



Celebration after the completion of an irrigation project. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

Nearly everyone worked more than 12 hours a day, 7 days a week without rest or adequate food. They sometimes worked from sunrise until midnight if the moon was bright enough. Without moonlight, fires would be set to illuminate the rice fields. If they tried to question the assignment their cooperative chiefs gave them, they would be called enemies of the revolution and would be sent to be “reeducated.” Repeated or serious mistakes at work could lead to execution. This act was contrary to Article 12 of the Constitution of Democratic Kampuchea, which stated that:

- Every citizen of Kampuchea enjoys full rights to a constantly improving material, spiritual, and cultural life. Every citizen of Democratic Kampuchea is guaranteed a living.
- All workers are the masters of their factories.
- All peasants are the masters of the rice paddies and fields.
- All other laborers have the right to work.
- There is absolutely no unemployment in Democratic Kampuchea.

6. PURGES AND MASSACRES

The Khmer Rouge were always searching for enemies and believed that their enemies were everywhere. Suspects were falsely accused of serving the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), KGB (Soviet secret police), or the Vietnamese.

Fighting with Vietnam in 1977 and 1978 led to extensive purges. In late 1977, after Pol Pot returned from China, Vietnamese troops entered eastern Cambodia. They withdrew after several months, taking hundreds of Cambodian civilians with them. The Khmer Rouge then accused people and cadres in the East Zone of cooperating with the Vietnamese, which led to many people being arrested and executed, including longtime Khmer Rouge loyalists and political colleagues like So Phim.

The worst purges in the zone occurred in 1978 after some units rebelled against the DK government. From June to September, while warfare continued with Vietnam, much of the East Zone became a battlefield between the DK government and these rebellious troops, and as many as 100,000 people in the East Zone died in battle or were executed. The government sent troops from the Southwest Zone to fight the rebels. Thousands of people fled to the Vietnamese border to escape the killings that followed the arrival of these troops.

A purge also occurred in the North Zone in 1977. This one concentrated on educated people and people connected with Koy Thuon, who had served as the zone's secretary until early 1976. During the purge, Angkar arrested Minister of Information Hu Nim, Koy Thuon's mentor Tiv Ol, and many of his colleagues, including Phok Chhay and Doeun. There were several attempted coups and rebellions (especially by Cham Muslims) during DK,¹⁵ but because they were unsuccessful, they only served to intensify the search for internal enemies, which in turn led to purges throughout the country.



An irrigation project. This photo was taken while a KR official delegation was visiting the site. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)



Khmer Rouge Female Mobile Unit pedaling to transport water for irrigation. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

San Teimnah, a 74-year-old woman living in Kampong Cham province, recalled how the Khmer Rouge massacred the Cham minority, especially her own family, during the rebellion:

In the Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime, my village had been home to thousands of Cham families. The Khmer Rouge killed almost all of them. People in my village and Koh Phal suffered more than the rest because they rebelled against the Khmer Rouge. As for my family, they killed my parents, two of my children, two grandchildren and all of my siblings. My son Musa was taken from us after the rebellion and disappeared; I heard rumors that he was killed in 1978 while he was searching for me. My daughter Rofiah and her husband and two children were killed for unknown reasons.

Afterwards, the Khmer Rouge moved my family to Sre Veal village in Stoeung Trang district. At first, they assigned me to fell tall trees with the evacuees from Phnom Penh. Many people were killed because they performed their tasks poorly or because the trees fell on top of them. Then, I was made to raise pigs. I objected, claiming that I was afraid of these animals. But, they forced me to do this, threatening that Angkar would send me off for study if I did not do it. The Khmer Rouge even forced me to eat pork, but I refused, saying that I had never eaten meat since childhood. After that, they refused to give me any food. I asked for salt, but they said the salt ration was in the pork soup. My body became swollen. Luckily, I survived the regime. I returned to my home village in 1979.



Khmer Rouge child cadres. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

CHAPTER 8

THE SECURITY SYSTEM

1. SECURITY CENTERS

Although the East Zone purges of 1978 were the most severe in DK, hundreds of thousands of people were arrested in other parts of the country and in many cases were killed. The Khmer Rouge security system, with its nearly 200 prisons, was set up virtually everywhere. The Khmer Rouge called these prisons “security offices” or “security centers” rather than “prisons.”

Security centers in DK were organized into five levels. These prisons were used for detention, interrogation, and

execution. Most of the prisoners in the lowest three levels (regional, district and sub-district) were former soldiers or civil servants of the Lon Nol government; the remainder were people accused of stealing, desertion, or speaking ill of Angkar. At the zone level, security centers held a thousand or more prisoners. These centers were generally used to hold Khmer Rouge soldiers and their families, and those accused of committing offenses in the zone. The highest level was the central security center in Phnom Penh with the code name of S-21. Almost all of its prisoners were Khmer Rouge cadres and soldiers accused of betraying the revolution.

At the lower levels, punishments were not severe, for prisoners were usually transferred from security centers to labor camps. There, they were made to build houses, plant vegetables, or cook. Many of the prisoners held at these security centers were released before 1976. But after that, almost none of the prisoners at the district and region levels were released. Very few prisoners survived S-21.

2. THE ENEMIES OF ANGKAR

The Khmer Rouge wanted their revolution and all the people of Cambodia to be pure. People had to be clean in terms of their mentality and background. Poor peasants were thought to be the purest revolutionaries. The Khmer Rouge distrusted everyone else. People who committed very minor infractions, such as complaining about the hard labor or stealing food, were labeled as enemies of the state and were often marked for execution. Khmer Rouge leaders divided their enemies into "internal enemies" and "external enemies."

Internal enemies were the "new" or "17 April" people and people from the previous regimes whose social status was classified as capitalist or feudalist. This category also included people who were not ethnically Khmer. These internal enemies concerned the Party Center¹⁶ much more than anything else. The target groups considered as internal enemies included:

Officials of the Khmer Republic government: In 1975, the Khmer Rouge carried out thousands of summary executions. They extended down from the Khmer Republic leaders to soldiers. Anyone who had served Lon Nol was targeted to die. Often their families and relatives were killed as well. Luckily, however, thousands of former soldiers and civil servants managed to conceal their identities and survived for a time or even until the collapse of DK.

Minority groups: To carry out their revolution, the Khmer Rouge favored ethnic Khmers who had no links to the former government. All minority peoples, who were not considered trustworthy and were suspected by Angkar, were persecuted.



A Tuol Sleng messenger.
(Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

Indigenous Highlanders. Many of the CPK's leaders had lived among the hill people in the Northeast Zone before they came to power. The Khmer Rouge leaders trusted them highly because they were so faithful. Some of them became Pol Pot bodyguards. But even though the regime claimed to revere and trust them, it began relocating many people from other parts of Mondul Kiri to Koh Nhek district as early as 1972, where many people died. Those who refused to go were executed.

Phsos Prai, a Prong living in Mondul Kiri province, described the experiences of his family after they were relocated during the Khmer Rouge years.

My 15-year-old niece was shot dead because she cried, saying she did not want to live somewhere else. I was separated from my family and sent to farm in many places. At Koh Nhek, people worked day and night with little food and became exhausted. My daughter, who had just delivered a baby, had nothing to eat except cassava, so her husband collected eight cans of rice and a chicken from other villages. The sub-district chief accused him of eating privately, and all of her family members were arrested. In Lam Tik village, two people were arrested and killed because they ate a honeycomb without sharing it.

Cham Muslims. The Khmer Rouge forced Cham people to flee their villages and live dispersed among Khmers. They were forbidden to speak their language or to practice Islam. The Khmer Rouge killed many of their leaders (*hakims*) and anyone else suspected of resisting government policies.



Khmer Rouge soldiers at the Independence Monument. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

Moreover, the Chams were forced to eat pork, which was forbidden by their religion. Tens of thousands Chams were killed or died of disease, starvation, and overwork under DK.¹⁷

Vietnamese. The Vietnamese were expelled from Cambodia en masse in 1975. Only a small number who had married Cambodians stayed behind. In 1977 and 1978, the regime began to kill these people systematically and very few of them survived. They were singled out simply because they were Vietnamese.

Ethnic Chinese. The members of this community, who were often entrepreneurs, also joined the forced march to the countryside to take up agricultural work. They were treated harshly when they failed to work hard, but they were not singled out to be killed.



Communal eating in dining hall. (Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives)

Intellectuals: The Khmer Rouge leaders, some of whom were well educated, saw other educated people as potential enemies of the state and as members of the corrupt class that the DK leaders believed had made Cambodia a puppet of foreign countries. Many of them were targets for execution; those who were liable to be labeled as “educated” had to pretend to be illiterate. They could survive only by hiding their knowledge and professions. Thousands of school teachers and university-educated people were killed under DK.

Engineer Pin Yathay tells of his experiences during the Khmer Rouge period in his book *Stay Alive, My Son*. During the evacuation in 1975, eighteen members of his family were relocated many times, ending up in Pursat. The sole survivor in his family, Pin Yathay managed to escape to Thailand in early 1977. One of the reasons he was able to survive was that he hid his profession.

One day, in Veal Vong forest in Pursat province, the village chief held another boring political meeting. He made propaganda that, “Prince Sihanouk has returned to the country and is preparing a new government, so Angkar requests specialists, well-educated people, and former government military commanders, doctors, engineers and students to be registered in a special list.” About forty people raised their hands, including former soldiers who had hidden their identity for a long time. I was undecided, but managed to control myself and not raise my hand. After that we never had any information from those people. The villagers whispered from one to another, “Those former high-ranking officials and other specialists were all killed by the Khmer Rouge.”¹⁸

Alleged traitors: Many Khmer Rouge cadres were accused of betraying the revolution and joining the Vietnamese. Simple citizens who made small mistakes were also often accused of being traitors to the revolution. The common crimes to which these people confessed included visiting home without informing the chief of their group, breaking kitchen utensils, stealing food, talking critically about Angkar, not going to work on time, not working hard enough, complaining about living conditions, wearing jewelry, engaging in sexual relations, grieving over the loss of relatives or friends, or expressing religious sentiments. Some people who became ill because of hard work or malnutrition were accused of pretending to be sick and were labeled as lazy or malingering. They often disappeared without a trace. During DK, doing more or less than required could mean death. The Khmer Rouge slogan said: "Do whatever Angkar orders you to do! You must completely fulfill the orders made by Angkar. Comrade, do not bargain!"

External enemies referred to the US and its allies such as Thailand and some socialist countries, especially Vietnam and the Soviet Union. The Khmer Rouge felt that these countries attempted to invade Cambodia and make it their colony. They also accused many people – including their own soldiers and cadres – of serving the ideologies of these countries. The Khmer Rouge marked them as "hidden enemies burrowing from within." These included people from or allied with countries opposed to socialism, led by the United States, and revisionist or hegemonic

states like the Soviet Union, Vietnam and their allies. Most of the people considered external enemies were falsely accused of working for the US CIA, the Russian KGB, or the Vietnamese. The Khmer Rouge also considered Cambodians who could speak a foreign language to be spies for foreign countries. This accusation became a convenient excuse to execute people who local authorities did not like.



Khmer Rouge cadres returning from field works
(Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives)

3. ARRESTS AND IMPRISONMENT

In late 1976 and early 1977, the search for hidden traitors became the Khmer Rouge's main activity. Villagers were made to spy on one another, encouraged by the slogan: "You must know how to trace one another. Report everything to Angkar!" Other means of discovering enemies included surveillance, informers' reports, the frequent writing of personal biographies, and confessions.

Once enemies were discovered, their names were reported to the sub-district or district committees, and then arrests were made. Angkar rarely arrested anyone in public. Instead, if a member of a cooperative was suspected, the officials would tell them, "Angkar invites you to go for further education." Under such guises, many victims were taken off for imprisonment and often execution without a serious examination of whether or not they had actually committed a crime. The Khmer Rouge said: "It is better to arrest ten people by mistake than to let one guilty person go free."

4. INTERROGATION AND TORTURE

People charged with lesser offenses and imprisoned at a lower level usually suffered from malnutrition,



Khmer Rouge cadres at a communal hall. (Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives)

untreated illness and rough treatment. Although many died under these conditions, some were neither tortured nor killed. But at the higher-level Khmer Rouge security centers like S-21, interrogation and torture were common.

Chou Sophea lived in Kampong Cham during DK. He was arrested in May 1977 without being given a reason. He described how he was caught and the conditions at a prison in Tbaung Khmum district:

One day, four soldiers arrived at my unit and politely asked me to help them connect electricity. When I came out, they pointed guns at me and tied me up. They put me in prison. After being in prison for 40 days, I was sent to an interrogation center that was harsher than the previous one. The prison guards used electric shocks to generate a confession from me. Sometimes they hit me hard. I was unconscious many times. No matter how bad the torture, I still rejected their accusations. Then I was transferred to a new interrogation center, where I stayed for 12 days. From that time on, they did not interrogate or torture me. I was very skinny. Three days later, they released me, saying that Angkar had been confused. I had to promise not to tell anyone about the situation in the prison. If someone asked me, my answer had to be “do not know, do not hear, and do not see.”¹⁹

5. EXECUTION

Under DK, perhaps as many as 500,000 people were executed for crimes against the revolution and the state. Thousands of “new people” who had no farming experience or skills simply disappeared. Having been evacuated to faraway forests or fields, they were killed after they made mistakes or angered their superiors. Some victims were buried alive and died of suffocation.

Nearly everyone who was known to be well educated was put to death. No one dared to wear glasses or speak foreign languages; it was a sign that they were educated. Many urban Cambodians, in particular, had to conceal their past and their talents, and pretend to be illiterate.

Executions were carried out in a number of ways. Some who were accused of being revolutionary traitors or enemies were sent to an interrogation center. After staying there for a few months, they would be taken to the killing fields where they were forced to kneel down at the edge of mass graves. They would then be killed by a blow to the back of the head with a shovel, hoe or stick. Sometimes, people were shot to death together and buried in a grave containing up to 100 bodies. Others were suffocated with plastic bags. In the countryside, where there were many wells in the forest, prisoners were delivered by trucks to the wells and were then hit or pushed into them.

Occasionally, an entire family was summarily executed because of a mistake made by one of its members. They searched out the family members to be executed according to the Khmer Rouge adage: "To dig up the grass, one has to remove even the roots."

Mam Phai Boun of Koh Kong province recalled how his four family members were killed:

My 7-year-old sister was killed by Angkar because she stole one ear of corn to eat. She was hit with a hoe and buried near the corn farm. One afternoon, while I was walking the cows across the forest, I smelled a rotting corpse. I searched for it to see if I knew the dead. There I found the body of my father, with his neck nearly cut off from his shoulders. There were two other bodies lying dead of the same cause. Two months later, my 70-year-old grandmother died; she was accused of stealing rice porridge from children and was clubbed to death. Her body was wrapped in a sack and buried. Several days later, my mother died of overwork and malnutrition. I hugged her with a heartbreaking cry.²⁰



Children unit. (Elizabeth Becker/Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)



Tuol Sleng compound. (Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives)

CHAPTER 9

OFFICE S-21 (TUOL SLENG PRISON)

The most important prison in DK was known as S-21 (Security Office 21). The letter “S” stood for “security” and the number “21” was a code designating its location in the southern part of Phnom Penh (Sangkat Tuol Svay Prey).

S-21 was a secret facility for the detention, interrogation, torture and extermination of its prisoners. After the middle of 1976, no one was ever released. Among the perhaps 14,000 prisoners held at S-21, only about 12 survived after DK fell. While they were incarcerated, they were spared because they had skills that were useful to S-21; they were painters, watch repairers and sculptors.

1. THE BUILDINGS

The prison had once been the Chao Ponhea Yat High School. Built in 1962, it was situated on a 600 meter by



400 meter parcel of land. Behind the school fence were two wooden buildings with thatched roofs, one of which had been the Boeng Keng Kang Primary School. Together, these buildings formed the S-21 prison.

During DK, Tuol Sleng was surrounded by corrugated iron sheets and electrified wire. There were four main buildings. The classrooms on the ground floor were divided into small cells, measuring 0.8 x 2 meters each; they were designed for single prisoners. The 8 x 6 meter rooms on the first floor were used as mass prison cells. The second floor included even larger rooms that held up to 40 or 50 prisoners. One room served as the office of S-21's chief, Duch, and another as an office for documentation and general administration. Nearby houses were used for interrogation and torture.

2. THE PRISONERS

Most of the prisoners at S-21 were accused of betraying the party or revolution, or of working for traitorous cadres who had already been arrested. With the passage of time, the CPK leaders became increasingly suspicious and distrusted their own cadres and soldiers. In October 1976, for example, Pol Pot had several high-ranking CPK members arrested and imprisoned in



Khmer Rouge prison staff and family of S-21. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

S-21 in a move to tighten national security. The Khmer Rouge leadership saw enemies in every corner of the country and arrested hundreds of fellow communists each month. The prison population also included approximately 400 members of many other nationalities, mostly Vietnamese.

Some of the people who worked in Tuol Sleng also became prisoners. They confessed to being lazy in preparing documents, damaging machines and other equipment, or beating prisoners to death without permission when assisting with interrogations. Most of the confessions extracted at S-21 were probably untrue because the prisoners were innocent and confessed because of severe torture.

Khiev Cheh alias Peou from Kampong Chhnang province was an S-21 guard. He recounted his story:

In 1977, two of my friends, Hong and Meoun, committed mistakes, so they were taken away and killed. After that, Angkar arrested me because I was their friend and sent me to Prey Sar. They interrogated me if I had something to do with the two, but I said "no." The interrogator named Sem Phal; he knew very well that I worked hard and faithfully. So I was released

after one and a half months and was sent to Division 502 to drive a truck that loaded weapons for Tay Ninh to fight the Vietnamese.

Life in S-21 was terrible. We dared not converse with each other. We could not trust anyone, even our close friends. Everyone had to work very hard. Besides guarding, we planted vegetables and raised pigs. We had to be very careful on duty. A small mistake, for example, falling asleep or leaning against a wall, could lead to death.

3. REGULATIONS

Ten regulations were posted on pieces of blackboard all around the prison compound.

SANTEBAL (SECURITY POLICE) REGULATIONS AT S-21

- 1. You must answer according to my questions. Do not turn them away.**
- 2. Do not try to hide the facts by making pretexts of this and that. You are strictly prohibited to contest me.**
- 3. Do not be a fool for you are someone who dares to thwart the revolution.**
- 4. You must immediately answer my questions without wasting time to reflect.**
- 5. Do not tell me either about your immoralities or the revolution.**
- 6. While getting lashes or electric shocks, you must not cry out at all.**
- 7. Do nothing. Sit still and wait for my orders. If there are no orders, keep quiet. When I ask you to do something, you must do it right away without protesting.**
- 8. Do not make pretexts about Kampuchea Krom so as to hide your true existence as a traitor.**
- 9. If you do not follow all the above rules, you shall get many lashes or electric shocks.**
- 10. If you disobey any point of my regulations, you shall get either ten lashes or five electric shocks.**



Another regulation for prisoners was posted in buildings "B-C-D."

CAUTION IN BUILDING "B-C-D"

- 1. You must absolutely not make contact with one another whether or not you know each other.**
- 2. If you want to do anything, you must get permission from the guards.**
- 3. You must not make sounds in your respective places.**
- 4. When guards or other people arrive, you must sleep.**
- 5. During inspection, put your hands behind your back. Don't try to be free.**

4. PRISON CONDITIONS

When they arrived at S-21, prisoners were photographed and required to give detailed biographies, beginning with their childhood and ending with their date of arrest. They had to strip to their underwear and their possessions were confiscated. They were then taken to cells where they were shackled with chains fixed to walls or the concrete floor, while those kept in the large cells had their legs shackled to pieces of iron bar. The shackles were fixed to alternating bars; the prisoners slept with their heads in opposite directions. They slept on the floor without mats, mosquito nets, or blankets. They were forbidden to talk to





Khmer Rouge prison staff eating together. (Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives)

each other. Vann Nath, one of the few S-21 survivors, described his life in S-21:

In S-21, I was shackled to a long metal bar with more than 30 other prisoners. They gave us food twice a day. Every prisoner got four small spoonfuls of rice porridge and some watery soup of leaves. Talking to each other was completely forbidden. If anyone wanted to sit up or to drink water, they had to ask permission from the guard. Doing something without the guard's permission would result in a serious beating. They gave us a bath every four days. They brought hoses up from downstairs and sprayed everyone from the doorway. If you were on the far side of the room, you did not get very wet. Every day, prisoners were brought out to be interrogated and some never returned, but new prisoners were brought in instead.²¹

At 4:30 a.m. prisoners were asked to strip for inspection. The guards would then check to see whether the shackles were loose or if prisoners had hidden any objects they could use to commit suicide. Over the years, several prisoners managed to kill themselves, so the guards were very careful in checking the shackles and cells.

Because of the filthy living conditions at S-21, most prisoners suffered from ringworm, rashes or lice. There were no medicines for treatment. S-21's medical staffs were untrained and offered treatment only to sustain prisoners' lives after they had been injured during interrogation.

When prisoners were taken from one place to another for interrogation, their faces were covered. Guards and prisoners were not allowed to converse. Moreover, within the prison, people who were in different groups were not allowed to have contact with one another.

5. INTERROGATION

Harsh tactics were used to extract confessions at S-21. Prisoners were beaten with hands, sticks, or tree branches. Sometimes, they were lashed with wires or given electric shocks. Other methods of torture used at S-21 included pressing a burning cigarette into prisoners' flesh, forcing them to eat human waste or drink urine, piercing them with needles, and hanging prisoners by their legs or hands for the whole day. Some prisoners were cut with knives or suffocated with plastic bags. Other methods for generating confessions included pulling out fingernails while pouring alcohol on the wounds or holding prisoners' heads under water. Some prisoners died under torture.

Female prisoners were tortured by cutting off their breasts or by forcing them to take off their clothes. Females were sometimes raped by the interrogators, even though sexual abuse was against DK policy. The perpetrators who were found out were executed.

In their confessions, the prisoners were asked to describe their personal background. If they were party members, they had to say when they joined the revolution and describe their work assignments in DK. Then the prisoners would relate their supposed treasonous activities in chronological order. The third section of the confession text described prisoners' thwarted conspiracies or supposed treasonous conversations. At the end, the confessions would list a string of traitors who were the prisoners' friends, colleagues, or acquaintances. Some lists contained over a hundred names. People whose names were in the confession list were often called in for interrogation.



Khmer Rouge cadres.
(Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

Because the torture at S-21 was so harsh, prisoners often confessed to whatever they could think of, even if it was false. Um Samnang, a worker in the Train Section, confessed to a treasonous conversation he had with Ton, a train construction worker:

Ton was a senior worker. He was not satisfied with the revolution, just like his colleagues. Every day, he spread propaganda as follows:

- Because I taught them almost all of the techniques, they want to chase me out of this place.
- If you continue to act like this, one day you will be dissolved like salt in water.
- Today senior workers are like rubbish under their feet; they can step on them whenever they wish.
- They are only good at boasting and theory, but not in practice.
- I work only for rice; I do not care what is damaged.²²

Moreover, he is prepared to fight the revolution whenever there are soldiers fighting from outside.

Chea Hoeung, a professor and who was evacuated to Baray, Kampong Thom, confessed to the treasonous activities of Tang Lonh, an official in the Ministry of Post and later a first lieutenant:

When he was evacuated to his home village, he gathered his colleagues to resist the revolution. He gradually sabotaged us as follows:

- He instructed his cliques to set cows free to eat rice.
- He instructed his cliques to destroy plates and dishes, one by one.
- He instructed his cliques to kill one or two ducks at a time and report that they had died.
- He made his house a place for producing leaflets and scattered the leaflets at work sites.²³

6. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Over a thousand people worked in and for S-21. Several hundred of them were general workers, including



Tuol Sleng prison staff eating communally. (Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives)

people who grew food for the prison. The rest were the internal workforce, including office personnel, who worked in one of the prison's three units.

S-21 consisted of a documentation unit, a defense unit, and an interrogation unit. The documentation unit was responsible for transcribing tape-recorded confessions, typing the handwritten notes from prisoners' confessions, preparing summaries of confessions, and maintaining files. In the photography sub-unit, workers took mug shots of prisoners when they arrived, pictures of prisoners who had died while in detention, and pictures of important prisoners after they were executed. Thousands of photographs have survived, but thousands are still missing.

The defense unit was the largest unit in S-21. The guards in this unit were mostly teenagers. Many guards found the unit's strict rules hard to obey. Guards were not allowed to talk to prisoners, to learn their names, or to beat them. They were also forbidden to observe or eavesdrop on interrogations, and they were expected to obey 30 regulations, which barred them from such

things as taking naps, sitting down or leaning against a wall while on duty. They had to walk, guard, and examine everything carefully.

Guards who made serious mistakes were arrested, interrogated, jailed and put to death. Most of the people employed at S-21 were terrified of making mistakes and feared being tortured and killed.

Within the interrogation unit, there were the hot sub-unit, cold sub-unit, and the chewing sub-unit. The hot unit (sometimes called the cruel unit) was allowed to use torture. In contrast, the cold unit (sometimes called the gentle unit) was prohibited from using torture to obtain confessions. If they could not make prisoners confess, they would transfer them to the hot unit. The chewing unit dealt with tough and important cases.

The hours of interrogation were very long. Sometimes, the process extended far into the night. Those who worked as interrogators were literate and usually in their 20s.

7. LEADERS

S-21 was controlled by the Ministry of Defense, chaired by Son Sen (aka comrade Khiev). Before joining the CPK he had studied in France and been a teacher.

SON SEN

(aka comrade Khiev)

Son Sen was born on June 12, 1930 in Travinh, southern Vietnam. His wife was Yun Yat (aka comrade Att), who was minister of education and culture under DK. He studied in France between 1950 and 1956 and joined the French Communist Party. In 1963, he fled to the jungle, escaping from the police. He became chief of staff of the Cambodian Peoples National Liberation Armed Forces in 1971.

During DK, Son Sen was third deputy prime minister in charge of national defense and was directly responsible for S-21. Son Sen and his family were killed under orders from Pol Pot on June 10, 1997.

DUCH

**(original name
Kaing Guek Eav)**

Duch was born in 1945 in Kampong Thom. He studied at Sisowath High School and won second place in a nationwide mathematics contest. He worked as a math teacher in Kampong Thom. In 1964, he was appointed an official of the Teacher Training School after Son Sen fled the city. He joined the Communist Party of Kampuchea in 1970.

Duch defected from the Khmer Rouge in the 1980s and became a Christian. He was arrested in May 1999. He has been in prison ever since, awaiting trial. In February 2005, he was charged with war crimes and harming foreign nationals during DK. He was in poor health in 2006.

The leading figures of S-21 were Duch (chief of S-21), Khim Vat aka Hor (deputy chief of S-21), Peng (chief of guards), Chan (chief of the Interrogation Unit), and Pon (interrogator). Pon was the person who interrogated important people such as Keo Meas, Nay Sarann, Ho Nim, Tiv Ol, and Phok Chhay. All of them were former school teachers.

8. EXECUTIONS

Most prisoners at S-21 were held there for two to three months. However, several high-ranking Khmer Rouge cadres were held for several months and their confessions were sometimes several hundred pages long. Within two or three days after they were brought to S-21, all prisoners were taken for interrogation with little or no regard for the truth. They had to admit that they were revolutionary traitors or had committed the crimes that were dictated to them. After the interrogations were complete, prisoners were “smashed” or “discarded,” the euphemisms used in DK for “execution.”

For the first year of S-21’s existence, corpses were buried near the prison. However, by the end of 1976, cadres ran out of burial spaces, so the prisoners were taken by trucks at night to Choeung Ek (located 13 kilometers southwest of Phnom Penh), where they were beaten to death with hoes, axes, or sticks, or were shot. Usually, after prisoners were executed, the soldiers who had accompanied them from S-21 buried them in graves that held as few as 6 and as many as 100 bodies.

Tuol Sleng prison was made into a genocide museum and Choeung Ek into a memorial by the government of the People’s Republic of Kampuchea with assistance from Vietnam in 1979.



Khmer Rouge cadres. (Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives)



DK leaders with a foreign delegation. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

CHAPTER 10

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Democratic Kampuchea had diplomatic relations with China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cuba, Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania, and Egypt. All of these countries had embassies in Phnom Penh. During DK, their diplomats, except the Chinese, were confined to their embassies.

DK had embassies only in China, North Korea, Vietnam (until December 1977), and Laos. Of these, China and North Korea were friendly and Laos was relatively friendly. But relations with Vietnam grew increasingly poor as a result of border clashes and ideological differences. Most of the CPK's leaders were anti-Vietnamese and any of them who had ever lived in Vietnam or had relations with the Vietnamese were purged (except Son Sen and Ieng Sary). They were accused of having "Cambodian bodies with Vietnamese minds." The two countries also disagreed on who owned the under-sea petroleum deposits along the coast of DK.

The CPK wanted to take Kampuchea Krom²⁴ back from Vietnam. They also disliked Vietnam's idea of "Indochina."

Clashes between Vietnam and DK began in late 1975. Soon afterward, serious fighting erupted on Tral Island (Phu Quoc in Vietnamese). In mid-1976, Democratic Kampuchea established closer ties with China and the DK-Vietnamese conflict became part of the Sino-Soviet rivalry, with Moscow backing Vietnam and Beijing backing DK. By the end of 1976, Democratic Kampuchea had obtained massive military aid from China. In 1977, DK forces attacked Vietnamese villages that bordered Cambodia and killed hundreds of civilians. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken in December 1977.

DK expanded its diplomatic efforts in 1978, and its foreign trade reached its peak at that time. The countries known to have had trade relations with DK were China, North Korea, Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong, Madagascar, Bangladesh, and Singapore. The main exports of DK were rice, rubber, timber and exotic animal parts (skins, tusks, and shells), while its main imports included weapons, tanks, and artillery, farm machinery, chemical products and cloth.

Most of Cambodia's exports—which were far smaller than they had been before 1970—went to China, which was the only country that had a major influence on DK. From 1977 to late 1978, China provided DK with hundreds of tanks, cars and heavy weapons, tens of thousands of shells and bullets, and six jet fighters. The Chinese also offered to repair the railroad from Phnom Penh to Kampong Saom and build

IENG SARY

(aka comrade Vann)
Ieng Sary was born in 1930 in Travinh, South Vietnam. He married Khieu Thirith. In 1950, he won a scholarship to study in France and became a member of the French Communist Party. He returned home in 1957 and joined the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea. Ieng Sary taught at Kampuchaboth High School until 1963, when he fled to the jungle. He later became the military commander of the Northeast Zone.

In 1976, Ieng Sary was appointed first deputy prime minister in charge of foreign affairs. He was also a member of the Central Committee and Standing Committee. He defected to the Royal Government of Cambodia in 1996. He lives freely in Cambodia, and his son Ieng Vuth is now the first deputy governor of Pailin.



DK leaders with a foreign delegation.
(Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

a new military airport in Kampong Chhnang. In addition to trade relations, military assistance and financial support, China sent several thousand experts to work as technicians and advisors in DK. These people helped train Khmer Rouge cadres on warfare, medical services, and factory operations. DK requested Chinese troops to help fight against Vietnam, but China rejected the request and suggested a cease-fire and negotiations, which DK declined.



Children mobile unit. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

CHAPTER 11

THE FALL OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

1. THREE REASONS WHY DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA FELL

A weakened populace. DK's four-year plan specified that the country would produce a yield of three tons of rice per hectare. This figure was double the pre-revolutionary yield. When production quotas could not be met, cadres throughout the country falsified their production reports. They then sent as much rice as possible to the party center, forcing people to go hungry.

Because the entire country depended on secrecy, the plan to harvest three tons per hectare became impossible to implement. Regions were not allowed to share information or to see what was going on. Rarely did anyone from the party center come to see how people lived or to plan the work of the cadres under their



Children unit. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

supervision. The senior leaders seemed to believe what their subordinates reported to them, while the cadres were terrified to report any bad news. CPK officials believed that the party never made mistakes and could never be wrong. All bad things were the fault of foreigners or traitors. As living conditions grew worse during the regime, hundreds of thousands died from overwork and malnutrition.

Purges. In mid-1976 many key members of the CPK were purged. From then on, Pol Pot and his colleagues believed that a rebellion against the leadership of the party was always being hatched. They believed that their enemies were everywhere. Many chiefs of zones, regions and military commands were arrested and executed. The situation grew worse in 1977 when Pol Pot ordered the assassination of the cadres in the East Zone and then purged almost all of the people living in the zone. After the Vietnamese invasion in late 1977, the remaining people in the East Zone were thought to have joined the Vietnamese and were labeled "Cambodian bodies with Vietnamese minds." So, the party center sent troops to attack the East Zone, leaving tens of thousands of its residents dead. Hundreds of men fled to Vietnam, where the Vietnamese helped them form a military unit.

Clashes with Vietnam. This was the most definitive cause of DK's demise. In 1975, DK began initiating its sporadic attacks on Vietnam. High-profile attacks broke out in the middle of 1977 when the Khmer Rouge

shelled Chaudoc, Hatien and other Vietnamese provinces, causing many casualties among civilians and unprepared militia. Thousands of Vietnamese fled into the interior of Vietnam. Within a few days of the attack, about 1,000 Vietnamese civilians were injured or dead.

In December 1977, Vietnam used warplanes and artillery to launch a major attack on DK, capturing the territory known as the Parrot's Beak area in Svay Rieng province. Vietnamese forces penetrated more than 20 kilometers inside DK, reaching the city of Svay Rieng. As a result, DK broke diplomatic relations with Vietnam and ordered Vietnamese diplomats in Phnom Penh to leave the country. The Khmer Rouge agreed to negotiate the border dispute only when all Vietnamese troops had withdrawn from DK territory. Soon afterwards, Vietnam withdrew its troops, bringing with them thousands of prisoners as well as civilians. No negotiations ever took place.

Instead, Vietnam accused the Khmer Rouge of attacking all eight provinces along its border with Cambodia. Vietnam decided to encourage the opponents of the Khmer Rouge to revolt against them. They also began training Cambodians in Vietnam to take part in military operations and to form the nucleus of a new regime. The two countries were at war throughout 1978.

On April 3, 1978, Radio Hanoi broadcast in the Khmer language an appeal to the people of Cambodia to stand up and resist Democratic Kampuchea. Vietnam selected some Cambodians who had fled to Vietnam to serve in military units under Vietnamese guidance. Most of them were East Zone cadres, soldiers, and residents. By this time, part of the zone was under Vietnamese control and the rest was controlled by a rebel group opposed to the Khmer Rouge.



Two Cham muslim cadres posed in a local photo studio in the Khmer Rouge liberated zone, Kratie Province. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

On December 3, 1978, Radio Hanoi announced the establishment of the United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea.²⁵ The Front was led by Comrade Heng Samrin, who had fled to Vietnam in late 1978.

TA MOK

(original name Chhit Choeun)

Ta Mok was born in 1926 in Takeo province. He spent several years as a Buddhist monk. He married his cousin Uk Khoem; they had four children. In 1949, Ta Mok was the chief of Issarak district in Takeo province. He became a communist in 1963. From 1968 to 1978, Ta Mok was secretary of the Southwest Zone.

In November 1978, Ta Mok was appointed second deputy secretary of the CPK. After DK fell, he never applied for amnesty and never attempted to defect. He was captured near the Thai border by the Cambodian army in March 1979 and was imprisoned. He died of disease on July 21, 2006.

Vietnamese General Van Tien Dung launched a major assault on Democratic Kampuchea on December 25, 1978. His troops occupied Kratie province within five days and Kampong Cham in a week. Then, on January 7, 1979, Vietnamese soldiers and soldiers of the United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea captured the capital city of Phnom Penh and soon afterward occupied nearly the entire country. They quickly organized a conference to create the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Council as Cambodia's provisional government under the leadership of Heng Samrin.

2. THE AFTERMATH

In early 1979, the Vietnamese helped to create a new regime in Phnom Penh. Called the Peoples Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), it governed Cambodia until the Vietnamese troops withdrew a decade later, in 1990. DK leaders and soldiers fled from Phnom Penh to the northwest on foot, in trucks and by train. They forced hundreds of thousands of people to go with them. During this second forced evacuation, many people died of hunger, disease or injuries.

Many people found their way back to their native villages. Prince Sihanouk and his family were evacuated by plane to China.

The Khmer Rouge established their functioning organization along the Thai border, supported militarily by countries such as China and Thailand. Until 1990 the United Nations continued to allow DK's representative to occupy Cambodia's seat in the General Assembly, in spite of objections from the PRK and its socialist allies.

In 1979, the Khmer Rouge announced the formation of a "United Front for Great National Solidarity, Patriotic and Democratic," that failed to attract many participants. At the same time, the first noncommunist resistance group, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) was founded by Samdech Son Sann, who was Prime Minister in the Sangkum period (1955-1970).²⁶

Soon afterwards, a royalist faction known as the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC) was formed under the Presidency of Prince Sihanouk. In 1982, FUNCINPEC, KPNLF and the Khmer Rouge formed the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) with Prince Sihanouk as president, Khieu Samphan as vice president, and Son Sann as prime minister. The purpose of the CGDK was "to mobilize all efforts in the common struggle to liberate Kampuchea from the Vietnamese aggressors." The CGDK, in which the Khmer Rouge was the biggest portion, held Cambodia's seat at the UN.

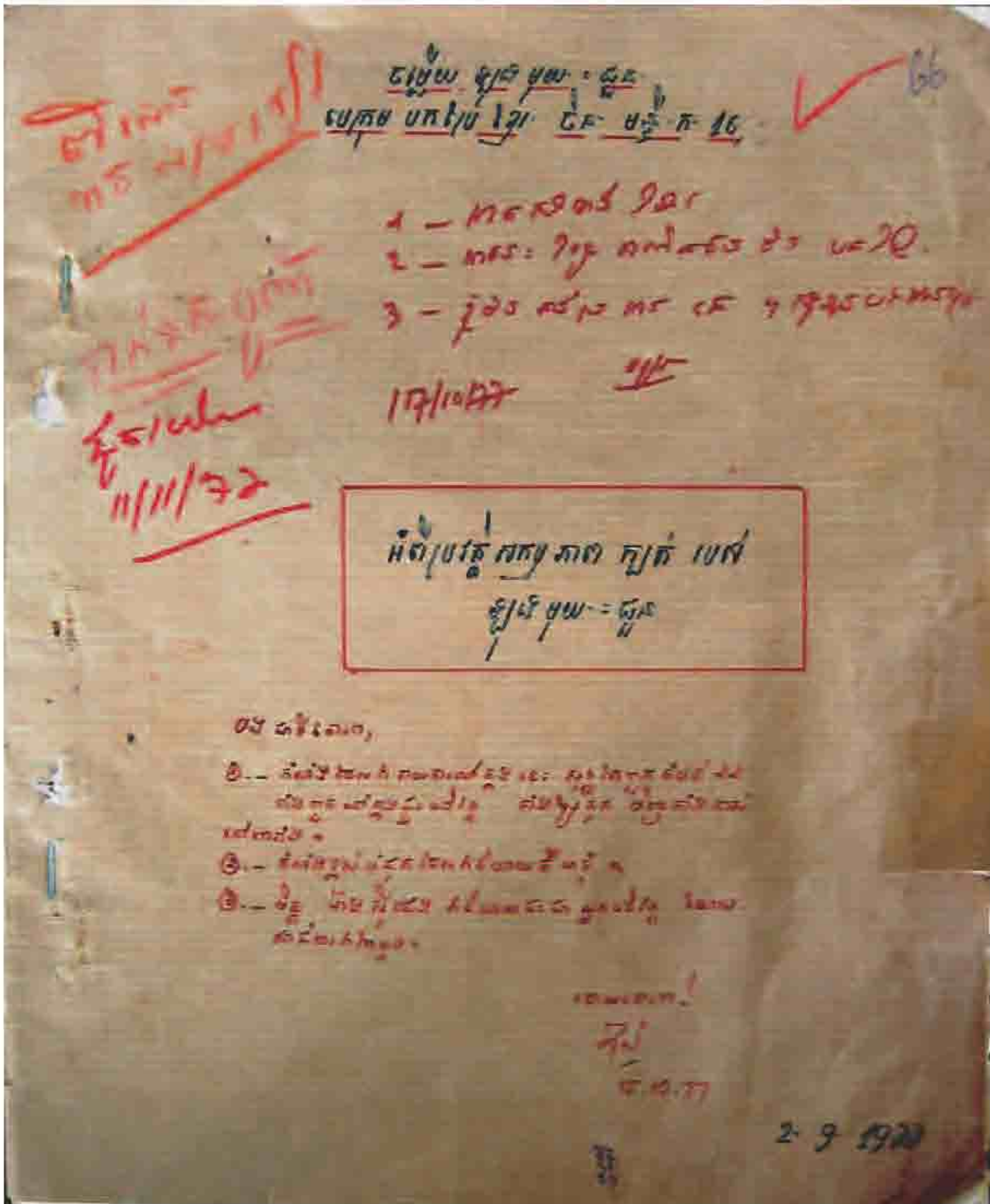
After years of negotiations, all Cambodian parties to the conflict signed a peace agreement in Paris on

October 23, 1991 and agreed to organize a national election under the supervision of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The Khmer Rouge boycotted the UN-organized election and refused to demobilize their forces. For several years, Khmer Rouge soldiers continued to fight against troops of the 1993-elected Royal Government of Cambodia, with Prince Norodom Ranariddh as first prime minister and Samdech Hun Sen as second prime minister.

In August 1996, Ieng Sary defected to the Royal Government of Cambodia, bringing some Khmer Rouge units with him. Other senior Khmer Rouge leaders, such as Ke Pauk, Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, defected in 1998. After Pol Pot died in 1998, Ta Mok was the only surviving leader who refused to join the Royal Government of Cambodia; he was captured in March 1999. By then all the surviving Khmer Rouge leaders had surrendered or had been arrested, and the movement totally collapsed. People living in the Khmer Rouge-controlled areas repatriated and reunited with the Royal Government of Cambodia.



The return home of survivors after the fall of the Khmer Rouge in January 1979. (Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives)



This Khmer Rouge document and other surviving documents from that era contain a wide variety of information on Democratic Kampuchea. These documents give insight into how and why so many people lost their life. In a sense, each document is symbolic of a life that the Khmer Rouge regime took away. There are over a million of these documents. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

CONCLUSION

Democratic Kampuchea was one of the worst human tragedies of the 20th century. The regime claimed nearly two million lives and left tens of thousands of widows and orphans. Several hundred thousand Cambodians fled their country and became refugees. Millions of mines were laid by the Khmer Rouge and government forces, which have led to thousands of deaths and disabilities since the 1980s. A large proportion of the Cambodian people have mental problems because their family members were lost and their spirits damaged. These factors are one of the major causes of the poverty that plagues Cambodia today.

The Khmer Rouge, whose leaders held extreme views formed from the communist ideologies of China, the former Soviet Union and Vietnam, set up policies that disregarded human life and produced repression and massacres on a massive scale. CPK leaders thought their revolution was the only way to bring Cambodia to independence and equality. They claimed that their revolution did not adopt any outside ideology, even though they copied ideas from the Soviet Union and China such as the collectivization of people, the evacuation of cities, the four-year plan, and Super Great Leap Forward.

The Khmer Rouge placed no value on education. Only a few of its leaders were well-educated and none of them had any experience in governing a state. Most of its low-ranking cadres were illiterate or semi-literate. Despite these obstacles, they wanted to make huge gains in a short period of time, without considering the country's resources or the consequences of their policies. In this sense, they turned the entire country into a rice field and the entire population into peasants and prisoners of Angkar.

Basic rights and needs were ignored; private property was confiscated. Religion, money and traditions became useless. Relations with the outside world were almost cut off. The regime would not tolerate the slightest criticism of its leaders or policies. The Khmer Rouge saw educated people, former government officials, and those who opposed their policies as enemies of the state or revolutionary traitors who had to be discarded. Amnesty and national reconciliation did not exist during the period of Democratic Kampuchea. They turned the country into a huge detention center, which later became a graveyard for nearly two million people, including their own cadres and even some senior leaders.

II. ABOUT KEYS AND SHACKLES

- When unlocking, definitely check the keys, shackles and iron bars before taking off the shackles and blindfolds.
- When unlocking keys, you have to keep the shackles and iron bars outside; do not keep them inside.
- When walking the prisoners out to dispose of human waste, handcuff and shackle them; do not walk far away from them.
- When walking the prisoners from interrogation rooms, thoroughly check their bodies, shackles and iron bars. Do the same during shift changes.
- Chains have to be short; half a meter is the longest. In special cases, you need to get a decision from high-ranking cadres.

III. ABOUT SECURITY MEASURES

- Do not allow prisoners in cells to contact one another.
- In our place, do not allow prisoners to converse with one another.
- Guards who are responsible inside are not allowed to walk outside. Be careful not to allow prisoners to contact each other or have any interaction.
- In each building, you have to have the list of the prisoners' names and cell numbers.
- While guarding, take out all bullets from their magazines. When the magazines are in the guns, they must be filled with bullets.
- The guards inside the rooms are not allowed to hold guns, but sticks.
- Make clear who holds the guns and has to be responsible.
- You have to keep guns with you all the time; do not leave them outside.
- Do not keep the guns near the prisoners or carry the guns near the prisoners.
- When changing shifts and transferring duties, guards have to report on the prisoners' situation and other situations to the new guards.
- Only when shifts change are guards allowed to take waste containers to throw away and check. It is the duty of the new guards. Former guards are not allowed to leave until the new guards have fulfilled their duty.



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- Confessions and lists of people killed at S-21
- DK's Constitution and policies
- *Revolutionary Flag* and *Revolutionary Youth* (DK magazines)
- Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee of CPK
- DK slogans and songs
- Maps of DK
- Original photographs from DK
- Textbooks from various Cambodian regimes.

In addition, information was drawn from DC-Cam's monthly magazine *Searching for the Truth*, its chronology of DK and news clips, as well as essays submitted to a contest sponsored by the Center and the Khmer Writers' Association and interviews.

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FOOTNOTES

¹ Estimates of the number of people who died during Democratic Kampuchea vary. The People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979-1989), which had conducted a national survey, claimed that 3.3 million people died. In his book *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), historian Ben Kiernan estimated the death toll at around 1.5 million based on his 1980 interviews with 500 survivors, 100 of whom had fled to France in 1979; the rest were inside Cambodia. He later claimed that according to demographers' calculations, about 1.7 million people died during DK. The US Central Intelligence Agency gave an estimate of 1.4 million ("Kampuchea: A Demographic Catastrophe," May 1980). Historian Michel Vickery stated that only about 740,000 people died during DK based on a comparison of the population before 1975 and after 1979, less the number of people who would otherwise have died from natural causes (*Cambodia from 1975 to 1982*, Bangkok: O.S. Printing House, 1988).

² Indochina was the name given to three countries that France colonized: Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The First Indochina War was fought from 1946 to 1954 between France and the Vietnamese resistance movement (the Viet Minh) led by Ho Chi Minh. The conflict engulfed the entire country and extended into Cambodia and Laos.

³ The party was founded by Ho Chi Minh while he was living in Hong Kong. First called the Vietnam Communist Party, its name was changed to the Indochinese Communist Party in February 1930.

⁴ To strengthen the struggle against French colonialism and to gain more support from people, in 1951, Vietnam divided the ICP into

three parties that represented the three countries in Indochina. They were the Workers' Party of Vietnam, the KPRP, and the Laos People's Revolutionary Party. However, the movements in the three countries were still in the hands of Vietnam.

⁵ Officially called the United Front for the Independence of Vietnam, the Viet Minh was founded by Ho Chi Minh in 1941 to seek independence from France.

⁶ The Agreements were written at the 1954 Geneva Conference, which ended the conflict and restored peace in Indochina.

⁷ No documents have yet clarified the reason for Tou Samouth's disappearance.

⁸ Documentation Center of Cambodia, "Composition of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia," catalogue number D24008. Its composition was as follows: Penn Nouth (prime minister), Khieu Samphan (deputy prime minister and minister of national defense), Sarin Chhak (minister of foreign affairs), Hou Youn (minister of interior, communal reforms and cooperatives), Hu Nim (minister of information and propaganda), Chau Seng (minister in charge of special missions), Chan Youran (minister of people's education and youth), Ngo Hou (minister of public health, and religious and social affairs), Thiounn Mumm (minister of economy and finance), General Duong Sam Ol (minister in charge of military equipment and armaments), Huot Sambath (minister of public works, telecommunications and reconstruction), Chea San (minister of justice and judicial reforms), Keat Chhon (minister delegated to the presidency of the Council of Ministers), Thiounn Prasith (minister in charge of coordination of struggle efforts for national liberation), H.R.H. Norodom Phurissara (minister without portfolio), Kong Sophal (vice-minister of national defense), Poc Deuskomar (vice-minister of foreign affairs), Van Piny (vice-minister of foreign affairs), Sok Thuok (vice-minister of interior, communal reforms and cooperatives), Tiv Ol (vice-minister of information and propaganda), Ieng Thirith (vice-minister of people's education and youth), Chou Chet (vice-minister of public health and religious and social affairs), and Koy Thuon (vice-minister of economy and finance). Almost all of these members had positions in name only. Only the CPK's Standing Committee, with Pol Pot as secretary and Nuon Chea as deputy secretary, had decision-making authority.

⁹ Khmer-Hanois were ethnic Khmers who had lived in Vietnam since the 1950s and returned to Cambodia during the war (1970-1975) to assist the Khmer Rouge in fighting the Khmer Republic government.

¹⁰ Before taking power, the Khmer Rouge declared they would sentence to death only the seven highest officials of the Lon Nol government, who they regarded as "super-traitors": President Lon Nol, Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak, Prime Minister Long Boret, Cheng Heng, In Tam, Sosthene Fernandez, and Son Ngoc Thanh.

¹¹ Documentation Center of Cambodia. "Office 870: Instruction on the use of the word Angkar and Party," released July 11, 1977, catalogue number D01266. "The words Angkar or Party are only used to refer to the organization, not an individual. For individuals, we use the word comrade, or comrade in charge of this or that position, or comrade representing this or



that organization, for example, comrade Teng, comrade Secretary, comrade on behalf of the organization, etc.”

¹² Chanda, Nayan. *Brother Enemy: The War after the War*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986.

¹³ Nayan Chanda states that on January 2, 1979, Vietnamese commandos crossed the Mekong River in front of the Royal Palace, intending to kidnap Prince Sihanouk and have him lead a resistance movement against DK with Vietnamese assistance. However, the plan failed. As the Vietnamese were nearing Phnom Penh and the situation was growing tenser, Khieu Samphan moved the Prince to Sisophon near the Thai border. Two days later, he brought the Prince back to Phnom Penh, telling him that the Vietnamese forces had withdrawn. On January 5, Pol Pot summoned the Prince to a meeting and asked him to represent DK at the United Nations General Assembly in order to gain support from the UN Security Council against the Vietnamese aggression. In exchange, Pol Pot agreed to allow members of the royal family to fly out of Cambodia despite opposition from Ieng Sary, who wanted to take all members of the royal family as hostages. The Prince and his family left for China on a Chinese plane on January 6. Ibid.

¹⁴ Documentation Center of Cambodia. “The First Congress Meeting of the People’s Representative Assembly,” April 11-13, 1976, catalogue number D21227. The Standing Committee of the People’s Representative Assembly included: Nuon Chea (president), Nguon Kan (first vice president), Peou Suo (second vice president), and Ros Nim, Sar Sean, Mei Chham, Kheng Sok, Matt Ly, Thang Sy, and Ros Preap (members). The members of the State Presidium of Democratic Kampuchea were: Khieu Samphan (president), So Phim (first vice president), and Nhim Ros (second vice president). The members of the Council of Ministers were: Pol Pot (prime minister), Ieng Sary (first deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs), Vorn Vet (second deputy prime minister and minister of economy), Son Sen (third deputy prime minister and minister of national defense), Ho Nim (minister of propaganda and information), Thioun Thioeun (minister of health), Ieng Thirith (minister of social affairs), Touch Phoeun (minister of public works), and Yun Yat (minister of culture, education and national studies). In addition, Democratic Kampuchea established some committees such as: the Agriculture Committee led by Chey Suon, Industry Committee chaired by Cheng An, Commerce Committee under Koy Thuon, Rubber Plantation Committee with comrade Phuong as head, Transportation Committee headed by Mei Brang, and the Energy Committee. These six committees were under the supervision of the deputy prime minister in charge of economy, and each committee president had a position equal to minister. However, these institutions never functioned fully.

¹⁵ Ysa, Osman. *The Cham Rebellion: Survivors Stories from the Villages*. Documentation Series No. 9. Phnom Penh: Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2006.

¹⁶ The Party Center was a term the CPK used to refer to high-ranking government officials and its ministries with authority. These could, for example, be the Central Committee, the Standing Committee, or the military.

¹⁷ Researcher Ysa Osman estimated that between 400,000 and 500,000 Chams died during DK. He based his figure on interviews with senior Islamic leaders who had collected statistics on the Cham population in Cambodia. They said that the country’s Cham population before 1975 was about 700,000, but after 1979 only 200,000 to 300,000 remained (*Oukoubah: Justice*

for the Cham Muslims under the Democratic Kampuchea Regime Phnom Penh: Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2002. Historian Ben Kiernan gave a much lower figure. He claimed that the Cham population before 1975 was about 250,000. Using the Cham population growth rate, he estimated that the population might have grown to 260,000 in 1979. He concluded that the number of Chams after 1979 was 173,000. This meant that 87,000 Chams died during the DK regime. (*The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996)

¹⁸ Yathay, Pin. *Stay Alive My Son: A Real Tragedy in Khmer Rouge Regime*. (Khmer translation), SIPAR edition, Phnom Penh, 2003.

¹⁹ Chou Sophea, "Why I was Imprisoned," second-place winner in an essay competition sponsored by the Khmer Writers Association and the Documentation Center of Cambodia, April 2004.

²⁰ Mam Phaiboun, "The Remaining Life and the Shadow of the Past," fourth-place winner in an essay competition sponsored by the Khmer Writers Association and the Documentation Center of Cambodia, April 2004.

²¹ Vann, Nath, *A Cambodian Prison Portrait: One Year in the Khmer Rouge's S-21*, Bangkok: White Lotus, 1998.

²² Documentation Center of Cambodia, "Ton, train section worker," catalogue number D02831.

²³ Documentation Center of Cambodia "Tang Lonh, a former worker in Ministry of Post, later a first lieutenant in charge of salary distribution, and now working in Chi Ok village, Baray district," catalogue number D02845.

²⁴ Kampuchea Krom was the southern territory of the Khmer Empire, which is now Ho Chi Minh City (known in Khmer as Prey Nokor). It was called Cochin China under the French. The French colonial government transferred this territory to Vietnam in 1949. Some parts of this region have large Khmer populations, but the majority of its people are ethnic Vietnamese.

²⁵ On December 2, 1978, a resistance movement against Democratic Kampuchea held a meeting in Snuol district, Kratie province in order to announce the establishment of the United Front for National Salvation of Kampuchea, which later became the United Front for National Construction and National Defense of Kampuchea. Two hundred people participated in the meeting to recognize the fourteen members of the Front's Central Committee with comrade Heng Samrin as president, comrade Chea Sim as vice president and comrade Ros Samay as general secretary.

²⁶ Samdech Bavasetha Son Sann was born in 1911 in Kampuchea Krom. He was the prime minister during the Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime from May 1967 to January 1968. During the 1980s, he led a resistance movement called the Khmer People's National Liberation Front. After the peace negotiations in Paris, he established and led the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party to participate in the 1993 national election. He died of heart failure in Paris on December 19, 2000 at the age of 89.



Photo: Daril Q. Kuo.

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Khmer Rouge cadres building a warehouse. (Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)



Khmer Rouge cadres dancing. (Toul Sleng Genocide Museum Archives)

