused to assist him, thinking he was an American. By the end of the year the U.S. presence in Cambodia numbered only twelve individuals, down from over three hundred a year earlier.

With relations precarious, James C. Thomson, Jr., a national security adviser, personally urged the president to pressure South Vietnam to take steps to defuse tension with Cambodia. There was an “urgent need to take special precautions to avoid further incidents on the Cambodian side of the border,” he wrote. Any more incidents, Thomson warned, and Sihanouk might well break relations.

Thomson’s advice did not bear fruit. “We are somewhat hampered by our lack of knowledge of the general thrust of the President’s thinking,” Thomson and Chester L. Cooper confided to Mc George Bundy on 22 January 1964. “Perhaps you can help.” There is no evidence that Bundy responded, probably because the national security adviser was not inclined to recommend that significant steps be taken to improve relations. On 6 January he sent to the presidents a copy of letter that Sihanouk had written to the International Herald Tribune in which the prince accused Americans of engaging in “hostile threats, aggressions, sabotage, subversions, plots and attempted coup d’ etates [sic] for secession.” The letter demonstrated “the problem of dealing with Sihanouk”, Bundy told Johnson.

Neither the United States nor Cambodia took any significant steps in the first months of 1965 to improve their relations. Sihanouk continued to criticize the United States, often in angry tones, for any number of past lapses: providing aid with strings, criticizing his nonaligned posture, allowing American

journals to publish unflattering stories about him and Cambodia, and bombing North Vietnam. In February Sihanouk told an Indian journalist that the United States “was today hated more than the French were in the worst phase of the colonial war.”

Cross-border raids on Cambodia continued to be a major source of anger. In mid-February 1965, after an upsurge of incursions from South Vietnam, Sihanouk said that he would declare war against the United States and South Vietnam if any more bombing of Cambodian villages took place, and he threatened to appeal to China for support. Yet the very next week there were thirteen minor incidents, and a U.S. helicopter also landed briefly inside Cambodia.

In Phnom Penh, Bergesen argued that the raids, as well as continued Khmer Serei activity, were counterproductive. Despite Sihanouk’s erratic behavior and anti-American outbursts, Bergesen believed that the prince was “unquestionably the most effective Khmer leader” and that Cambodia had prospered under his leadership. Therefore the United States should try to “keep the wild men in Bangkok and Saigon from getting out of control and attempting to ‘liberate’ Cambodia. We do not believe that in the long run the best interests of the Free World would be served by an attempt to unseat him.” Such advice was not heeded. Despite ever more insistent warnings from Sihanouk, every week saw more raids on Cambodian villages.

(Continued)

KHMER ROUGE SLOGAN

- ◆ Must achieve one hundred percent the plan of three and a half tons and seven tons per hectare for 1978. (Notebook 067 KNH)
- ◆ Expand the militia war in all districts. Attack and break up the ranks of enemy. Attack enemy’s arsenals. (Notebook 194 KNH)
- ◆ The revolutionary initiative is self mastery.
- ◆ Only the people can build world history.
- ◆ Hunger is the most influential disease.

A SAMPLING OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE LINKING SURVIVING SENIOR LEADERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF KAMPUCHEA TO CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

By Steve Heder

(Continued)

In a conversation on 4 January 1979, Ieng Sary once more insisted that he had not known that cadre who were arrested were being routinely executed, and that he had no authority to order an arrest. He claimed that his only role in such matters had been to argue strongly against the arrest of department heads at the Foreign Ministry who S-21 had wanted to take away, but who he presumed at the time would just be sent for “re-education”, not executed. He also compared the lack of knowledge of Khieu Samphan, who was publicly named as Chairman of the Democratic Kampuchea State Presidium in April 1976, to his own. He confirmed Khieu Samphan’s elevation to the Central Committee in January 1976 and his later appointment in early 1977 to Chairmanship of “Office 870”, the administrative office of the Central Committee, the formally-defined function of which was “to keep track

of the implementation “ of the Standing Committee’s policy decisions. He asserted that in his Office 870 capacity, Khieu Samphan would have seen many more documents of a general nature than him, but not necessarily documents related to executions or torture. Sary insisted that Khieu Samphan had, like him, continued to believe that Communist Party cadre arrested were being “re-educated”, not executed. He said once more that arrest and execution decisions were made by Pol Pot, Nuon Chea and Son Sen, this time adding that S-21 itself was also involved in such decisions.

Speaking to Far Eastern Economic Review journalist Nate Thayer in mid-October 1997, Pol Pot conceded a role in overseeing the operations of S-21 and admitted deciding on the execution of at least some of the people who “confessed” there. Thus, Pol Pot did not dispute the assertion that “the majority of the



members of the Central Committee were killed in Tuol Sleng”. Nor did he contradict a statement that the S-21 archives contain documents “to the effect that 16,000 human beings died” there, “and that all of them confessed that they were Yuon–CIA agents, among them men and women, young and old”. Asked “were all of them indeed killed thus, and do you bear responsibility for this?”, Pol Pot replied, “I did upper echelon work; and as such, I made decisions...about the very important ones.” However, he claimed, “I didn’t know about the lower downs”. With reference to members of the Central Committee and the Government who were executed, he declared that “these human beings had joined the Party and the leadership of Democratic Kampuchea human beings.” He referred to having received documents about “the organization by all these guys” in 1976-77 “of a Committee to make a coup against the leaders of Democratic Kampuchea, that is, to kill me.” However, he said, “I don’t remember all the names”, although he did recall the name of Ya, the Secretary of the Northwest Zone who was arrested in 1976, and whom Pol Pot described as “a human being belonging to the Yuon”.

Ta Mok insisted in a separate October 1997 interview with Thayer that the “crucial individual in Cambodia was Pol Pot”, and that the Central Committee Secretary was directly in charge of S-21, along with Duch. Ta Mok claimed he himself had only been “responsible for the countryside”, an evident reference to the tasking given to him at the November 1978 Party Congress, whereas “Pol Pot, who...was responsible” for S-21, “was the Number One individual” in Cambodia. Thus, although the remainder of the Standing Committee hierarchy through mid-1978 was, by Ta Mok’s account, “Nuon Chea.. the Number Two individual, Ieng Sary the Number Three individual, Sao Pheum the Number Four individual, and himself “the Number Five individual”, all tasks in Cambodia were those of the Number One individual. Even Nuon Chea knew nothing. And Son Sen, moreover, knew less than nothing. And that spouse of Son Sen...Yun Yat...also knew nothing at all.

Asked what control Pol Pot had over the Standing Committee, Mok asserted:

There were meetings; it’s not that there were

none. The Standing Committee held meetings. And there were joint study sessions. There was democracy; we did consult and discuss things with one another. But this was a predetermined democracy. Pol Pot had already decided things on his own, and then read out what he had decided to those attending the meetings. This is why I say that Pol Pot was undemocratic.

With regard to execution policy, Mok declared:

Did Pol Pot consult on the question of killing human beings? Did he ask anyone else? It was Pol Pot and the prison chief...: just the two of them. Once somebody was arrested, that prison chief took them for interrogation, then took things to Pol Pot, and Pol Pot made the decision. Inside the [Standing] Committee it was not understood what was going on. The committee did not interfere in security matters.

Although Mok claimed to be “not certain, not clear about the exact numbers, “killed at s-21, he insisted this was all “Pol Pot’s affairs”.

Finally, in October 1997, Nuon Chea wrote of himself and unspecified other senior leaders:

We knew nothing at all about the killings. This was the lower-downs acting irresponsibly, such that my younger-sibling [s]-in-law and younger sibling [s] were all smashed. The lower-downs did the smashing, and we did not go down to as far as the lower levels.

Referring to the late Secretary of the West Zone, Chou Chet alias Si, and the late Kou Thuon alias Thuch alias Khuon, the former Secretary of the old North Zone, as well as to Mok’s Zone, Nuon alleged, “the contemptible Si and Thuch groups acted irresponsibly, and not a few died over in the Southwest as well.”

Thus, Pol Pot corroborated Ieng Sary’s assertions that the Party Secretary had held ultimate authority in security matters and implicitly corroborated Sary’s suggestions that subordinates like Nuon Chea were also involved. On the other hand, Nuon Chea had tried to place all blame for killings by security forces on Zone secretaries and other lower downs, while Ta Mok had tried to place all responsibility on Pol Pot alone. Sary’s claim that he was entirely outside the security loop had not been contradicted by any of the others, but this seeming corroboration of his claim appeared possibly to have come about simply as a result of Nuon Chea’s and Ta Mok’s efforts to blame everything on subordinates and superiors, respectively. **(Continued)**



LEGAL PROCEEDING RELATING TO CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE KHMER ROUGE

By Thomas Hammaberg

Extract from “Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia: Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for human rights in Cambodia.” January, 2000

30. The issue of a trial relating to Khmer Rouge crimes committed in the period 1975-1979 came up during the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Right in Geneva.

In its resolution 1999/76 on Human rights in Cambodia, the Commission took note with appreciation of the report of the Group of Experts appointed by the Secretary - General in response to the request by the Cambodian authorities for assistance in responding to past serious violations of Cambodian and international law by the Khmer Rouge, and strongly appealed to the Government of Cambodia to take all necessary measures to ensure that those who were most responsible for the most serious violations of human rights were brought to account in accordance with the international standards of justice, fairness and due process of law. The Commission encouraged the Government of Cambodia and the international community to continue to cooperate for that purpose.

31. Prime Minister Hun Sen wrote to the Secretary - General on 28 April 1999 explaining that, though the trial of Ta Mok and possibly others would



Khmer Rouge Soldiers

take place in an existing national court, foreign judges and prosecutors would be invited to take part fully in the trial in order to ensure that it would meet international standards of due process. A draft law would be submitted for approval to the Cambodian National Assembly allowing for foreign judges and prosecutors to take part in the proceedings.

50 50 50 100 100 100 100 100 100

Cyan Magenta Yellow Black

meet the necessary requirements in accordance with international standards, The Special Representative undertook to convey that message to the United Nations Secretariat and to propose that such expertise be provided. He also stated that any further United Nations involvement after the drafting stage would depend on whether there was an agreement on the inclusion in the legislation of guarantees that appropriate international standards would be respected.

35. The Special Representative reported on these developments at meetings in the United Nations Secretariat on 24 May and 10 June 1999. The office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations undertook to analyze the legal requirements in relation to a “mixed” tribunal. Members of the Security Council were informed in late July about the discussions with the Government of Cambodia on the issue of a tribunal. A mission led by the Assistant Secretary - General for Legal Affairs arrived in Phnom Penh on 25 August 1999.

36. The Government had appointed a working group chaired by Senior Minister Sok An to meet with the United Nations legal delegation. Modalities for a trial in Cambodia with international participation were discussed. Before leaving Cambodia, the United Nations delegation handed over for further consideration a draft law for the establishment of a tribunal. There were further discussions in New York in September 1999 between the Secretary - General and the Prime Minister, as well as between the Assistant Secretary - General for Legal Affairs and the Senior Minister.

37. This issue was also raised during the meeting between the Prime Minister and the Special representative on 25 October 1999. The Prime Minister explained that the Government intended to consult with legal experts from other countries, including France, Russia and India, and thereafter submit its revised draft of the law, which would take account of the proposal by the United Nations legal

delegation, before the end of November. The Prime Minister suggested a quick response from the United Nations Secretariat in order that a draft law could be put to the National Assembly before the end of 1999.

38. The Prime Minister expressed concern about the aspect of national sovereignty and saw the proposal that the international community appoint the majority of the judges as an infringement. However, he stated that he agreed with the suggestion for a “super-majority” arrangement, which would mean that, though the majority of the judges would be Cambodians, a broad majority would be needed for any decision so that the views of the minority would be respected.

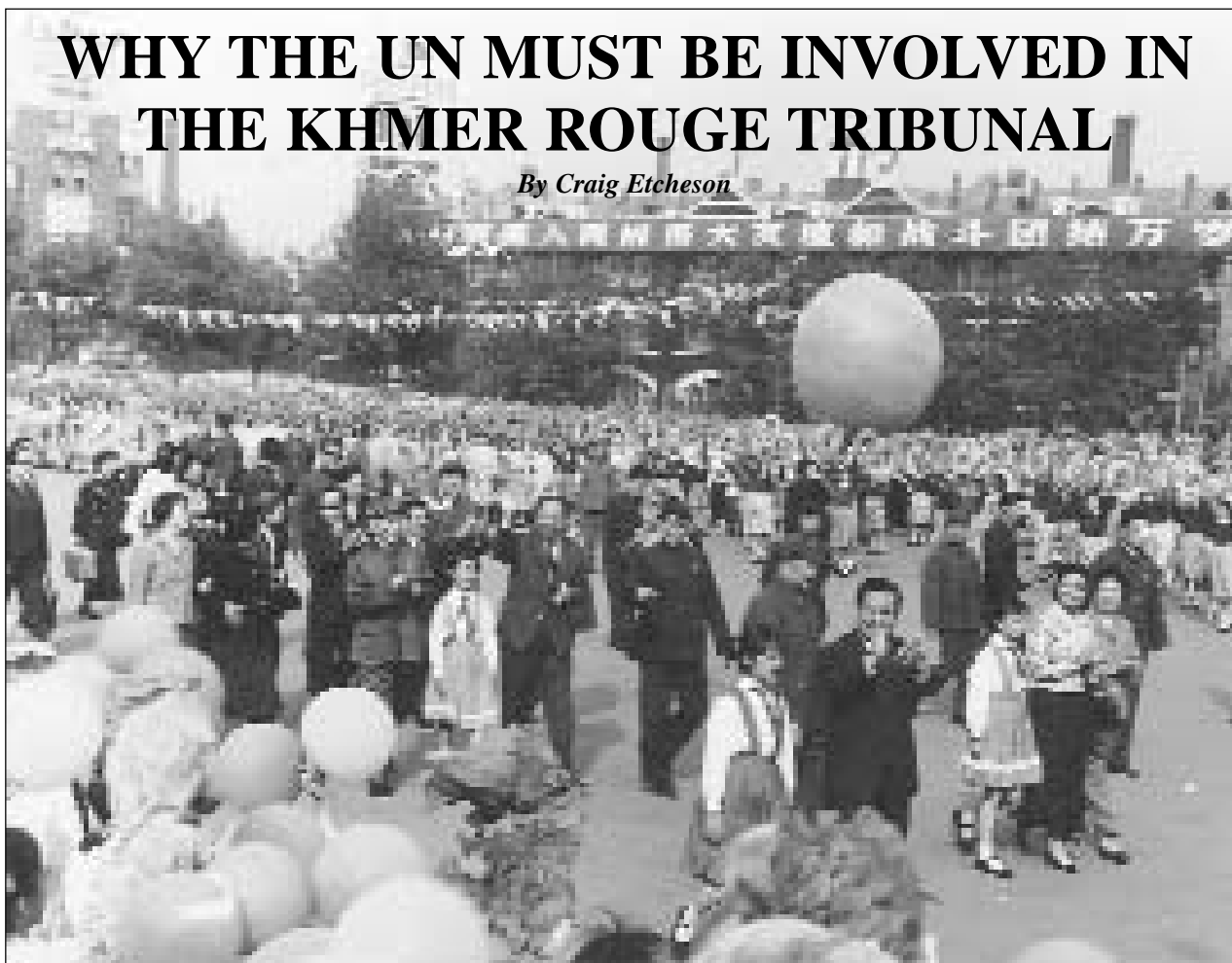
39. As on earlier occasions, the Special Representative made clear that there would be no United Nations involvement in any process to bring the Khmer Rouge to justice unless the Secretary - General was convinced that the proposal endured that recognized international standards of justice, fairness and due process would be met. There would have to be guarantees that there could be no political interference and that the whole process would be independent.

40. At the time of writing of the present report (mid-December 1999), the final proposal from the Government had not yet been submitted. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/171, welcomed the efforts by the United Nations Secretariat and actors of the international community to assist the Government in the matter and encourage the Government to continue to cooperate with the United Nations with a view to reaching an agreement.

*Please send letters or articles to
Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)
P.O. Box 1110, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Tel: (855) 23-211-875
Fax: (855) 23-210-358
Email: dccam@bigpond.com.kh
Homepage: <http://welcome.to/dccam>*

WHY THE UN MUST BE INVOLVED IN THE KHMER ROUGE TRIBUNAL

By Craig Etcheson



Some people argue that there are more important issues for the future of Cambodia than what happens with the Khmer Rouge tribunal. It has been argued that Cambodians—or for that matter, anyone in the world who cares about Cambodians—should be more concerned with the Cambodian people getting enough rice to eat, than with what happens to the old and discredited leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime. For people who have this viewpoint, economic development and the integration of Cambodia into the world community appear to be the most important issues, and they wish the whole business about the Khmer Rouge tribunal would just go away.

People who want to see a closer integration of Cambodia into the world community should be closely focused on what happens with the Khmer Rouge tribunal. It is important to realize that economic development, the integration of Cambodia into the world community, and the Khmer Rouge tribunal are all

closely linked issues. For economic development to blossom in Cambodia, Cambodia needs to become integrated into the global economy; this is just a fact of life in today's globalized economic system. For Cambodia to become integrated into the world economy, the "world" has to come to the conclusion that Cambodia is a mature society, a country which functions under a rule of law regime. That way, Cambodia's potential foreign investors and trading partners can have confidence that their business deals in Cambodia will be protected by the law. Right now, they have little such assurance, and consequently, few businessmen are prepared to take the risk of making deals with Cambodia. A Khmer Rouge tribunal carried out by Cambodian courts without UN assistance—many Cambodians will remember the trial of Prince Ranariddh in 1998, for example—risks being subjected to political pressures. And that would vividly demonstrate to businessmen and investors around the



world that Cambodia remains too risky, too far from having a firm footing in the rule of law. Conversely, a well-handled Khmer Rouge trial, carried out in conjunction with the United Nations, would do more than anything else to demonstrate to international investors that Cambodia has changed, and is in the process of becoming a strong, self-confident and reliable partner for the international community. The question before us today is high outcome will the Cambodian National Assembly, the Senate and the government ultimately choose?

The March round of negotiations between the Cambodian government and the United Nations about the Khmer Rouge tribunal was very productive. The negotiating teams appear to have reduced a complicated series of disagreements down to one single, crucial issue: the co-prosecutor veto question. Let us speak plainly about what this issue is really all about: it is about who will control which Khmer Rouge leaders will be brought before the tribunal. Will it be the People's Party, or will it be an independent, impartial professional jurist nominated by the Secretary General of the United Nations?

Up until now, the Cambodian government's position has been that the Cambodian and foreign co-prosecutors in the Khmer Rouge tribunal would have to agree in order for any indictment to be issued. Assuming that a liable ally of the People's Party were to be named as the Cambodian prosecutor—and that's a safe bet—this arrangement would, in theory, allow the government to frustrate the indictment of any individual they wanted to protect. The possibility that such a theory could become a reality is a risk the United Nations refuses to accept, because it is the opposite of the rule of law. Such an arrangement would instead signify the rule of power.

The co-prosecutor veto question appears to be a bottom-line issue for both sides. Interestingly, on Saturday, March 18, Prime Minister Hun Sen refused to comment on the negotiations with the UN, but said "Now war has ended, so the remaining issue is to integrate our country into the world community." Clear-eyed strategist that the Prime Minister is, there can be no doubt that he understands how important agreement with the UN on a tribunal is to Cambodia's image and acceptance in the international community. Cambodia's

credibility in the international community depends on how the tribunal question is decided. But the other side of the coin is strong opposition within the People's Party to ceding such a degree of control to a foreigner on this volatile issue. In the past, Prime Minister Hun Sen has had no problem with occasionally presenting the People's Party with *faits accomplis*, sometimes running roughshod over the party line. But there is a pattern to the Prime Minister's political behavior, and that pattern is that he always seeks to keep all his options open until he feels forced by circumstances to choose. When will he feel compelled to choose whether or not Cambodia shall cooperate with the UN? He has had many years to ponder this decision.

The very high rank of the UN negotiating team—including an Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, an Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Director of the Secretary-General's office—indicated to the Cambodian side that they have the full attention of the United Nations. After nearly three years of proposals, investigations and negotiations, the UN is under intense pressure from influential member states to get results. Beyond pressure from member states, the reason this is important for the UN, in the words of Ambassador Thomas Hammarberg, is that it is a matter of honor. The UN's record on Cambodia in the 1980s cries out for a new chapter to redeem the fecklessness of the past. The UN's failures to act in a timely fashion in the face of unfolding genocides in the recent past, as so thoroughly documented in recent reports commissioned by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan—reports which did not spare the Secretary General himself—underline the institutional necessity for the UN to act honorably in the present case, if it is to restore its own moral credibility. Unfortunately, despite regular complaints from Prime Minister Hun Sen that the UN is not moving quickly enough on the Khmer Rouge tribunal issue, and clear indications that the Cambodian people as a whole want the UN to be centrally involved in a Khmer Rouge tribunal, the Cambodian government does not appear to feel similar pressure to come to terms on the issue. There is a growing body of opinion which holds that the Cambodian government is simply stalling, hoping to exhaust the UN's patience. The government may be close to succeeding in that goal, but so far the United

Nations has remained seized of the issue.

Hun Sen has much to gain by making a deal, and he also has much to lose by failing to get a deal. If the Prime Minister comes to terms with the UN, his historical legacy will be as the statesman who defeated the Khmer Rouge and finally brought these international criminals to credible justice. If he fails to make a deal, his legacy will be very different, and not nearly so pleasant. Hun Sen's greatest concern, however, may not be his international image, or even Cambodia's international image, but rather the domestic political implications of the tribunal decision. Within the Cambodian People's Party, opinion is mixed on what to do about the Khmer Rouge. On one side, there are three schools of opposition to a tribunal, or at least to intensive UN involvement in a tribunal. A group we can call the "nativists" oppose any UN participation in a tribunal, reflecting an abiding revulsion at external interference in the affairs of the Cambodian state, conditioned by centuries of foreign meddling in

Cambodia's affairs. Another grouping, who we will call the "rejectionists," opposes the entire idea of any tribunal on the grounds that it could be harmful to national reconciliation. A third group is one we can call the "protectionists," who feel there are simply too many skeletons in the Cambodian People's Party's closet to risk a free, fair and independent Khmer Rouge tribunal. These three strands of opposition to a tribunal in the People's Party are countered by three other groups in the party who support the idea of vigorous international participation in a genocide tribunal. A group we might refer to as "internationalists" understands that cooperation with the UN on the tribunal can bring many side benefits, from increased bilateral and multilateral financial aid to greater political credibility in international for such as ASEAN. Another group which might be labeled the "modernizers" looks more to the domestic benefits of a well-conducted tribunal, including combating the culture of impunity and providing a salutary example of the value of an



Khmer Rouge Soldiers

independent judiciary. Finally - and this is perhaps the largest of all the groupings in the People's Party—are the ones we might call “triumphalists.” This big group wants to see a full-scale tribunal for the Khmer Rouge, and wants to have that tribunal fully legitimated by the international community, both as a final act of revenge against those who destroyed Cambodia's revolution and wrought so much havoc, as well as to provide final “proof” of the correctness of the party's perception of its own historic legacy. As the dominant partner in the coalition government, with a majority in the National Assembly, the People's Party probably has the power to determine the outcome of the tribunal issue. Where is the balance of influence among these struggling tendencies within the People's Party? It is Hun Sen's challenge to discover the answer to that question, and his greatest test as a politician. Members of FUNCINPEC are easier to analyze in this regard. As near as one can tell, virtually all members of FUNCINPEC appear to support UN involvement in the tribunal. The only exception to this might be those FUNCINPEC members who fear opposing Hun Sen. How many in FUNCINPEC have such fears? The truth shall soon be known.

Participation by the United Nations in the Khmer Rouge trials would signify Cambodia's full return to the community of nations as an equal partner and a constructive member state. After so many years of being relegated to a second- or third-tier status as a ward of the international community, and a pariah nation, it is time for Cambodia to take this step. UN involvement in the Khmer Rouge tribunal would also demonstrate that Cambodians deserve the same right to justice as Europeans are receiving at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Anything less will leave Cambodia relegated to a secondary status in the international community for at least another generation. Unless Cambodia accepts UN participation, many people in the world will conclude that Cambodia is still so damaged by the trauma of genocide that it cannot be trusted as a partner for business, or any other aspect of the modern international community. Failure by the UN to participate in the tribunal would also send a message that when hundreds of thousands of Bosnians are brutally murdered, or when 800,000 Rwandans are hacked to death, the international

community leaps to punish the perpetrators, but if two million Cambodians die at the hands of the Khmer Rouge, well, they are just Asians, and their government doesn't care enough about them to give them the same international standard of justice that Europeans or Africans deserve. This should be unacceptable to all Cambodians, and to the international community, as well. Cambodians deserve first-class justice for one of the most heinous crimes of the twentieth century—and they know that they can't get it unless the United Nations is involved. The reason so many people all over the world—not just Cambodians—are so excited about the issue of a Khmer Rouge tribunal is that what the Khmer Rouge did was to commit crimes against humanity. Let's be clear about this: the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, in which the principal immediate victims were mostly Cambodians, were of such a grave nature that they fall into a special category called crimes against humanity. This means that all members of the human family, no matter what their nationality or race, are victims of the Khmer Rouge. As such, all members of the human race have a right and a responsibility to see that justice is done in the Khmer Rouge genocide. The determination of the international community to see justice done for such crimes, and to finally enforce the international laws which have been developing over the past century, has first been seen in the two international criminal tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In the future, such crimes will be punished at an International Criminal Tribunal. But for now, it is urgent the Khmer Rouge also face the international standard of justice, and this can only be done with the participation of the United Nations. Otherwise, genocide justice in Cambodia will appear to be a question of politics, rather than a matter of justice. It is clear what the Cambodian people want. Several surveys have been conducted over the past several years on the question of a Khmer Rouge tribunal, and the results are always the same: the Cambodian people overwhelmingly want a tribunal to judge the leaders of the Khmer Rouge, and they overwhelmingly support a strong international role in that tribunal.

In a democracy, the government submits to the will of the people. We will soon find out what kind of regime governs Cambodia.



TWENTY FIVE YEARS LATER, FROM THE SHADOWS OF TRUTH: KHMER ROUGE TRIALS IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

By Michael E. Shipler

In the days after the Khmer Rouge marched into Phnom Penh, New York Times Correspondent Sydney Schanberg huddled in the French embassy with 800 other foreigners, searching for a glimpse of the impact of the revolution. As the two million residents of the capital and the countless other towns marched from their homes to rural villages, the rest of the world struggled to learn about what was happening from those few remaining international journalists. Only a shadow of the truth in wisps of information escaped Cambodia and landed on the pages of newspapers around the world. “Thousands of Cambodian civilians were reported yesterday to be leaving Phnom Penh under orders from the victorious communists,” the Times reported during those days. “Agence France-Presse reported that Communist patrols with loudspeakers had rolled through the streets the night before telling all residents to go more than 12 miles into the countryside.” But the full extent of the atrocities that were beginning in those days was hardly imagined. Even the remaining journalist did not expect a genocide of one quarter of Cambodia’s population. Weeks later, Schanberg



Khmer Rouge Child Soldiers

reported that a “prediction made by the Americans was that the Communists would carry out a bloodbath once they took over—massacring as many as 20,000 high officials and intellectuals. There have been unconfirmed reports of executions of senior military and civilian officials, and no one who witnessed the take over doubts that top people of the old regime will be or have been punished and perhaps killed or that a large number of people will die of the hardships on the march into the countryside. But none of this will apparently bear any

resemblance to the mass executions that had been predicted by Westerners.”

Indeed, the actions of the Khmer Rouge did not bear any resemblance to the predictions of Westerners, but far exceeded the world’s worst fear. The events of that week gave rise to one of the twentieth century’s worst regimes and worst set of crimes against humanity. Between 1.5 and 2 million people were killed by the regime that forced the majority of the population to move into work camps and denied its people food and

medicine and most of their basic rights. Only a shadow of what was happening in Cambodia was known to the international community at the time. Twenty five years later, as the anniversary of the fall of Phnom Penh to the Khmer Rouge passed, Cambodia has begun to face its own history, to uncover the hidden truths that still lay hidden among the wispy shadows that survived the revolution.

The end of the war in 1998 brought Ieng Sary, Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea out of the northern jungles and back into the spotlight of mainstream Cambodia, sparking a national and international discussion as to how to deal with the past. A fierce debate has arisen over the following years with many parties putting pressure on the government to act in a variety of ways to deal with the Khmer Rouge revolutionaries. Cambodia has suddenly found itself on an international stage at the cutting edge of human rights law and norms.

Cambodia's discussion is part of a series that have been taking place in countries that are experiencing transitions to democracy and processes of peace for the past twenty years. Since Argentina's decision to prosecute the five key figures of the military junta that ruled with a brutal dictatorship for seven years during the seventies and eighties, countries have followed, choosing from a range of options as to how to deal with the past.

Most debates have centered around whether countries should officially recognize and act on the human rights violations of past regimes. Academics, analysts and interested parties have widely argued that it is a mistake for a government to sanction discussions about memory, but should rather let history take its course and not revisit it. Analysts often argue that for a country to bring up the past human rights violations and reveal them in full to the public would sow the seeds for further division and could even lead to revenge attacks. Additionally, it is argued that the full information would divide younger generations who may not have suffered in the war or under past regimes.

Spain, after its transition to democracy, for example, chose not to take any actions to uncover or discuss the violations that the government may have committed during the Franco years. The transition has proven largely successful and the legacies of terror

remain deep beneath the surface.

Since the end of the cold war, the international community has widely rejected this option, arguing that post-conflict societies need to recognize the full extent of what happened to prevent the crimes from occurring again. Since the mid-eighties, international human rights organizations as well as the United Nations have put consistent pressure on transitional governments to recognize their history in official capacities. They argue that terror leaves legacies on all levels of societies, within institutions, communities, and individuals.

The international community has begun to pressure transitional governments to deal with the past either by pursuing justice of past offenders or by forming truth commissions. The ideal option in most countries would be to prosecute past human rights violators, to make them accountable for their crimes against humanity. Prosecution, it is argued, not only punishes offenders but gives victims space to bring closure to their own traumas. It serves to strengthen a country's justice system and democracy by demonstrating that even the leaders and the military are subject to the law.

However, the possibility of bringing human rights violators to justice in most countries is minimal. As most countries begin transitions to democracy, they lack viable judicial systems which are able to carry the heavy caseload and are able to provide fair trials. Additionally, the individuals who were responsible for past human rights violations often retain tremendous power and influence in the society. Thirdly, offenders often demand immunity from prosecution before relinquishing power or allowing a peace or democratization process to begin. In Guatemala, the military, who has been shown to be responsible for over 90% of the human rights violations during the 36 year war still wields tremendous power and authority throughout the country. The few soldiers who have been tried for massacres or human rights violations have received very light sentences leaving the victims' families feeling more alienated and vulnerable. Most officials haven't faced any repercussions for their crimes. In fact, a basic part of the agreement which brought the army to the negotiation table in the 1990s was a guarantee of immunity from prosecution.

(Continued)

MEAS SARIN LEARNS OF HER COUSIN'S FATE THROUGH 'SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH'

By Kosal Phat and Sophearith Choung

In Issue Number One we published the “confession” of Tiv Mei, a younger brother of Tiv Ol, who was arrested, tortured and killed by the Khmer Rouge on the grounds of having been a “Free Khmer, CIA, and a traitorous element in the party rank” in the Eastern Zone (Document File D00049, entitled “Biography of comrade Tiv Ol known as Penh”). The confession document is 103 pages long, and was written from July 14 to September 3, 1977 at Office S-21, now known as “Toul Sleng”. Tiv Mei met the same fate as his brother Tiv Ol. Tiv Mei stated in his “confession” (Document File J00642): “On the evening of May 11, 1977, I asked for permission from a unit chief to bring soaked stitched-palm leaves to cover my house. At about 4 PM, while I was preparing the leaves to put in a cart, a cooperative chief accompanied by several unknown people told me that Angkar was planning to get me.” Thereafter Tiv Mei was sent to Office S-21 and tortured into confessing on September 18, 1977. He was interrogated by comrade Oeun and subsequently killed.

Meas Sarin received one of the many copies of “The Truth” distributed in all districts, populated areas, and cities of the country, and was very moved after reading the confession of Tiv Mei, who was her cousin. She then called the Documentation Center of Cambodia confirming her relationship with Tiv Mei, and briefly recounting the story of Tiv Mei, who had been a worker in a cooperative at Kor Village, Ta Keo Sub-district, Kor District, Kampong Cham Province. Although the day of our interview was Women’s Day, a national holiday, Meas Sarin enthusiastically recounted the following story.

Question: What’s your name?

Answer: I am known as Ken. My real name is Meas Sarin.

Question: How old are you ?

Answer: I will be sixty next month.

Question: Where did you live in the Pol Pot time?

Answer: In Phnom Penh.

Question: What precinct number, and from what year?

Answer: In 1958 I lived in Sangkat Phsa Depo. Then I sold that house and bought another one in Russei Keo, next-door to a gas station. I lived there up until 1975.

Question: What is the relationship between you and Tiv Mei?

Answer: Cousin. His mother and my mother are siblings. During the evacuation, we were separated one after another. We didn’t stay together. Later we met each other. But, Tiv Mei’s mother hated me so much.

Question: Why?

Answer: Tiv Ol’s family hated me because she (Tiv Ol’s mother, who is Tiv Mei’s elder sister) always spoke in the revolutionary style “comrade”. **(Continued)**



Praying Ceremony for the dead caused by the Khmer Rouge atrocities, Tuol Sleng



LETTER SEARCHING FOR PARENTS AND SIBLINGS

My name is Chany, female. I am searching for my parents and siblings, namely:

1. Tim, father;
2. Khom, mother;
3. Khoeun, elder sister;
4. Kha, elder sister;
5. Net, elder brother; and
6. Nakk, younger sister.

In the Khmer Rouge regime, perhaps my family lived in Pursat or Battambang Province.

In 1979, (when I was about five or six) the country was liberated. My family moved from there to our hometown. Along the way (maybe closed to Stung Pursat), I got lost and have been separated from the family since then.

LETTER SEARCHING FOR MY FATHER DISAPPEARED DURING KHMER ROUGE TIME

On the morning of March 24, 2000 (via internet)

Dear Mr. Youk Chhang,

My name is Vanarith, a son of Touch Khamdoeun, former Cambodian ambassador. My father was born in 1935 in Kampong Thom Province. He was an ambassador to Cuba between 1970 and 1972, and to China between 1972 and 1975. My mother's name was Nou Vanna, who was born in 1937 in Phnom Penh. My parents were educated in Paris, France. My family returned to Cambodia in 1975, only to be killed by the Khmer Rouge. I was the only one who survived the slaughter. My mother and my father were held and executed at Tuol Sleng prison. I am very anxious to know whether the Documentation Center of Cambodia holds any piece of information concerning my parents, such as date of arrest, room number, date of execution, especially their confessions. If the said items are available, may I have a copy of them, and if possible, may I visit your center. My main aim is for you to publish any article about my parents in your magazine "Searching for the truth", next edition. Thank you very much indeed.

Vannarith

LETTER FOR VANARITH

Dear Vanarith,

The Documentation Center of Cambodia holds a document concerning your father. I would like to express my regret and share condolences with your family. At your convenience, please come and pick up the document.

Sincerely,

Youk Chhang

Evening of March 24, 2000

Dear Mr. Youk Chhang,

I would like to express my profound gratitude for your great efforts in assisting Cambodian victims via the magazine "Searching for the truth", and especially for the priceless documents you sent to me this evening. I have searched for documents concerning information about my parents for a number of years. In fact, I worked for the International Committee of the Red Cross between 1993 and 1995. During that time, I received only a single piece of information claiming that my parents had been imprisoned by the Khmer Rouge at Office S-21. I tried several times to obtain photos and other information concerning their fate that may have been left at Tuol Sleng. Unfortunately, I was never able to obtain these or any other information. Twenty years have passed, and only today have I received this priceless information through your qualified and professional assistants.

Once again, I would like to express my special thanks to you and your colleagues, who have been such a great help, and my hope that the Documentation Center will be successful in searching for the truth for all Cambodian victims, as well as the younger generations, to help them understand what happened under the Pol Pot genocidal regime. A number of my friends are bereaved, and they also wish to obtain any available information. One of them is Sien Seila, who is a son of the former Cambodian ambassador to Vietnam, Sien An. Sien An's wife was mentioned several time in the confessions of my parents. Sien Siela longs to know what happened to his parents at Office S-21.

Please let me know when you manage to locate photographs of my parents. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Vannarith

MY FAMILY

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF POL POT

By Samondara Vuthi Ros

(Continued)

His youngest brother died during a bombing mission at the Vihea Sour battlefield in 1974. My uncle used to say to my father, “What benefit will you gain from the Khmer Rouge when they win the war. Why do you support them?” Since then my family has endured much suffering and separation, and only I and my mother together have survived. As for my brother, we don’t know what happened to him. He disappeared. In the blink of an eye, my mother lost her husband and two of her children. That night, my mother and I were told to go to the district office for new place assignments. Yet, they told us not to bring along so many things as some people had already arranged matters for us. I and my mother were taken by ox-cart to the district office. I didn’t recognize the way we went because it was so dark. At the district office, a man told my mother: “You have to spend a night here. At dawn you will be taken”. In the morning, the district office appeared to be vacant, with no one present except my mother, myself, and three or four Khmer Rouge. A man approached my mother and said in a belligerent tone: “Go to your village! People here are very busy. They won’t have time to take you until later”. Then we left the office and returned to our homestead on foot. We walked from dawn to dusk. That night, my mother

remained awake. She sat with her knees upward in the bamboo-lattice hall. When the morning came, she carried a hoe and a long-handled knife to the farm, saying to me: “My son, take my rationed porridge to eat when they deliver. I will not return until the evening”.



Khmer Rouge Child Soldiers

As she had promised, in the evening she returned home. She was so sad and said nothing. She had only two or three cans of rice to cook. After cooking, she asked me to eat rice with her. While eating, she glanced at me very often. Suddenly, a village militiaman came to ask my mother to attend a meeting in the Village Office. My mother told me: "Son, sleep after eating. I will be back soon." I spent one night waiting for my mother. I seemed to have no soul in my body. I thought my mother might have been taken to be killed. In the morning, I went to the house of the village chief to ask for information about my mother. The village chief said: "Your mother is being held at Tuol Kok Kor. If you want to meet her, you can ask people around there. They will tell you."

Tuol Kok Kor was a hill, surrounded with small rivers, used to detain middle-age women who had broken their regulations, like my mother. They accused my mother and the other people being detained there of secretly digging potatoes, stripping rice and of having the spirit of previous regimes, especially in their relations with their husbands.

I was left to the vast field alone. A week later, I received information about her. Villagers next to my house told me that my mother still survived and she really wanted to see me. It took me half a day to walk from the village to the place where my mother was being kept. I had to swim across rivers to reach Tuol Kok Kor. There, I saw hundreds of middle-age women clearing forests, digging out tree-stumps, and carrying tree branches to burn down. There was no sound of singing. For nearly an hour, my eyes

searched for my mother. Unable to find her, I felt despair and uncertainty. I cried as I ran away. Fortunately, I met a woman of about the same age as my mother, sitting under a tree along the way. She asked me: "Where are you running to, child? Who are you looking for?" I replied: "I want to find my mother". She went on: "What's her name? From which village?" After describing my mother to her, I learned that on the previous day, my mother had been sent to work site where they were digging canals. Returning to the field, I felt a great relief.

Escape for survival

During this period of my childhood, I did not receive the care of parents. I lived alone in a leaf-roofed cottage at the foot of some mountains. Often I would ask myself how long I would be alone, and wondered if I would live such a life forever. One day, when I was walking back from cutting Tun Trean Khet (kind of plant used to make compost) and collecting cattle dung, an aged woman, who was a "base person", told me that she had met my mother at the dam work-site east of the mountain. But, she didn't tell me where it was. She just instructed me to walk eastward.



The comrades

50 50 50 100 100 100 100 100 100

After receiving this information, I left that morning, walking eastward as instructed. I spent a whole day reaching the work site, where I found hundreds of middle-aged men and women. There was a long hall being built on the top of a tall dam. In the hall, the people were taking a rest, sitting in rows along the edge of the low roof. The gap from the ground to the edge of the roof was approximately one-third of a meter. The people had to crawl to enter the hall. I spent many hours bent over, walking the length of the enormous hall in search of my mother. Suddenly, I saw a pair of feet which seemed to belong to my mother. Then I walked straight toward those feet and found myself looking into my mother's face. She was patching some torn clothes, and when I called out, "Mum, Mum, Mum", she looked up and her tears started flowing. She hugged me and fondled my head as she cried. That night, my mother asked a chief of the mobile unit for permission to have me stay for the whole night. I remember her painful words to me that night. "From now on it will be hard for you to find me! We will be separated with no idea when our family will be reunited." Looking back, I know that my mother had been warning me not to stay with her. I felt doubtful and asked her why I could not stay with her. Instead of answering my question, she only cried and told me to escape from the village, to go away, and not to worry about her, because she could take care of herself. I could not think, but cried out and hugged my mother, pleading to live with her. I hugged her close that night until I fell asleep. At dawn, I heard the shrill sound of a whistle, calling the people to their work. Then my mother asked me to return home and prepare things for escape. She kissed my forehead three times and uttered softly: "From now on you have to know how to lead your life, and we don't know when we could meet again! If you have free time, please come to visit me". Then she walked away with tears. I stared at her with tears until she was out of my sight.

About two days after my return, I met an adolescent who was also categorized as a 'new person'. He was assigned to a 'front mobile unit' constructing a dam at a place called "Tum Nup Daem Kor Bei", located in Phnom Chhun Chaing District, Battambang Province. I asked him if there were any children working in the unit. He said there were about ten but

that they didn't allow many children to work there. I asked if I could go with him, and, one morning shortly after waking, we left.

As a child, I lived a vagrant life, like that of a plant floating in the ocean. My life was the same as the other ten children in the mobile unit "Daem Kor Bei". I had only two shirts, a rice spoon, and a small pan left to me by my mother. I used them to receive my rationed food every afternoon and evening. All of us children were assigned to build fifty meters of dike or three cubic meters of dam each day per three children. If anyone failed to fulfill their assignment, their food ration would be reduced, or they would be punished. To live for one day in this dark era seemed like one hundred years. I always remembered my mother's words: "You have to learn how to live without me." I never received any information about her after she left. I always thought that she was living in the village like the others. One time, I and few friends were asking each other about our families: "When can we see our parents?" Suddenly, an adolescent about the same age as my brother told me that my mother had already been taken to be killed. Although he lived with our group, this boy had just secretly visited his parents in their village. His news brought tears to my eyes. I felt I had nothing. I wondered if I would survive or not. It is only now that I realize the aim of my mother had been for me to escape the extermination of our family. If I had failed to escape to the mobile unit, our entire family would have been killed. For fear of death, even though I had been told that my mother was killed, I dared not return to the village to learn if my mother had been killed or not. To this day, some twenty years later, no word from my mother has been had.

This story of pain and bitterness is a real story of one of the hundreds of thousands of Khmer orphans in Cambodia, who experienced the dark era between 1975-1979. The memory of pain and separation is everlasting in my mind.

On behalf of the orphans, I strongly support any catalyst for an international tribunal to bring to justice those Khmer Rouge leaders who were involved in the Cambodian genocide between 1975-1979, in order to find real justice for innocent Cambodians who died unjust deaths during that most barbarous regime.

KOH KHSACH CHUNLEA: AN ISLAND OF WIDOWS

By Kalyanee Mam

Cambodia is a land of widows. The Pol Pot regime left behind many enduring legacies. One of the more striking reminders of this horrific period are the vast number of women who are left widowed and children left orphaned by their husbands and fathers. Where did all the widows come from and how did they come to be? Five women from Sa-Ang district, Kandal province seek to answer this question by re-telling their own bitter stories of hardship, endurance, and survival on an island called Koh Khasach Tunle, where recent widows were ostracized and sometimes, even murdered. These stories reveal another determined effort by the Khmer Rouge to sever family ties and to uproot the traditional relationships that existed between the Cambodian husband and wife and between the Cambodian mother and her children. Abandoned by a hopeless future, the women wonder who will avenge their past and who will remember their story.

Before 1975, Theeda and her husband lived in Phnom Penh. She sold things at the market, while her husband worked as a servant in a hotel. When the Khmer Rouge ransacked Phnom Penh and evacuated the city, Theeda and her husband were sent back to their native village in Setbo. There, she was placed in the full labor force (kamlang sreuk) in Beoung Tnaot and forced to carry dirt up to the Toul Krasang dam while her husband worked in Chansa Cheang Kul, plowing the fields at night and carrying dirt in the daytime. They rarely saw each other since it was policy that husbands and wives only meet once a week. When Theeda and her husband did meet, he would help her complete her quota of five square meters of dirt per day, so that they would have more time in the evening to devote to each other, before separating again at the crack of dawn. Theeda only met her husband nine times this way, before he disappeared from her life forever. In March of 1977, they dragged him from his work site in the evening and took him to Koh Kor, the largest prison and execution site in Sa-Ang District. They accused him of

being a 1st Lieutenant. During the Pol Pot regime, soldiers, military officers, civil servants and anyone educated were considered bitter enemies of the regime and it was necessary to eliminate them. Although Theeda's husband worked as a simple servant in a hotel in Phnom Penh, his connection with urban life made him a perfect candidate for execution.

Theeda did not get to see her husband leave, but she and her children were forced to endure the consequences of his execution. Even before Theeda and her children were sent to Koh Khasach Tunlea, they experienced the bitter contempt of Angkar. They were forced to dig with fixed quotas, they received the heaviest and most difficult work, and their food was rationed differently from the others. Despite her husband's death Theeda continued to work hard. "If you don't work, they will kill you," she said, "because they have already killed your husband. But they did not allow you to cry. Anyone who dared cry would be killed."

When her husband was taken away, Chantou was also forced to cry alone. Like Theeda, Chantou was a native of Setbo village. During the months of fighting, Chantou moved with her family to Phnom Penh, before she eventually evacuated to her native village in 1975. Chantou was a widow with one child, before she was forced by Angkar to re-marry. Chantou did not want to marry, but knew she would have to bear the consequences if she did not: "In my heart I did not want to [marry], but if you did not marry they would take you to be killed. They would kill you, so you just forced yourself to get married." Like Theeda, Chantou only saw her husband once a week or every ten days. Their meetings were monitored and they were not allowed to visit each other freely: "When we went to work, we met each other like this, but we never spoke a word to each other... We just steal glances at each other, but they never let us talk to each other." Thousands of marriages were arranged during the Pol Pot period, but it is not

clear why people were forced to marry since couples were denied the right to live together and were sometimes separated forever. Chantou was forced to endure such a fate while she was already seven months pregnant with a child. In 1977, she was helping to raise a dam in Beoung Tnaot when they sent her husband to Koh Kor. Only a week later, did Chantou discover her husband had disappeared.

Davy, on the other hand, witnessed her husband's departure and even staged a small resistance to challenge the policies of Angkar. Davy was a "base person" who had lived in Prek Ambel ever since she married her husband. Her husband was poor and weak and they only had a small hut in the village. they raised only enough ducks to live on and they had some wood they were saving with which to build a house. In 1974, the militia leader came to ask Davy for some ducks and wood. She refused since it was all they had. A couple of days later, they came to take her husband away. "We are only taking him to be educated," they said. Davy understood the consequences of being educated, "Being educated. It will not be quick. I know that if he goes, he will go forever." She asked who would support her and her four children of her husband was taken away? They answered, "Angkar will support you."

During the Pol Pot regime, relationships were shattered, families were separated and emotional and sentimental ties disappeared. Angkar became the parent, the husband, and the family that one should only pledge allegiance and absolute loyalty to. Davy refused to accept this reality. She sat in the road in protest and dared them to kill her entire family, "Okay, why don't you just shoot and kill everyone in the house. Shoot and kill everyone, including myself, my children, my husband, everyone, because if you take him away, I will definitely starve and die." Few people were willing to be as confrontational as Davy was. When asked why they did not dare to resist Angkar, Theeda answered, "How could you run away? If you run, the punishment is even greater, It will even touch on your children. I tell you, if your husband challenges them...he will live, but we will lose with their warning, "It the husband dares to resist, we will take the entire family. At this point, your husband does not dare to resist." But Theeda, quickly added, "If we knew that all our families would die anyway, we would have all resisted." Davy's

husband did not resist. He resigned himself in order to save his family.

Bopha's husband's departure was less dramatic, Bopha lived for a short while in Phnom Penh, before returning to her native village in Svay Brateal. When they returned, her husband planted vegetables while she worked near the village. It was 7:00 in the morning in 1977, when they called her husband from the house. Bopha was two months pregnant at the time. They said that they were taking him to help plow the fields. Bopha remembered how her older brother, in 1976, also left in this way. Many different tactics were used at that time to deceive family members from the truth. Although one of the most popular methods used was to say they were taking the individual to be educated, Angkar also used other means of deception. According to Theeda, "They would pick at you and say, 'Come on, fetch your earth basket.' When you went to fetch your earth basket, you knew that they were taking you to be killed. And we knew. Inside our heads, we already knew." When Bopha's husband left, he also knew. He did not take anything with him. He kept everything for his wife, knowing that he would never return, A month after her husband was taken to Koh Kor, Bopha suffered a miscarriage while digging a canal.

Sopheap was also two or three months pregnant when her husband was taken away. In 1975, Sopheap and her husband were evacuated from Phnom Penh, where her husband worked as a motorcycle repairman. They arrived in their native village of Svay Brateal carrying a baby only 20 days old. Sopheap and her husband were divided into separate units. Sopheap entered a mobile work brigade for married women (Kong chalat sehtrey), transplanting rice seedlings and clearing forests, while her husband worked in a mobile work brigade for plowing (Kong chalat pchoor). It was broad daylight when they took her husband to Koh Kor and she was not able to see him go. He was not alone. Four or five people were dragged along with him. Like Bopha, they said they were taking him to plow the fields and to carry wood.

After their husbands were sent to Koh Kor prison, each of the women above was soon taken to Koh Khsach Tunlea. They were certain they would never see their husband again, not only because Koh Kor was an infamous execution center, but also because Koh

Khsach Tunlea was an island reserved mainly for widows. “I could not say that we would be able to reunite again,” said Bopha. “If they take you and put you in that place....It is filled with widows.”

Sopheap was almost ready to give birth when they took her to Koh Khsach Tunlea. They told her she was going to meet her husband. “When I left, I didn’t even know they were taking me to this island. Only after they pulled the boat in, did I know. When they took me, they didn’t tell me where I was going. I just kept walking. They said, ‘We are taking you to be with your

husband.’ ...They just lied, They already killed my husband. They just lied to me. They gathered everyone. Everyone, who’s husband they had killed, they took to live on this island.” Theeda was also told she would go meet her husband .She was so happy she tried to walk faster while she advised her own child, “Go easily. We are to meet our Pa; we are going to meet your father. Look, your father is waiting to welcome us,” On the way there, Theeda saw many women crossing the river. But there were no men. “Whenever they sent you anywhere, they always said it was to go meet your



husband. Go here, and we will meet. Go there, and we will meet. We were all so happy to hear that we were going to meet our husbands. But until the day we broke out, I still do not know where my husband went.”

The five women never met their husbands again, but on the island they met many women who confronted the same fate they did. It was uncertain where all the women came from, but there were thousands of them. Chantou was surprised to see how many widows there were on the island. Each of them had one thing in common. They were widows, left stranded on an island

because of their suspicious connections to their husbands. When Sopheap reached the island, the unit leaders announced to the women, “Those who come to this island, do you realize what’s going on? You are all wives of soldiers and the military police. We bring you and put you on this island.” Sopheap asserted that there were no wives of soldiers or military officers present on the island. They were all just regular people. This line of reasoning, however, was used simply to justify their own classification schemes.

(Continued)



KHMER ROUGE SONG:

COMMITMENT TO COPY THE RADIANT ROLE MODEL OF OUR COMRADES

Compiled by Sayana Ser

Girl: April 17 is the liberation day, on which the earth is trembling; the cloudy sky is gone away, and the honorary ray of light is shining.

Boy: The era of being lackies is ended. People have self-mastery. The world is thankful for the existence of Kampuchea.

Girl: This stems from the high patriotism of all combatants, who have achieved victory, endured all kinds of hardships, and sacrificed their lives.

Boy: We see clearly the patriotism of our comrades, who have spent five years, both day and night, fighting against the contemptible enemy in the land until the day of triumph.

Girl: Comrades have endured, drenched with rain day and night, and endured the hardship of starvation in the military trenches. Comrades have attacked enemy tanks with their bare hands.

Boy: Combatants have swum across the river to fight the wild dogs, and gone out to resist the American pirates on the seas.

Girl: Combatants have waged a noble fight in prisons, while being tortured. Combatants have not been frightened, even while being electrically shocked, and have kept their secrets secure until the day of death.

Boy: We remember the fresh, bright red blood of combatants, which has showered the earth for five years. This is a new era, in which the revolutionary Kampuchea is shining.

Together: We are committed to copying the most radiant role model of the combatants, following the tracks of our comrades, and serving the revolution forever in order to build and transform Kampuchea into a new place, prosperous and developed, in which all people live in happiness.

**ដើម្បីទប់ទល់ការបោះពុម្ពនិងចែកចាយដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃ ដល់មន្ទីរស្រុក និងឃុំ នៅទូទាំងព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា
ទស្សនាវដ្តីចំនួន១០០០ក្បាលជារៀងរាល់លេខ និងដាក់លក់តាមបណ្តាទីរួមខេត្តនិងក្រុង មួយច្បាប់ក្នុងតម្លៃ ៧០០០រៀល**

ថវិកានៃការបោះពុម្ពផ្សាយទប់ទល់ដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃនិងជំនួយមនុស្សធម៌នៃក្រសួងការបរទេសនៃរាជរដ្ឋាភិបាលនៃកម្ពុជា មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជាអំពីការរស់រាននៅក្នុងប្រទេសកម្ពុជា មូលនិធិនាត និង សាធារណជនគ្រប់រូប សូមជួយទប់ទល់ការបោះពុម្ពផ្សាយទស្សនាវដ្តីនេះទៅតាមលទ្ធភាពដែលអាចធ្វើបាន ព្រមទាំងប្រគល់ឱ្យការបោះពុម្ពផ្សាយទស្សនាវដ្តីស្រុកនិងការពិភព សូមមេត្តាទទួលយកការនិយាយកម្រិតណាមួយនៃការបោះពុម្ពផ្សាយទស្សនាវដ្តីនេះ (៨៩៩) ២៣ ២១១ ៨៧៩ ឬ (៨៩៩) ១២ ៩០៩ ៩៩៩ ។ សូមអរគុណ ។

Documentation Center of Cambodia would like to appeal to governments, foundations and individuals for support of the publication of *Searching for the truth*. For contribution, please contact (855) 23 211 875 or (855) 12 90 55 95. Thank you.

A magazine of the Documentation Center of Cambodia: *Searching for the truth*. Number 4, April 2000
Funded by the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, Norway, Section for the Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance;
and the Canada Funds, Canadian Embassy, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

