

*Searching for*

# THE TRUTH



- ◆ Memorandum of Understanding Signed
- ◆ The King in the Hearts of Cambodians

« The Museum of Memory Project seeks to fill this gap by focusing on Cambodian arts and architecture, national identity, and history as a foundation for truth and reconciliation »

-- Youk Chhang

Special  
English Edition  
Fourth Quarter 2012

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LETTER FROM YOUK CHHANG:

# UNDER THE AGELESS CHARM OF ANGKOR—BARACK OBAMA

The great matters of high politics, statecraft, and grand strategy are built on mountains of the mundane. Tedious processions of technocratic exchanges, diplomatic correspondence, and meetings working out each and every detail of a significant matter must precede any grand breakthrough between countries. But once all of the details are worked out, and each issue and point of contention or agreement is essentialized, there is the equally important matter of translating the mountains of the mundane into the profound. Every great matter in high politics demands some thought-provoking images, sound-bites, or grand symbol to convey the matter in a way that touches the heart of an issue and speaks to the soul. Well-scripted meetings followed by lofty speeches in ornately decorated conference centers hold incredible value in the grand march toward greater peace, security, cooperation, and human rights. But lofty speeches need a beautiful backdrop; grand breakthroughs beg for a dramatic theme; and inspiring visits by foreign leaders cry out for a symbolic gesture

that translates the great matters of politics and statecraft into something that can be remembered for all history.

President Barack Obama's trip to Cambodia was certainly historic. He was the first sitting United States President to come to Cambodia, and Cambodians eagerly awaited his arrival. But there was something that was profoundly missing in this historic moment.

In Thailand, President Obama met the King and was greeted by religious leaders at Wat Pho. He met the Thai Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra, who hosted an official dinner. They gave press conferences and reviewed honour guards. In Burma, he was met by thousands of Burmese citizens lining the streets. He met the most charming human rights leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, at her lakeside villa. They too gave inspiring, even if tempered, speeches. He spoke at Yangon University, a symbolic gesture to Myanmar's dramatic turn to democracy.

In Cambodia, however, with little fanfare, the President's motorcade drove through empty streets.



President Barack Obama waves his hand as he arrived at Peace Palace in Phnom Penh. Photo: Pete Souza/whitehouse



**Prime Minister Hun Sen greeting President Barack Obama**

There was no honour guard or charming women to welcome his arrival. The President's visit was buried in the mundane with little pomp or flare. I regret that the President never saw Angkor Wat.

It is perhaps a fitting reminder that the President's visit, while highly anticipated, was never

meant to be a grand breakthrough or an inspiring gesture of friendship renewed. The visit was a meeting for ASEAN and not Cambodia; and in the context of Cambodia, the trip was never intended to be ground-breaking, inspiring, or profound. The meeting was a courteous discussion on important matters indeed, but the lack of a historic backdrop, theme, or symbolic gesture shows that Cambodia still has far to go.

But political themes aside, I lament the fact that the President's visit did not afford a better window into the ageless beauty of Cambodian culture. Government leaders must follow tight agendas, and attention must go to the task at hand. But Cambodia is a beautiful country, and I hope President Obama was able to sense this beauty. I also hope that one day he will return with his family to see Angkor Wat.

Like Thailand and Myanmar, Cambodia is a sentimental country at heart, and I hope the President sees this in the idyllic painting he stood in front of with Prime Minister Hun Sen. Resorting to such a backdrop, in place of Angkor Wat, is a telling reminder that Cambodia's glory continues to be ageless, even if the vision for the future is immature.

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***Youk Chhang is the Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia***



**Prime Minister Hun Sen and Lok Chumteav Bun Rany Hun Sen posing a picture with President Barack Obama in Cambodian traditional shirts before dinner-reception at Koh Pich Convention and Exhibition Center on November 19, 2012**

# ARTS IS HEALING

## DC-CAM INITIATIVE : MUSEUM OF MEMORY

*“The loss of culture is the thread [that leads] to the destruction of a nation” – Cambodian saying*

The Documentation Center of Cambodia's Museum of Memory Project aims to play a central role in promoting peace and reconciliation by rebuilding Cambodia's cultural heritage. Since the 8th Century A.D., Cambodia has had a rich and vibrant artistic culture. Cambodia's cultural life has included ornate temples, lively art galleries, splendid museums, rigorous art schools, graceful and distinctive royal dances, rhythmically complex chanted poetry, multi-genre plays, and abstract orchestral music.

The Khmer Rouge deliberately targeted Cambodian cultural resources, destroying temples, forbidding traditional dances and music, and leaving no space for cultural expression beyond propaganda for the regime. As the quote above suggests, this cultural devastation deepened the suffering of Cambodians as they mourned the loss of their loved ones and attempted to reconstruct society.

The crimes of the Khmer Rouge have been addressed legally, through the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia among other efforts, and societally through memorials and national remembrance days. Yet the enormous cultural losses inflicted by the regime have been largely left unexamined. The Museum of Memory Project seeks to fill this gap by focusing on Cambodian arts and architecture, national identity, and

history as a foundation for truth and reconciliation.

The Museum of Memory Project currently has three components. First, it seeks to expand upon its current exhibits and educational activities at Tuol Sleng genocide museum, including through interactive discussions between DC-Cam lecturers, experts, survivors, and museumgoers; screening films about the Khmer Rouge regime; and exhibiting photographs from the Democratic Kampuchea era. Second, the Project aims to install a Khmer Rouge history exhibit at twenty-four provincial museums. This would include permanent and temporary exhibits on the Khmer Rouge era, meetings with local staff to assess and review exhibits, and documentation of stories and photos of Khmer Rouge survivors in the various regions. The Project also aims to establish an archaeology museum in Cambodia. Finally, the Project will play a central role in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the National Museum of Cambodia. The Project aims to celebrate this milestone accordingly, through comprehensive research on the history and collection of the museum, thorough analysis, and extensive recommendations consistent with the Museum's cherished legacy.

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***Youk Chhang is the Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia.***

### **Collaboration between the Documentation Center of Cambodia and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts**

DC-Cam established a formal collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in 1996. Subsequently, DC-Cam was granted permission from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts to establish a project to provide educational elements and visual-audio activities to Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum through a history classroom, photo exhibitions, and film screenings. Extending from the project at Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, DC-Cam also received permission to work with involved ministry experts and staff members to develop twenty-four provincial museums nationwide and establish an archaeology museum. Finally, in July 2012, the Royal Government of Cambodia permitted DC-Cam to collaborate with the National Museum to undertake programs to organize events for the hundredth-year inauguration of the Museum.

Based on this collaboration, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and DC-Cam have engaged in discussions to develop concrete programs to contribute to the preservation and promotion of culture and fine arts in Cambodia. The ministry is tasked with responsibilities to create and nurture programs that contribute to these purposes. DC-Cam will work closely with the representatives of involved departments and museums to implement the project.

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED

On October 10, 2012, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (“The Ministry”) and the Documentation Center of Cambodia (“DC-Cam”) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the headquarters of the Ministry of Education. Pursuant to the MoU, the Ministry transferred to DC-Cam a parcel of land (4,785.61 square meters) on which a permanent center called the Sleuk Rith Institute will be built, located next to the Royal University of Law and Economics.

The Sleuk Rith Institute aims to be the leading center for genocide studies in Asia. It will consist of three major pillars: a museum, a research center and a school. The museum will serve as a public archive of the history of Cambodia where locals and visitors can come not only to learn about the history of the Khmer Rouge, but also to enjoy a quiet place for reflection and healing. The research center will allow DC-Cam to continue its work compiling, analyzing and preserving information about the Pol Pot era. It will also welcome scholars from around the world that are interested in studying human rights atrocities in Cambodia and beyond. The school will educate leading Cambodian

students about Cambodia's history as well as certain principles of law and human rights in an effort to build a more promising future.

DC-Cam's operations have been generously funded by a number of donors. The United States government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Office of Global Programs Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) of the U.S. Department of State, has provided \$5.35 million to DC-Cam in continued support of the Center's work on documenting the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge regime. Of the \$5.35 million, \$4 million has gone towards the Center's endowment. The remaining \$1.35 million is supporting the Center's core operations. These include the continuation of information gathering to support the ECCC's work; the digitization of over one million Khmer Rouge documents; the publication of a family tracing book containing more than one million names; and the Genocide Education project. The Genocide Education project trains and equips 3,000 high school teachers with the necessary resources and methodologies to teach the history of Democratic

Kampuchea to one million high school students.

This MoU shall be valid for the period of 50 years, starting from the date both parties sign this MoU. After the first 50 years of this agreement, the Documentation Center of Cambodia is permitted to request 10-year extensions. This memorandum of understanding cannot be terminated unless otherwise agreed by both parties.



Youk Chhang (left) and H.E Im Sethy, Minister of Education, signing an MoU on October 10

# THE KING IN THE HEARTS OF CAMBODIANS

*Socheat Nhean*

In November 1991, I was among approximately twenty villagers watching a live broadcast on television of then Prince Norodom Sihanouk's repatriation into the capital city of Phnom Penh. He had been absent from Cambodia for twelve years. I was eleven. Television was not very common at the time, and whenever it was available, a large number of villagers would come to watch, no matter what was being broadcast. On that day, sitting in front of the black-and-white television, much like an audience watching a movie in the cinema, villagers and I happily watched the arrival of the Prince. He was greeted and welcomed by hundreds of thousands of people who were eager to see his face. Some of the villagers who had lived through the peaceful time of *Sangkum Reastr Niyum* (Popular Socialist Community) period in the 1950s and 1960s when Prince Norodom Sihanouk was the head of state said openly, "Our country will once again be the way it was during the *Sangkum [Reastr Niyum]* period"; "The king still has a nice smile" and "He was very energetic." My parents and other

villagers were all delighted that the Prince had returned. They believed the Prince would bring peace and unification. I shared the villagers' joy.

As I watched the broadcast and the people gathered to see it, I thought to myself that it was the biggest gathering and most important event I had ever seen. Villagers were full of joy and the hope of regaining peace in the country after years of mass killing and guerrilla warfare staged by the Khmer Rouge movement. I heard villagers murmuring about how wonderful the times were when Cambodia was at peace in the 1960s during Prince Norodom Sihanouk's period. Following the arrival of the Prince there were songs by Sin Sisamouth who was a popular singer before the Khmer Rouge period. His music was played nationwide, and cassette tapes of his songs began to be available in the country. I began to feel a sense of peace, and I also began to love the voice of Sin Sisamouth. My love of his songs remains with me today.

On that day, as the plane carrying the Prince



Prince Norodom Sihanouk and PM Hun Sen on the day of the Prince's arrival in Cambodia in 1991. John Vink/Magnum Photo



touched down and before it had stopped, the television showed the excitement of the Prince sitting in the plane nervously looking the plane window where he saw his land and people waving to him in the airport courtyard. Shortly afterwards, the plane door began to open. People cheered and waved the flag of State of Cambodia (1989-1993) and UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia). They shouted loudly to the arriving Prince. The Prince was greeted and welcomed by hundreds of thousands at the time. He was greeted the same way the documentary videos show his being greeted in the 1960s during *Sangkum Reastr Niyum* period.

After getting off the plane, the Prince rode in a roofless limousine with His Excellency Hun Sen as hundreds of thousands of people cheered him along the street from the airport to the gates of the Royal Palace, which took hours for the Prince to travel the 15-kilometers road. The villagers and I watched this joyful, exciting, hopeful event to the very end.

At the time, I had very little knowledge of the Prince. What I learned about him was from my parents, villagers, and later school. Years afterward, my father brought home

piles of books containing pictures of the Prince's activities and achievements during the 1950s and 1960s. I viewed all the pictures in the books. There were pictures of a car factory, universities, a bridge inauguration, the Olympic stadium, and so on. All of them showed great things that he had done for the country and the joy and appreciation of the people for his good work. Some of the pictures I spotted in the book were those of the Kampong Tram sugar factory in Kampong Speu province. It was exciting! This factory was very close to my house. Just a few years earlier (circa 1989) it was destroyed by villagers to get iron and bricks to sell. It took the villagers less than two weeks to reduce the entire factory to the ground. The factory that was so near my house no longer existed, and it was exciting to me to see the photographs of it when it was functioning. I was speechless. I could only feel regret that the factory which allowed people in my neighborhood to work and produce needed products was abandoned and destroyed.

Recently, on October 17, 2012, King Father Norodom Sihanouk returned home again, but this time Cambodians were in a state of shock. Thousands upon thousands of people flocked to the airport, lined up along the streets, and gathered near the Royal Palace to welcome the arrival of King Father's body. Feeling extremely sad, people cried and mourned losing their great king forever. The crying and sobbing became louder as the body of the Prince in the casket drew near. It was the beginning of seven national days of mourning. All over Cambodia, flags were flown at half-mast expressing the people's deep regret and sorrow at their great loss.

After the body of King Father arrived in Cambodia, all television stations broadcast stories about him, about things he had done and his achievements in the past. I had a chance to talk to my mother and villagers again, some of whom were watching the live broadcast with me when then Prince Norodom Sihanouk arrived in Phnom Penh in November 1991. This time, I found that villagers were mourning the death of King Father. Each one began to talk about the achievements in the good old days when King Father was the leader. All my villagers said the Prince was a leader who was down to earth with his people,

that he was physically active and energetic, and that he had always been in the hearts of his people. Some villagers said they met the King Father on several occasions in the 1960s. My mother described the time when she and her mother saw the Prince who came to build houses for widows in a nearby village. She recalled that at that time a villager gave the Prince a pair of pomegranates which he peeled and ate immediately. Other villagers witnessed people giving local fruit to the Prince who even helped people do their agricultural work. Villagers spoke of their lives when the time was peaceful. The passing away of the King Father served to remind all the villagers of the peaceful times under his leadership.

Now, it has been a week since we received the news of the King Father's passing. My mother and other villagers as well as the Cambodian population nationwide are in a period of mourning. Television stations are broadcasting programming about the King Father, his life, his leadership, and the response of the nation and the world to his death. On the weekend of October 20, my mother arrived home at half past eight in the evening with other villagers. When I asked her where she had been, she replied that she had come from the pagoda where she and other villagers had joined together in a funeral ceremony for King Father Norodom Sihanouk. She had tears in her eyes. At the same time, I

was writing this article in front of the television which was broadcasting the visit of foreign government leaders who had come to pay respect to the King Father. King Norodom Sihamoni was sobbing as were other Cambodian government officials. My family, my villagers, and my Cambodian countrymen as a whole are mourning the loss of King Father.

Born with charisma, this popular Prince had qualities of leadership which won people's hearts. King Father Norodom Sihanouk is remembered especially for several things. He was the figure who in November 1953 brought ninety years of French colonization to an end. It was he who through his Khmerization campaign unified people of different backgrounds, languages, cultures and ethnicity into people of one nation, the Khmer nation. In addition, he ensured the integrity of and protected the territory of the nation by winning the court case of Preah Vihear which guaranteed Cambodia's ownership of the temple. Because of these and other masterful achievements, he will forever be remembered as "the Father of Independence, Territorial Integrity and Unification."

He will always live in the hearts of Cambodians.

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***Socheat Nhean is the team leader of Searching for the Truth Magazine.***



The casket carrying the body of late king-father Norodom Sihanouk returned to Cambodia on October 17, 2012

# THE CONFESSION OF SISOWATH BUTHSARA CALLED CHREUNG

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The former lieutenant in Lon Nol regime, Sisowath Buthsara, was arrested and sent to S-21 or Toul Sleng on February 3, 1976 in charge of dispersing against revolution. Sisowath Buthsara's confession was 44 pages long. In his confession, he described his detailed biography and various activities he did in order to destroy the revolution. He wrote that he was linked to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which was to create chaos inside the leadership of the Democratic Kampuchea. Sisowath Buthsara added that his father was Sisowath Doungeakena (deceased) and his mother's name was Sok Soun (alive). Buthsara has another sister, Nhep Samith, single and was in grade 3 in 1975. On the day Buthsara was arrested, all of them were living at Village 6, Porthiban Commune. Buthsara's wife was Tak Li-Eng. His father-in-law was Tak Khuy, a photographer and his mother-in-law was Heng, a photographer, and his father-in-law was Leng Chu. Below is what Buthsara wrote in his confession.

My name is Sisowath Buthsara called Chreung. I am 33 years old. I am Khmer and was born at Sangkat number 3, Phnom Penh city. Nowadays, I am living at village number 6, Porthiban commune, district 18 (Koh Thom) in Region 25. I finished high school and then worked as the lieutenant.

In 1951, I was studying in the second grade at Duda School in Phnom Penh and then in 1957, I failed the exam, so I transferred to study in the sixth grade at Kampuchboth secondary school. I moved again to Thach Ngok Thwan, which is a private high school at the south of Sileb market. I was studying in this high school since 1964 until the final class. I completed high school and then began my work in the state-owned company Sonaprim, under the supervision of Ouk Sun, who was the director. My duty was to sell flashlight battery and cloth. I received 3,000 riels as monthly salary. I quit that company in

1967 and enrolled as a soldier at the Headquarter of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces where I was assigned to work in Office Number 6. I was responsible for maintaining security during the national festival and at the time I was the corporal sergeant.

After the coup in 1970, I was promoted as major lieutenant and transferred to Chbar Morn military camp in Kampong Speu province at the Office Number 2 overseen by Chheum Chhoun. In 1973, I was promoted again. My salary was 26,000 a month. Below people are those who joined CIA with me on September 23, 1970.

1. Chheum Chhoun, Brigadier General, was the chief of CIA.
2. Mam Sarin, Colonel, was a deputy chief
3. Huy Hem, Colonel, was a group chief
4. Lau Sary, Major, was a group chief
5. Pov Siphou, Major, was a group chief
6. Mam Ratana, Lieutenant, was a member
7. Oul Peak, Lieutenant, was a member
8. Sisowath Buthsara, Lieutenant, was a member
9. Hak Chhay Hok, Lieutenant, was a member
10. Kong Sopheak Mongkul, Captain, was a member
11. Chheng Kheang Meng, Captain, was a member
12. Keo Mantha, Captain, was a member
13. Siv Vorn, Lieutenant, was a member
14. Khut Khun, Captain, was a member
15. Samnang, Lieutenant, was a member
16. Mayasith, Captain, was a member
17. Sany, Captain, was a member
18. Mech Saleun, Lieutenant, was a member

## Plot before April 17, 1975

The chief of CIA, Chheum Chhoun conducted a plan for all members:

1. To provoke anger among Phnom Penh dwellers to strongly protest against the Khmer Rouge Communism.

2. To guard the city to see if the Khmer Rouge spies were hiding in the city.

3. To investigate the arsenal of the Khmer Rouge communist inside the city.

4. To destroy the plans of the Khmer Rouge communists who intended to distribute leaflets in the city.

5. To command all the army headquarters and the ministries not to allow the strangers to stay.

#### **Plot after April 17, 1975**

The chief of CIA, Chheum Chhoun and Lau Sary conducted the plan for implementation:

1. To cause the Base People and evacuees to hate the liberation soliders.

2. To request break-time in order to prevent the improvement of Angkar.

3. To destroy all members of Angkar revolution.

4. To push the Base People and evacuees to protest against Angkar revolution.

#### **A. Assignment of the strings of traitors**

I was actually assigned to betray Angkar by Lau Sary on March 26, 1975 at Wat Phnom.

#### **B. The guidance**

Khmer Republic regime is the period of time that we had all freedom and rights. We could do what we wanted to and no one controlled us, and we lived in harmony as there were many entertainments such as girls, alcohols and dramas. Also, we had enough food, sleep, social status and money unlike the Khmer Rouge regime. The Khmer Rouge was under the control of the Viet-Cong; they worked for Vietnamese and

allowed the Vietnamese to invade Khmer territory.

Khmer Rouge is Tamil (no religious), mistreated the monks, and burnt most of pagodas. Also, the Khmer Rouge communists used their authority over the people, killed people illegally without compassion and forced people to work day and night without enough food.

#### **C. Members assigned by Lau Sary**

Group assigned by Lau Sary to work against Khmer Rouge consisted of three members:

1. Mam Ratana was a lieutenant

2. Oul was a lieutenant and me

3. Lau Sary conducted treacherous plan for me to implement as following:

♦ Creating propaganda and causing people to stand up against revolution.

♦ Trying to contact Base and New People of to prepare for the arrival of Son Ngoc Thanh soldiers.

♦ Stealing people's properties and foods in order to create trouble.

#### **D. Activities done by me**

The people whom I instructed to fight against revolution were Bou Kheng, who as a doctor; Meas Meng Heang, an officer at the Ministry of Information, Phalla (a major lieutenant) and Tai Sman, a gym expert, but he was arrested by Angkar. When I am living at Village number 6, I actually spread political propaganda to co-workers to destroy Angkar. I was so frustrated with Angkar, so I worked little for them. Besides, I often stole the corns, cut off banana and sapodilla tree in order to confuse Angkar.

### **Royal Family Members Who Were Sent to S-21**

<b>Names</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Positions</b>	<b>Date of Entry</b>	<b>Date of Smash</b>
♦ Sisowath Buthsara	Male	Lieutenant	1 March 1976	3 May 1976
♦ Sisowath Ketarak	Female	Wife of soldier	1 March 1976	Smashed
♦ Sisowath Duong Khara Mchas Hut	male	merchant	Unknown	Unknown
♦ Sisowath Iem Marya	N/A	Child of King	10 Oct 1976	14 Oct 1976
♦ Sisowath Pon Vireak Vong	N/A	Child of King	30 Oct 1976	N/A
♦ Sisowath Norak Norindarith	Female	Child of King	29 August 1978	14 Oct 1976
♦ Mavya aka Mary	male	Child of King	8 November 1976	Unknown

# HOME IS TOO FAR, JUSTICE IS TOO FAR TO RECEIVE

*Socheat Nhean*

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It was in 1974 that 15-year-old Mean Chen was told by the Khmer Rouge cadres to leave home in Stung Treng and travel to Preah Vihear province so that she could be trained to be cleaned, independent and about the concept and rule of Khmer Rouge communism. Chen did not want to leave home at this young age, but she could not reject the request of the Khmer Rouge cadres and her parents were powerless to challenge them. The 100 miles between the two places made the distance even further as they were divided by densely thick forests, bad roads and a total lack of communication. Despite such a distance, Chen did not expect that the separation from her family members would last such a long time. The moment she left home was the last time she saw her father. It was not until 1980 that Chen had a chance to go back to her home village again in Stung Treng, but she did not see her father. He disappeared without any trace.

On the way back to her home village in Stung Treng province in that year, via an ox-cart, a journey that took Chen and her newly-wed husband about a week, Chen missed her parents and other two siblings badly and hoped of reuniting with them again after she had been away for six years. However, home was somehow unpleasant after her mother told her that her father was taken away and was killed during the Khmer Rouge regime.

Thirty-five years on, trauma is still in her heart; the past is haunting her; justice is obscure and the place where her father was taken to remains a mystery. Chen still remembers her father's last smile.

Earlier this month, Chen made the first ever 300-mile trip from Preah Vihear to Phnom Penh where she attended the hearings at the Khmer Rouge tribunal, visited Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Choeung Ek killing fields.

On the one hand, Chen was told that her father, who was a village chief before he disappeared in 1977,

was sent to S-21. December 4, 2012 was a rare chance that she could make a visit to Tuol Sleng. She found it shocking as she stepped into the courtyard of this museum and began to cry as she saw hundreds of photographs posted on the boards of the museum building.

"Are all these people in the photographs dead?" asked Chen. "Yes," replied a staff member of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, who brought 47 people from rural areas across the country as part of the "Witnessing Justice" project to attend the hearing at the Khmer Rouge tribunal, visit Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek.

Slowly and carefully looking at each photograph from one to the next to see if the photograph of her father was among those thousands, she held a Krama to wipe away her tears.

Chen did not find her father. She came out of the museum buildings with tears in her eyes as she lost hope of finding the location of her father's death.

The news of her father's death that Chen received was from her mother when she returned home in 1980. Her parents were ordinary farmers their entire lives. Her home village in Stung Treng Province fell under Khmer Rouge communists' control shortly after the overthrow of the then-Head of State Prince Sihanouk in early 1970. The change of the country's political structure did not change the life of Chen's parents. They continued to live as farmers while Khmer Rouge communists were indoctrinating all villagers to follow Khmer Rouge rules, to fuel anger against the American imperialists in Phnom Penh and to farm in order to produce rice for Khmer Rouge needs.

Chen's life was normal until 1974 when she was requested to go to Preah Vihear in order to join with other youths of her age. Since Chen left home, she heard nothing from her parents and other family members. Alone, she was assigned to do several kinds of work



Mean Chen sobbing outside Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum building

such as building dams, clearing forests, farming, cutting trees and doing several other tasks.

"I experienced every hard work in my life; I used to work under every condition—hot sun, rainy days, malaria-endemic areas and life-threatened pressure," said Chen.

In 1977, Chen's father was taken away with a motorbike. Chen heard from her mother that it was the day that all family members lost a man whom they loved the most. Not only did the other family members not have a chance to say good bye to that man, but he did not have a chance to tell any of his family members a word about where he was called to go. Chen was told that her father was taken away as he was accused of having betrayed Angkar.

Away from her home village where her father was located, Chen reflected on the same incident that occurred at Preah Vihear where lots of people were accused of being an enemy and then were killed. Chen said that she witnessed several of her peers who were accused of betraying Angkar just after they did not transplant the rice plants properly or after they did not come to work while they were sick. Through this reflection, Chen thought that her father would make the same minor mistakes.

Currently, Chen is struggling to live; she could only afford a trip to visit home village in Stung Treng once every two or three years. She knows very little about the Khmer Rouge tribunal as her home is too far for newspapers to reach; she is illiterate and it is too far in distance for the radio to be heard. She does not know any names of the accused at the Khmer Rouge tribunal. The hearing she attended on December 5, 2012 was about a life of the witness who described her vivid past during the time when she was evacuated from Phnom Penh in April 1975. Chen found the hearing so informative and moving, although her experience was different from that of the witness. The accused Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan were also present listening to the witness in the courtroom.

What Chen wishes is that those who are responsible for the death of all Cambodian people must receive serious punishment. Chen hates all those Khmer Rouge leaders, but she could feel that justice is too far from her to receive as her home is too far from the site of the Khmer Rouge tribunal.

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***Socheat Nhean is the team leader of Searching for the Truth Magazine.***

# TAING KIM: LIFE WITH KARMA AND HUNTING FOR PERSONAL JUSTICE

*Socheat Nhean*

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Taing Kim at her house in November 2012

Living in an unfinished house in the middle of paddy fields, Taing Kim is still living in the past, blaming herself for having being born with Karma, a feeling that she has to endure for the rest of her life. She is in frail health. Similar to the time when she was born, and during the Khmer Rouge regime, Taing Kim is living in fear and poverty, and is struggling to survive—living alone mostly during the daytime, she was occasionally accompanied by her youngest son in the evening, who was married and living on the same plot of land in Rolea Pi-ier district, Kampong Chhnang province. Taing Kim could hardly earn enough to provide herself with just a simple life.

56-year-old Taing Kim could never forget her mother's words that she uttered during the time when she was sitting on her mother's lap, her mother told her that "my daughter, you were not born into a peaceful time. I do not know how much you will suffer in the future, no matter how much suffering you will endure, just accept it because this is your Karma from a previous life." Taing Kim has absorbed these words and remembers them at all times.

Every day, most of the things that surround her she finds unpleasant. The rainy season worries her the most as she is scared of lightning, thunder strikes, the sound of explosions and fireworks. She turns her cell phone off immediately whenever the sky gets dark and whenever it is about to rain.

"I am afraid of the loud noise. I do not want to go to any ceremonies where fireworks are being set off. I hide myself under the table when a firework goes off or when the thunder strikes," said Taing Kim.

Beside the state of Karma described by her mother, Taing Kim current's trauma is rooted back to the Khmer Rouge time during which she found it terribly awful. On the one hand, Taing Kim thought that what happened to her during the Khmer Rouge period was linked to the words that her mother told her. Although it was painful, and she felt a sense of loss, Taing Kim had to accept it.

At the age of 18, Taing Kim married a Lon Nol soldier who remained on duty as the wedding day was about to begin in 1974. While anxiously waiting for her future husband, Kim was told to prepare to wed to the shoes of her future husband just in case he did not arrive on time. Fortunately, her future husband appeared at night time wearing drenched clothes having left the battlefield and crossed the river. The wedding ceremony started, while Kim herself did not experience a sense of love, she needed to marry upon her family's advice to a man with whom she had never talked to before.

As newly-weds, Taing Kim did not have the chance to live as husband and wife. Her husband needed to go to the battlefield again the next day. Later, the two did not meet very often as the country was in great turmoil,

and her husband was busy on duty to prevent the Khmer Rouge soldiers from advancing into Kampong Chhnang provincial town.

“My husband and I loved each other like brother and sister; we had never been with each other like husband and wife,” said Taing Kim.

The Khmer Rouge victory over the country in April 1975 brought a horrible nightmare that still haunts her today. She and eight other women, whose husbands were former Lon Nol soldiers, were brought to be killed while their husbands had already been killed, including Taing Kim's husband. Taing Kim and other eight women were raped before the rapists took those women's lives. Amongst them, Taing Kim was the luckiest one as she survived.

How she survived was a miracle. Taing Kim managed to survive just after she was raped by some Khmer Rouge soldiers. While the soldiers were raping others, and shortly before Taing Kim was brought to be killed, she was helped by a kind Khmer Rouge soldier who encouraged her to escape so upon that advice, Taing Kim hid herself in the pond of water lily for three days and nights without any food. That kind Khmer Rouge soldier told his soldier mates that Taing Kim had been killed, but they refused to believe it. Those Khmer Rouge soldiers searched for Taing Kim everywhere including in the pond where she was hiding. One of them would have stepped on her, had he moved just one more step in the water. She only just escaped certain death.

For the rest of the Khmer Rouge regime, Taing Kim lived in hiding and worried that she would be found by the men who wanted to kill her.

That terrible life caused her to live in trauma and isolation from others for more than two decades. She had never shared her past to others including her own children and second husband until the mid 1980s. When her husband did eventually learn about it, he divorced her, forcing her to struggle with life once more as a widow with three children. Trauma and suffering never ended and Kim herself never found ways to deal with her past.

In 2003, Taing Kim became ordained as a nun, believing that to learn Buddhist precepts would release

her from the state of Karma, allowing herself to live a better life at the pagoda, a place which she considered to be the most peaceful on earth. In that same year, Taing Kim was interviewed for a documentary film by the Documentation Center of Cambodia in which she spoke out about her life during the Khmer Rouge period.

She left nun hood in 2006, however, her life returned to the state that it had been before she became a nun—trauma, mental illness and poverty.

Currently, skinny and frail, Taing Kim looks frightened and physically weak. However, one thing she needs the most in life, before she gets too old, is to see justice which she has not received properly. The Khmer Rouge tribunal sparks her interest, although on the one hand she said that the tribunal does not treat the victims who are in poor health as well as they treat the accused.

“Whenever I return home from the court, I get sick for other four or five days. However, I support the court to bring Khmer Rouge leaders to justice” Taing Kim remarked in a despaired manner.

However, while senior leaders are on trial, the ones who raped her would still be left behind. Taing Kim said that she would be more appreciative if those low-ranking Khmer Rouge cadres were brought to trial also.

Nowadays, Taing Kim devotes herself to Buddhism; she spends the whole morning in the Buddhist pagoda, serving the monks, which she religiously believes will release her from Karma and psychological traumatization. She holds eight precepts of Buddha—which is not to harm living things, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to tell lies, not to drink alcohol, not to eat after noon, not to partake in entertainment and not to wear make-up and other decorative things—which she commits thoroughly.

Despite this commitment, Taing Kim can hardly live in peace. The men who harmed her life were living not so far from her. Thunder strikes and loud noises are her enemy, all of which are in her environment on a daily basis.

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***Socheat Nhean is the team leader of Searching for the Truth Magazine.***

# TEACHERS ARE THE ARCHITECTS OF KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL MORALITY

*Khamboly Dy*

Teachers of Genocide History in Cambodia deserved to be recognized for their ability not only to have survived the Khmer Rouge (KR) but the commitment to teach this genocide history to millions of students. Thus, Cambodia stands proudly before the world as a testament to mankind's resilience in the face of horror.

On October 5th each year since 1994, the world celebrates the World Teachers' Day in recognition and gratitude to the teachers who play important roles in constructing knowledge and shaping social morality of the students. Teachers perform various roles during the course of their teaching as a facilitator, observer, adviser, a caretaker and a role model all of which contribute enormously to the students' self-learning, critical thinking, discipline, personal and professional development, and the construction of the social behavior and attitude of the young generations let alone talking about teachers'

responsibilities in dealing with different behaviors and levels of intelligence of the students. In addition, teachers construct students to be not only a good friend inside the school but also a good child at home and a good citizen in the country. In recognition of teachers' priceless roles and efforts, I call teachers the architects of knowledge and social morality.

Teachers in the war-torn, post-genocidal country like Cambodia face even more inevitable challenges. Immediately emerging from one of the most traumatic and unspeakable suffering experiences during the KR regime, teachers' physical and mental energy and encouragement were severely marginalized by both mental destruction due to the loss of loved family member(s) and the social turmoil with daily incursions from the KR remnants. In addition to walking around and searching for the whereabouts of the disappeared



Teacher Siv Thuon teaching the history of Democratic Kampuchea to secondary school history teachers in April 2010



Teacher Mom Meth



Teacher Sambo Manara

family members, teachers like the Cambodian population at large were struggling with the economic survival in which the KR regime left almost zero foundation for the succeeding regime the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) to reconstruct the nation and the education system and infrastructure. Nonetheless, the PRK government survived and succeeded in putting into functioning the primary schooling, and teachers had sacrificed time, energy and the remaining existing knowledge to educate both the young generation who lost schooling opportunity and those who were born after the genocide.

In this contemporary day, teachers play even more important role in educating the students not only about the general knowledge but also how to deal with

the genocidal past of their country. From 2009 to the present, over three thousand secondary school teachers specializing in History, Khmer Studies and Citizen Morality have participated in the teacher training workshops on the teaching of A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979), a program initiated by the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, which endorsed DC-Cam's Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history textbook into official

school curriculum in May 2011. With this mission, teachers participate in conveying the DK history objectively, a step to preserve the memory of the KR atrocities and to build compassion, tolerance and forgiveness. In teaching DK history, teachers adhere to the principle of guiding students away from hatred, a sense of anger and revenge. In this respect, teachers contribute tremendously to the national reconciliation and sustainable peace building in Cambodia through education, a universally non-violent mechanism adopted by a number of countries.

Once again, teachers are definitely the architects of knowledge and social morality.

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***Khamboly Dy is the team leader of Genocide Education Project***



**Pre-service teachers at the National Institute of Education posing a picture with Professor David Chandler in July 2012**

# YOUTH MOBILIZATION AND IDEOLOGY

## CAMBODIA FROM THE LATE COLONIAL ERA TO THE POL POT REGIME

Anne Raffin

**ABSTRACT:** *This article, based on archival data, tracks the evolution of youth mobilization in Cambodia from the Vichy French colonial National Revolution during World War II through the country's revolutionary implosion under Pol Pot in 1979. Successive regimes relied on young people to consolidate power and protect the nation from external and internal threats. An overarching ideology of agrarianism structured the political beliefs of the leaders and committed cadres of these youth corps, ranging from an ideology of civic agrarianism under colonial officials and Sihanouk, to Lon Nol's military agrarianism, and finally to the Pol Pot regime's mobilization of youth via an ideology of revolutionary agrarianism that aimed to create a utopian agrarian nation. While the lives of young Cambodians had traditionally been shaped by two institutions, the family and the sangha, the advent of state-sponsored youth organizations in the mid twentieth century provided a new space for young people beyond the family and existing religious organizations. In this respect, the author argues, the Cambodian youth corps was part of modernity. In spite of this development, those in power continued to mobilize young people via ideologies based on agrarian values, an idealization of the past, and the desire to create a "new man." The state's instrumental use of youth organizations during this period can thus be seen as a type of reactionary modernism.*



Un-married Khmer Rouge soldiers, most of whom were rarely allowed to visit home after they joined revolution

This article aims to trace the state's instrumental mobilization and organization of youth in Cambodia from 1941 to 1979 in order to chronicle the important role that youth played in Pol Pot's genocidal Democratic Kampuchea (DK) regime. Apart from personal accounts of survivors, no systematic long-term historical writing has been done on youth policy or youth mobilization under the Pol Pot regime. Autobiographical recollections of Pol Pot survivors emphasize political change through breaks young people were forced to make with the past. By contrast, this article traces the continuities in youth mobilization from Cambodia's colonial period through its turbulent postcolonial regimes by linking forms of social organization to ideologies of agrarianism and reactionary modernism.

Between 1941 and 1979, Cambodian leaders and state authorities put into place ideologies and institutional structures whose aim was to mobilize young people for political projects. Under the authoritarian French colonial Vichy regime (1940-1945), young Cambodians were mobilized through state-sponsored recreational youth corps. This approach was used up to the Lon Nol era (1970-1975), when it evolved into a military mobilization that would ultimately reach genocidal proportions under the Pol Pot regime (1975-1979).

In this article, youth is studied as an organizational unit brought from the Western world as one of a number of channels of change in colonized Southeast Asia. Among these channels was the creation of voluntary associations not based on ascribed membership. In Cambodia, such associations constituted a new way for the colonial power and postcolonial regimes to organize large groups beyond the family and sangha, or Buddhist community, and were a way the state could mobilize young people in order to counter international and domestic threats.

### **Youth as a Social Category**

Before beginning our analysis, we must first examine “youth” as a concept. The French colonial definition of youth was less about age, per se, than about its associated functions and obligations, and such youth-related associations remained constant through successive political regimes. These functions included bonding young people to one

another through practical and ideological activities and inculcating values of service and defense of the nation. Definitions of youth as a category changed over time, however: in colonial and postcolonial Cambodia youth was loosely defined as the period before marriage, when individuals were relatively free from family responsibilities. For the French colonial state, this period spanned ages seven to twenty-one.

Later, when the Pol Pot regime sought to mobilize somewhat older individuals who were perceived as having “the most energy” and whose help was needed in order to realize the revolution and defend it from enemies, youth was redefined as being from eighteen to thirty years.

Complicating the definition of youth was its relation to the concept of childhood. All the regimes under study recognized the existence of both categories, although the distinction between the two was less marked in the Democratic Kampuchea era than in other periods, given the political importance of children as bearers of the future and as more malleable subjects who would be dedicated to the revolution. Throughout the Pol Pot era, children and youth were two contiguous and complementary stages in the life cycle of an individual—a time when a person could correct the errors of the past, unlike older generations who were presumed to have been corrupted by previous regimes. In this respect, youth also represented a politicized generational category. In order to capture young people's loyalty and cultivate solidarity, political leaders during the time frame of this study, generally encouraged young Cambodians to think of themselves as members of this meaning-invested category.

The youth corps under the colonial regime, as well as under Sihanouk and Lon Nol, consisted mostly of young people from both small and large towns. By contrast, the Khmer Rouge targeted the offspring of peasants, whom they perceived as representative of the working class. Youth groups in all regimes from 1941 to 1979 included female as well as male members, and official discourses from the colonial to the Lon Nol period frequently highlighted the idea of youth as an important social identity over and above distinctions based on hierarchical ties, gender, and urban/rural dichotomies.

## Mobilization and Overarching Ideologies

As Nasir Abdoul-Carime notes in his study of the Khmer identity, one significant challenge for all post-colonial regimes in Cambodia was creating a nation, i.e., a feeling of unity among the population, beyond clan and family networks. I argue that youth mobilization prior to and including the postcolonial period, up to 1979 was the state's response to the historical need to foster a mass political commitment to the regime in the face of threats to Khmer nationhood. My argument is that such mobilization was to reinforce patriotic/nationalistic feelings toward the motherland.

In 1941, at a time when the colony faced the occupation by Japanese soldiers and Thai expansionist policies, the French created a large Cambodian youth movement called *Yuvan Kampucherath*, with King Norodom Sihanouk as its head. The *Yuvan* involved its members in socially-oriented activities. Sihanouk later used this movement as a tool to consolidate his power, forming the Royal Khmer Socialist Youth (RKSJ) in 1957 to support his new mass political movement, the *Sangkum Reastr Niyum* (Popular Socialist Community). The *Sangkum* aimed to unite all Khmers in the guise of a national union under Sihanouk's leadership, and the movement's electoral victory in 1955 placed power in Sihanouk's hands for the next fifteen years.

Toward the later part of Sihanouk's regime, the armed struggle launched by the Communist Party of Kampuchea against Sihanouk led to the insurgents occupying nearly a fifth of Cambodia's territory. Although membership in youth organizations had been voluntary up to this point, it became compulsory from 1967 to 1970, as Sihanouk sought the total allegiance of youth. In March 1970, Sihanouk was overthrown and Lon Nol came to power. There were increased calls for youth to join the military effort, judging from evidence contained in speeches and magazine articles of the times. Thus, youth mobilization became more militarized during Lon Nol's reign. In April 1975, Lon Nol resigned and fled into exile as Pol Pot's communist forces captured Phnom Penh. The Khmer Rouge forces that subsequently controlled Cambodia until January 1979 sought to extinguish

existing youth organizations, while at the same time Khmer Rouge leaders remobilized young people along utopian agrarian ideals. All group participation under the Pol Pot regime was compulsory.

Whether by choice or by force, youth groups from 1941 to 1979 represented a form of social modernization in that for the first time Cambodia as a modern state was organizing young people into large groups. Nevertheless, this new form of organization was not a complete rupture with the past; in fact, preexisting agrarian values were the foundation of this top-down institutional structure that aimed to socialize youth. Such existing agrarian values included the expectation that young people should engage in productive labor in order to contribute to society and that values of obedience and reciprocity between themselves and figures of authority should be upheld. For their part, those in authority owed youth moral guidance and the representation of an ideal. Over time, the state progressively replaced the family as an educator by providing training to young people in food production, playing the role of supervisor, and promoting ideas such as self-reliance, devotion, and obedience toward leaders.

From the colonial period to the Sihanouk era (1941-1970), leaders who perceived their country as subject to both internal and external threats stressed an ideology of civic agrarianism; accordingly, youth mobilization took the form of civic engagement in agricultural projects as well as expeditions to experience the natural world as a site of purification. By the end of 1972, political instability allowed the insurgent Khmer Rouge to gain control of more than half of Cambodia's territory. This led the existing Lon Nol regime to stress a military agrarianism in which young people were expected to be peasants and soldiers at the same time as part of the war effort. In the wake of Lon Nol's overthrow, from 1975 to 1979, the autarkic Pol Pot regime mobilized youth via an ideology of revolutionary agrarianism aimed at building a utopian rural-based society.

In sum, an overarching ideology of agrarianism framed the political beliefs of both leaders and committed cadres. For all these regimes, ideologies of agrarianism

were linked to issues of nationalism and modernity. Considering the ideology of the Third Reich, Jeffrey Herf used the term “reactionary modernism” to describe the notion of an ideology of reaction—dreams of the past and a rejection of liberal democracy, for instance—entangled with technical modernization. He linked technology not with capitalism, but with Geist (spirit) and will. Inspired by Herf's work, this article uses the term “reactionary modernism” to refer to each regime's attempts to mobilize youth corps by means of an approach that employed modern forms of social organization integrated with local traditions, Buddhism, an idealization of the past, and the projected creation of a new man. Because it represented a step beyond the family and religion and, at the same time, was reactionary in its idealization of the past, state intervention in youth mobilization was in this sense a variant of reactionary modernization.

#### **The Colonial Period: National Cohesion and Civic Agrarianism Threats: External, Internal, Actual, and Perceived**

In 1941 the overall situation in Indochina was worsening for the French colonizers, who had suffered a quick defeat at the hand of the Japanese invaders. On the one side were 35,000 Japanese soldiers who had invaded and were now posted in Indochina, mainly in urban areas; on the other side were the French who wanted to retain national sovereignty over the territory. Because the priority of the Japanese was to continue an invasion of the rest of Southeast Asia, they allowed the colonials to continue administering this region. Given this precarious balance of power in the region, the governor-general of Indochina, Jean Decoux, advocated a rapid expansion of youth mobilization. According to Decoux, the Japanese occupation heralded a state of emergency and since the Japanese occupiers were co-opting and mobilizing young people, French-backed youth organizations had become “necessary and urgent.” The objective of greatly expanding youth corps under these circumstances was to offer socially oriented activities under the guise of normality, while at the same time extending control over the country's young people and fostering “proper” patriotic feelings toward the motherland in an effort to police the population.

Posing an even greater threat than the Japanese occupation of Cambodia was Thailand's expansionist ambition toward its neighbor. In late 1940 a war broke out between France and Thailand. Taking advantage of the militarily weakened French position, Thailand attacked the French with the aim of regaining territories in Cambodia and Laos that it had earlier lost to this colonial power. France was victorious at sea but defeated on land, resulting in the return of Cambodia's westernmost provinces, excluding Angkor, to Thailand.

Parallel to these actual threats were perceived ones that were mentioned regularly in official documents. French colonizers often portrayed Cambodians as a monolithic “lazy,” “weak,” and “moribund” population and such perceptions were embraced by the governor-general of Indochina, Jean Decoux. Writing to the *résident supérieur* in Cambodia regarding youth policy, he exhorted, “the main task which occurs to you is to maintain the energetic effort to revitalize the country, to prevent it from falling back into inertia and pessimism, to maintain the confidence in its destinies that it has acquired, and to keep it from withdrawing completely into itself.” In other correspondence, the *résident supérieur* in Cambodia described this protectorate as living a “contemplative existence” that made the country “heavy, restive, susceptible” and therefore challenging to manage; thus the need to “save” and revitalize it in the face of an expansionist Thailand.

#### **Ideologies: Civic Agrarianism and Reactionary Modernism**

In this section, we look first at the agrarian aspects of state projects involved in youth mobilization during the colonial era. By *civic agrarianism*, I refer to rural and agricultural activities that colonial leaders perceived to be beneficial for youth in that involvement in nature was thought to develop character, health, manual ability, and team spirit. Youth socialization measures were partially based on an orientation shaped by agrarian values that can be tracked across the various regimes under study here.

The scholarship of Penny Edwards and Agathe Larcher-Goscha on Cambodia and French Indochina in the 1920s and 1930s shows that youth mobilization and

the emphasis on the social category of youth predated the Vichy period. According to Edwards, sports and Scouting were already quite popular in Cambodia by the 1930s, enjoying the support of both monarchy and protectorate. Leaders of young people in both movements, which often overlapped, saw sports as a way to affirm notions of the Cambodian nation, strengthening the body and mind as part of that project. Scouting also brought participants into closer contact with the country and agrarian society.

Compared to these early origins, Cambodian youth mobilization during World War II was much larger in scale and grew particularly active as the country faced imminent threats from Japan and Thai land. While youth groups in the 1930s and during the Vichy regime aimed to teach Cambodians to love nation and country, by 1941 French officials actively began to shape a mass youth movement and recruit the involvement of King Norodom Sihanouk as the head of this movement, known as *Yuvan*. A number of Sihanouk's speeches during the Vichy period emphasized the agrarian value of obedience and submission to the leaders' authority.

Such devotion to leaders soon became transposed into a relation between the masses and Sihanouk (who was said to be descended from Theravada Buddhist monarchs) and was used to promote nationalistic feelings among the youth. For instance, during a public speech in 1942 Sihanouk stated that young people must submit themselves

to the same discipline and be raised with the same sense of duty. They [Yuvan's members] are already 2,000 for whom the slogan is "to Serve." To serve the family, because it is the foundation of the social and national edifice. To serve Cambodia. To serve France.... They [the youth] need to integrate in a group where they learn to work in common, to think in common, to take part in their games in common. It is only with such a discipline...that they will be able to confront happily the magnificent work of national recovery.

Through such activities aimed at serving the

French protectorate and France, young people in Cambodia would in addition bond to one another as part of the nation-building process.

Other youth-related measures shortened the traditional distance between a king and his subjects. For instance, prior to 1941, the king's birthday was celebrated in a small ceremony limited to the palace grounds. Starting in 1942, in an effort to manipulate the royal aura for their own purposes, the Vichy regime orchestrated the king's birthday in a grand public ceremony outside the palace, during which the king reviewed 15,000 *Yuvans*, a measure emphasizing the osmosis between the leader and the youth. This permeability was one that Sihanouk would later develop through his numerous visits to the populace throughout the country.

According to LeVine and White, at the core of an agrarian society is the belief that young people have economic value and should provide economic contributions to the family and to society at large. Indeed, reciprocity between the generations was a key aspect of everyday social life in Cambodia. In the present case, the state promoted this notion against the backdrop of a wartime situation. For instance, Indochina had an urgent need for castor oil plants in 1942; thus, Captain Ducoroy, the head of the Indochinese youth and sport initiative, sought to organize young Indochinese to join vacation camps where they would help cultivate castor oil crops. In the summer of 1942, leaders planned other group efforts where young people would similarly perform labor useful to the war effort. As conditions became further impoverished, the governor-general of Indochina stipulated:

The Youth must be oriented more and more toward utilitarian realizations and especially toward agricultural activities...in particular through the creation of markets and fruit gardens as well as small livestock breeding stations which can, besides, be called under the present circumstances to be of great services to the collectivity.

These youth projects also complemented "the dual role of agrarian parents as nurturers and supervisors,"

as traditional subsistence skills were passed down from parent to child as they worked together. With youth groups, the state sponsored outdoor activities for urban youth, such as trekking, swimming, and team sports. At the heart of agrarianism was Vichyist officials' belief that direct contact with nature would help young people acquire self-reliance, courage, and integrity. Here, cadres of state-sponsored organizations imparted useful training while also nurturing the participants' need for recreational activities.

In the same vein, colonial authorities strongly encouraged camping. The newspaper *Sports Jeunesse d'Indochine* recorded 24,000 child-days of camp activities in Cambodia during the summer of 1942. Camp activities were also a means to teach young Cambodians about their grandiose past. During an earlier period in the 1870s, French scientists had reconstructed a portion of the history and chronology of medieval Cambodia. They presented an era of national greatness and cultural realization that reached its peak in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with energetic leaders, monumental arts, and imperial ambitions, followed by extensive decline. The French argued that this decline was due to Cambodians' inability to behave themselves in "Angkorean" ways. One of the aims of the World War II wartime youth project was to bond locals with their ancient past as a means of inspiration under French guidance.

French political discourse encompassed a call for "revitalization" involving a collective remembrance of and gratitude toward the country's grand medieval past. The new Cambodian national anthem, created in 1941 under French supervision, stated that the remedy to current challenges was to reawaken this Angkorean spirit, as Angkor was a marker of the past superiority of the "Khmer race":

[...] The temples are asleep in the forest  
 Reminding us of the greatness of Great  
 Angkor. As the rock of the Khmer race is eter-  
 nal. Have confidence in the fate of  
 Kampuchea  
 [...] In peace as during battles Kampuchea  
 was the friend of France The blood of their

heroes was not shed in vain Because a day  
 will arise which will see the triumph  
 As well as the unity of all Khmers.

In August 1942, a youth camp of about five hundred people, governed by the French School of the Far East, gathered to restore part of the vast temple complex at Angkor. The goal was not only to develop a team spirit and bond with one another through specific activities, but also to teach young people to serve their country and reconnect with a glorious past.

Colonial propaganda stated that Cambodian youth had a "profound love" for their suzerain Sihanouk, who was presented as embodying a nationalism based on an "authentic" Cambodia. More precisely, a rhetoric of reactionary modernism portrayed Sihanouk as the heir of the Kingdom of Angkor—a past to emulate—as well as a symbol of "the Cambodia of today and the Cambodia of tomorrow," now that the country was "embracing the modern world." This "modern world" was represented by developments such as more advanced systems of agriculture. For instance, the Cambodian youth corps *Yuvan* included mobile companies whose task, among others, was to spread new agricultural techniques to increase productivity. Young people were key actors in the state-led process of modernization. Finally, not only the suzerain, but also the Cambodian people, according to the official propaganda "will not accept any longer that we distinguish a Cambodia of contemplation with a Cambodia of action...[and] following the example of his King, [reject] the artificial opposition between tradition and the ones who want novelty."

At another level, Jacques Lebas, the commissioner general of youth in Indochina until December 1941, stressed that "in the Métropole, as in all the Empire," high-ranking leaders were dedicated to finding the appropriate means of training young people and subsequently building new men, since their "immediate influence, if well-conducted, can be considerable," that is, the rejuvenation of society. Such perceptions mirrored discourses in the métropole itself, where officials often blamed the defeat of 1940 on the previous regime and especially on its left-wing teachers, who were accused

of having undermined the courage and patriotism of the youth through their teaching. The will of the youth had been broken along with their bodies, necessitating reeducation. Thus, the ideal was to create a new citizen/subject who was physically healthy and strong as well as dedicated to the new regime; young Cambodians were likewise expected to become the future bearers of the Vichy youth project. The Japanese coup of August 1945 put a definitive end to these aspirations.

### **The Sihanouk Regime: Civic Agrarianism and Surpassing Angkor**

#### **Threats: External, Internal, Actual, and Perceived**



**Then-Head of State Norodom Sihanouk with female Yuvan members in the 1960s**

After the Japanese coup of August 1945, which overthrew French rule, Sihanouk's propensity to settle with rather than oppose the French triggered a long fight between those who desired immediate independence from the colonial power and those who were willing to behave in a more circumspect manner. In addition, the real threats to Sihanouk's power came from those who supported putting matters under the guidance of a strong parliament, rather than letting the king decide the fate of the country.

After a brief interlude during which Son Ngoc Thanh was prime minister, British and then French troops entered Cambodia in September 1945. With the return of the French, Sihanouk kept his throne and Son Ngoc Thanh left for exile in France. The French and Sihanouk signed the Modus Vivendi Agreement of 7 January 1946, giving domestic independence to

Cambodia. This agreement promised a constitution and for the first time allowed the formation of political parties. France continued to maintain control over Cambodia's foreign policy, however, and kept advisory relations with the government of Prince Sisowath Monireth. In September 1946, after new political parties were formed, elections for the consultative assembly were held in order to assemble a group of advisers to the king regarding a constitution for Cambodia. The Democratic Party won fifty of the sixty-seven seats. The constitution drafted in 1946 reduced the power of the king, while the 1947 constitution gave real power to

the National Assembly and therefore to the Democrats. This situation created several years of fragile political regimes that battled with both France and King Sihanouk.

Another threat for Sihanouk was the 1951 return to Cambodia of Son Ngoc Thanh, who soon put together a guerrilla movement against the king and the French. By 1952, students were holding strikes against the monarchy and protesting Sihanouk's handling of the issue of

independence from France. In January that year Son Ngoc Thanh founded the newspaper *Khmer Krauk* (Cambodia Awaken), which condemned Cambodia's lack of independence within the French Union while fanning the flames of the opposition. In February 1952, Phnom Penh witnessed huge student-led demonstrations demanding Cambodia's independence. This student self-mobilization threatened Sihanouk and the Sihanouk-led state. The state's mobilization of youth was designed to co-opt young people away from competing political groups. As a means of suppressing the revolutionary forces challenging his power, Sihanouk also embarked on a mission to France and other countries to seek independence for his country. In 1953 he achieved his goal, and Cambodia became independent. With independence—after more than a half-century of French control—Cambodia had to face the challenge of establishing political institutions

that would be functional and efficient.

By the late 1960s, Sihanouk was heading a country that was facing serious domestic problems: corruption, military coercion, a weakening economy, and an increasing polarity of right and left. Externally Cambodia's challenging geopolitical situation involved a complex web of relations with Vietnam, China, and the United States. Attempting to counterbalance Thailand and South Vietnam, Sihanouk developed closer ties with China and North Vietnam. In 1965 he cut off all relations with the United States and sought to bring together an international conference in order to make Southeast Asia politically neutral and evict U.S. troops. He followed this up with a secret 1966 alliance with the Vietnamese as a means of assuring Cambodia's independence under the patronage of North Vietnam, since Sihanouk perceived the Vietnamese communists as the ones who would win the war. With such a close association, North Vietnamese troops were permitted to operate on Cambodian soil and receive weapons through Sihanouk Ville's port. These controversial actions would result in Sihanouk's overthrow a few years later.

Such genuine threats were accompanied by symbolic ones, such as the decline of the “Khmer race.” According to Sihanouk, Khmer civilization had reached its peak during the Angkor era, before entering a period of “successive setbacks” followed by a phase of “resuscitation,” when the independence of Cambodia led to the “blooming” of the country under the Sangkum, the political movement created by Sihanouk. Cambodia was perceived by Sihanouk as a nation that was “moribund” at one point and then resuscitated to a certain extent, depending on the regime in power. Such a duality of thinking echoed the French colonial officials' perception of Cambodia.

### **Ideologies: Civic Agrarianism, Buddhist Socialism, and Reactionary Modernism**

Sihanouk's civic agrarianism was in accord with that promoted during the colonial period. Both the French and the Sihanouk regimes viewed nature as an arena for cultivating a healthy younger population; in 1960 Sihanouk wrote that thanks to such activity, “a loyal, open mind, a clear judgment, mutual understanding

and tolerance can be developed by [outdoor] sport.” In addition, both regimes intended for youth organizations to be utilitarian in nature. Under the Sihanouk regime, for example, “Cambodian youth participate[d] in manual works, that is, works of road construction, digging, building houses for inhabitants, etc.”

Young people were strongly encouraged to participate in the colonization of new lands. The official press showed members of the Royal Khmer Socialist Youth (RKSJ) as young colonists in the Stung Kranhoung area, for instance. In a seminar held in January 1969 and organized by the commissioner general of the RKSJ and the Ministry of Agriculture, officials underlined the role of the RKSJ in modernizing agriculture—selection of seeds, fertilizers, better use of water—as a means to increase rice production. As part of Sihanouk's modernization plan, youth mobilization overall was a response to the agrarian need to foster economic growth and produce socioeconomic change. Further, agricultural activities were encouraged as an answer to urban unemployment. But Sihanouk had encouraged the development of education without planning for job placement. Thus, the education system was “producing an increasingly numerous class of useless people.” Most graduate students hoped to find employment in private businesses or government, expecting that these jobs would afford them a Western-style lifestyle in the city. They did not want to return to working in the rice fields.

Sihanouk's vision for Cambodia was of a neutral country spared from the ravages of the Vietnam War. He intended to embark on modernization projects to gain recognition from the international community, and in doing so he hoped to mold a Cambodia that would not contest his absolute power. The Royal Khmer Socialist Youth (RKSJ) was created in 1957 to play a key role in reaching this ideal future. As Sihanouk stated, “the nation's vital ideals” that this youth organization needed to promote and preserve included the monarchy, the neutrality of the country as a means of safeguarding its independence, the country's religious, institutional, historical, and cultural heritage, and its efforts at modernization. He added:

The RKSJ must drive towards progress, the understanding of other peoples, the assimilation of their culture, their technique and their science, without surrendering the traditions and assets inherent to our race, the true national institutions without which we would cease to be Khmers but would soon be lagging behind, and “assimilated” by our neighbors.

In 1964 an independence commemoration day was planned, but Sihanouk refused to let the Scouts participate because they were an international rather than a national organization. He contended that the Scouts promoted disunity among youth by diverting them from joining the RKSJ, which offered a similar education to that of the Scouts. As a result, the Scouts decided to disband their movement and join the RKSJ, displaying their obedience and helping to build a consensual “royal nationalism” centered on Sihanouk. Such consensual royal nationalism was again promoted when 70,000 youth celebrated the anniversary of Cambodia's independence in 1968. The theme of the event was “the Khmer Nation will never die,” which stressed how Cambodian history had shown that the gathering of people around the throne had preserved the country's independence. Sihanouk reinforced the importance of complete obedience to the leader in 1967, when he made adherence to the RKSJ compulsory.

Combining political reactions—i.e., looking to the Cambodian Kingdom of Angkor as an idealized model—with technological progress, various strands of reactionary modernism appear in Sihanouk's speeches. In his prolific Cambodian-language broadcasts using the new communication medium of radio, Sihanouk created a cultural space in which he reproduced and reshaped existing values, such as Buddhism; for instance, connecting the state's ideology of “Buddhist socialism” to the welfare interests of Mahayana Buddhist King Jayavarman VII (1181-1220) as a model of good deeds and national development.

In a speech addressing the youth, Sihanouk stated, “Jayavarman VII founded about 200 hospitals, while the Sangkum is now close to the 600 mark.” Thanks to

state intervention and technology, the example of Jayavarman has been surpassed. The overall efforts promoted both modernist projects (economic growth, mostly agricultural, under the leadership of a strong state) and a “return” to the nation's celebrated past as the way toward economic and social development for Cambodia.

Sihanouk's state ideology was a Buddhist form of socialism that was national, not international, in character: it blended the compassionate approach of Buddhism with the redistributive aspect of socialism. As the propaganda stated: “the stronger must assist the weaker and the better-off must help raise the standard of living of the less fortunate to a proper level: ‘the leveling from the top’.”

Based on traditional practices of mutual help, Buddhist socialism would cultivate brotherhood feelings among the youth through practical as well as ideological activities. Thus, young people were assigned to do social work, especially farming activities in the countryside, as a means to improve the lot of their fellow citizens and contribute to the development of the nation. As Yim Dith, the commissioner general of the RKSJ, observed: “Our youth is also required to assist directly and actively in agricultural production by means of aid groups.” For instance, the youth participated in digging wells, which was part of a new national policy launched in July 1958 to supplement the water supply through the construction of wells, reservoirs, irrigation canals, and dams.

Sihanouk's agrarianism, like Korean agrarianism during the colonial era, offered a “third way” between the communist path and capitalism, calling for self-sufficient communities based on agricultural villages and on participation in local culture (Buddhism, and Angkor, the latter a site for the restoration of the Cambodian nation) that would produce this new young man dedicated to the building of this “third way.” The reference to Buddhism was not insignificant, since Cambodia was primarily a Buddhist country; the constitution designated Buddhism as the state religion. Hence, building on existing values, Sihanouk made a conscious effort to create a link between his political ideas and Buddhist

doctrine. As a “political educator,” Sihanouk was able to communicate with the peasant population, whose life was molded by Buddhist precepts.

Sihanouk was also building his power on existing cultural practices, such as the importance of oral expression in relation to the written word in the Cambodian culture. Indeed, Cambodian magazines of the time show him visiting various youth groups and youth camps and making numerous speeches on youth as a special group. Like a Buddhist monk or a local notable, he commented on and interpreted events for the population. Nevertheless, such politics did not prevent a segment of the Cambodian establishment from withdrawing its support for Sihanouk, which would eventually lead to a political crisis resulting in his removal from power.

#### **Lon Nol Era: Armed Conflicts Threats**

After Sihanouk's eighteen years of rule over Cambodia, during which he supported policies that he claimed would promote neutrality, the Sihanouk regime was replaced by Lon Nol's Khmer Republic (1970-1975). The new regime faced Vietnamese incursions into its territory. Conflict was unfolding not only between Vietnamese and Cambodian communist

groups throughout the country, but also between U.S. and South Vietnamese units, each side trying to gain a tactical advantage over the other. The Khmer Republic received support from the United States in its fight against the Khmer Rouge, which was backed by China.

After his overthrow in March 1970 Sihanouk united with his former enemy, the Khmer Rouge, in asking Cambodians to combat the “illegitimate Khmer Republic.” This situation fomented a brutal civil war in which the economy was destabilized. Moreover, heavy U.S. bombing created impoverishment, displacement, and perhaps up to 150,000 deaths, pushing many survivors to join the Khmer Rouge. The Lon Nol regime quickly lost command of most of the countryside.

By mid 1974, in spite of their losses, the Khmer Rouge were preparing confidently for victory, which came less than a year later. Lon Nol's anti-Vietnamese diatribes and policies foreshadowed the Pol Pot regime's extermination of ethnic Vietnamese. After the March 1970 coup, Lon Nol briefly rallied support for his “Buddhist war” against the Vietnamese, who were perceived as a threat responsible for Cambodia's situation. His supporters regularly intimidated and assaulted ethnic Vietnamese, some of whom ended up in detention centers. Many



Young Lon Nol soldiers in the studio with a picture of Angkor Wat in the background

Vietnamese were killed. By August 1970 about 310,000 of Cambodia's 450,000 ethnic Vietnamese were believed to have left the country. Xenophobia was used as a tool to unite forces and justify power.

This was followed by the “Khmerization” of some economic activities such as fishing on Tonle Sap Lake—another anti-Vietnamese measure, given that other ethnic groups did not engage in this pursuit. By 1973 most Vietnamese communists had left Cambodia; U.S. bombing had ceased about midway through the year. While the urban population initially backed Lon Nol, over time they became disillusioned with the regime due to its corruption and evolution into a narrow military dictatorship.

### **Ideologies: Military Agrarianism and “Neo-Khmerism” as Reactionary Modernism**

Under Lon Nol's regime, the civil war led to the state-sponsored mobilization of the entire population in order to fight for the Khmer Republic. As Lon Nol stated on the inaugural day of the National Assembly in 1972, “young and old, civil and military, all have risen to defend their country from danger.” He called for a popular movement uniting people in order “to fight...all the obstacles to the defence, building and expansion of the country.” At the outset young people were no longer singled out as a strategic sector since, due to the exigencies of war, the whole of society had to be mobilized.

Yet some specific youth corps did carry on. For instance, the pro-Sihanouk RKSJ evolved into the pro-Khmer Republic Salvation Youth, which had a weekly publication, the *Bulletin of the Salvation Youth*. Within such organizations, a military brand of agrarianism was promoted in which young people were asked to support the soldiers, participate in economic production, and even fight against the enemy themselves if necessary. For instance, the Salvation Youth organized a “Soldiers' Day” on 6 January 1971 to show symbolic support for the army by offering gifts to soldiers. This aim was reaffirmed in the following speech by a Salvation Youth representative: We, who have cooperated closely with our fighters for many months, will always remember the solidarity between the soldiers and the youth. Now, although we

are absorbed in our studies and cannot share the life of our soldiers, our thoughts go with them everywhere and we remain ready to continue our struggle against the enemy until final victory.

Lon Nol thanked the Salvation Youth, stressing that they were indeed the future of Cambodia and he noted that “the youth and the army will sacrifice all for a victory which will lead to peace, progress and the glory of the Khmer Republic, and will allow nobody to get in the way of this movement.” The examples that follow show how youth corps complemented socialization within the family by teaching agrarian skills, underscoring a social transition in how such skills were transmitted. “Youth colonies” were created for individuals to participate in local economic development through supervised farming and animal husbandry. In addition, youth camps were organized in order to “inculcate notions of agriculture and breeding.” Meanwhile, as during the Sihanouk regime, unemployment among urban youth continued to be a problem and the state mobilized these young people for economic and defense projects. The Khmer Republic responded to the employment challenge as Sihanouk had, by emphasizing the economic contributions that could be realized by making productive use of this group. By 1971 the commissioner general of the youth had established an “Economic Youth” corps, in which young people engaged in fish farming and other fruitful pursuits. To counteract the high price of food and to aid the war economy, the fish farmers sold their catch at a low price. Other young people took up chicken and pig farming.

During the same period, the commissioner general of youth experimented with the creation of “pioneer colonies,” which required young people to participate not only in the economic development of the nation but also in its defense, while nurturing their sense of belonging:

Young people will have an opportunity on the one hand to become acquainted with their country, to reinforce and deepen their national consciousness, and, on the other hand, to devote themselves to activities of an economic and social nature, and, finally, beginning with youth techniques, learn to defend their country.

The propaganda emphasized indirectly the need

to create a new man, highlighting a collective spirit dedicated to assisting the nation in its development. In addition, young people would “work under military discipline,” where obedience to the authority figure and the Khmer Republic was cultivated. Such a plan was inspired by the example of the Nahal villages in Israel, which were created by young Israeli soldiers along the country's borders and contributed to the economic development of the country during young people's period of military service. The leaders of the Khmer Republic believed in cooperation among youth and romanticized the role of the peasants. Such beliefs were based on “the [misunderstood] traditional practice of mutual assistance, *brovas day kinear*, whereby rice farmers shared their labour for ploughing, transplanting and harvesting so that all tasks could be completed within time limits enforced by the rains.”

On 18 March 1970, Lon Nol took power, with Sirik Matak wielding actual control despite being officially second-in-command. Together they aimed to create a society free from communism, based on the motto “nation, religion, and republic.” However, the regime did not offer a well-defined and well-conceived republican doctrine; rather, its existence was based on opposition to Sihanouk and his alliance with the communists. Lon Nol believed that Cambodians needed to be united by patriotic feelings and that an independent, safe, and prosperous country required allies. Buddhist allies appeared to him to be a good choice, and he attempted to cultivate relations with other Buddhist Asian countries. As he stated, “one should note that in other parts of the world spiritual forces are organized into international institutions whose influence is as strong as international political organizations.” To counteract socialist ideals, Buddhist ones would be offered. Thus, Buddhist identity was promoted as well as a call for building international Buddhist political organizations that could influence world politics. “This will permit us to perpetuate our ancestor customs and above all to find solid moral support from the outside world for our external defense policy,” Lon Nol proclaimed.

Like Sihanouk, Lon Nol exploited existing values,

in this case Buddhism, to gain support from the local population. Also like Sihanouk, Lon Nol found sources of power in the Khmer civilization. “Burnish the Khmer-Mon culture,” he declared, “for it is the basis of our civilization. It is this culture which gave to our country the grandeur of yesteryear and which still remains one of the most prestigious in Asia.”

Indeed, he spoke of “neo-Khmerism”; the latter half of the term underlined a link with a grandiose past that Cambodians needed to identify with, while “neo” embodied the movement toward a modernizing future free from “totalitarian ideology.” This neo-Khmerism was a vision of nationalism as a communal agricultural society inspired by the Kingdom of Angkor as well as enhanced by technical modernity. Pioneer colonies were subsequently established near Angkor, since “it is our duty to acquaint them [young people] with it, to have them preserve it, and the national pride born from contact with the prestigious past of the Khmer people will contribute to the reinforcement and crystallization of national consciousness.”

Playing a key role in the vision of a collective national future were the youth, who had to be redirected to the countryside in order “to shoulder the gigantic task of saving the rural areas.” Leaders believed that the creation of “rural family homes” was an answer to the problem of rural exodus by offering the youth: “...training adapted to his own environment and which impels him to outdo himself and to help others to realize that agricultural work is not humiliating or dull if one is sufficiently prepared for it.” As the commissioner general of youth stated, with regard to fostering economic development and as a response to unemployment:

“The moment has come to direct the youth toward the rural and not toward the urban life where they find themselves defenseless. Cambodia is an agricultural country; undeniably, agriculture constitutes the base of the country.”

Modernization, especially the building of dams, digging of reservoirs, use of fertilizers, and use of tractors, had helped increase the yield of rice from one and a half to two tons per hectare. However, as Slocomb

observes, the task of conducting war as well as running other state affairs was ultimately too much for these inexperienced republicans. Lon Nol's regime did not last long.

### **Pol Pot Era: Reforming Society**

#### **Threats: The "Hidden" Enemies and the External Ones**

By early April 1975, Lon Nol had been driven into exile and Pol Pot's forces had assumed complete control. The Khmer Rouge preoccupation with the prospect of a Vietnamese invasion meant that national defense was a priority, to the detriment of ensuring an adequate food supply for Cambodia's population. War with Vietnam eventually broke out in 1977. Perceived threats to the DK were the "hidden enemies" not only within the population but also within the party's ranks. These threats, the regime insisted, needed to be eliminated. According to Alexander Hilton, the regime's inability to reach its agricultural production quotas reinforced this perception. To meet these enormous quotas, local cadres would sometimes forward to Phnom Penh rice that was intended for consumption by the rural population. When party leaders learned about documents reporting people's suffering in the countryside, they concluded that subversion was responsible for the situation. Like an illness, Pol Pot said, "civil microbes"—as he called internal

enemies—had to be eliminated. The purges also targeted "non-trustful" ethnic groups, such as ethnic Vietnamese civilians living in Cambodia and ethnic Thais.

The Cambodian leadership not only had to fend off external enemies, but also enemies among themselves. An excerpt from the 1977 magazine *Revolutionary Youth* states:

It is notable that although American imperialists as well as other oppressive classes were basically knocked over politically and economically, they haven't totally vanished yet. They all are enraged by the historical victory gained by the nation and the people under the correct, bright leadership of the Communist Party of Kampuchea.... Our revolutionary youths found it necessary to continue the revolution even more extremely so that a staunch, constant defense of the nation and the Communist Party of Kampuchea and the protection of our revolutionary interests can be assured.

#### **Utopian Agrarianism, Influence of Foreign Models, and Reactionary Modernism**

With the Khmer Rouge now fully in charge, young Cambodians became subject to the full weight of contradictions embedded in the party's increasingly destructive measures to overturn society and remake it



Young Cambodian youth who were children from poor family were recruited by the Khmer Rouge to serve the revolution. Some of them were assigned to carry food or military supply to the battle fields.

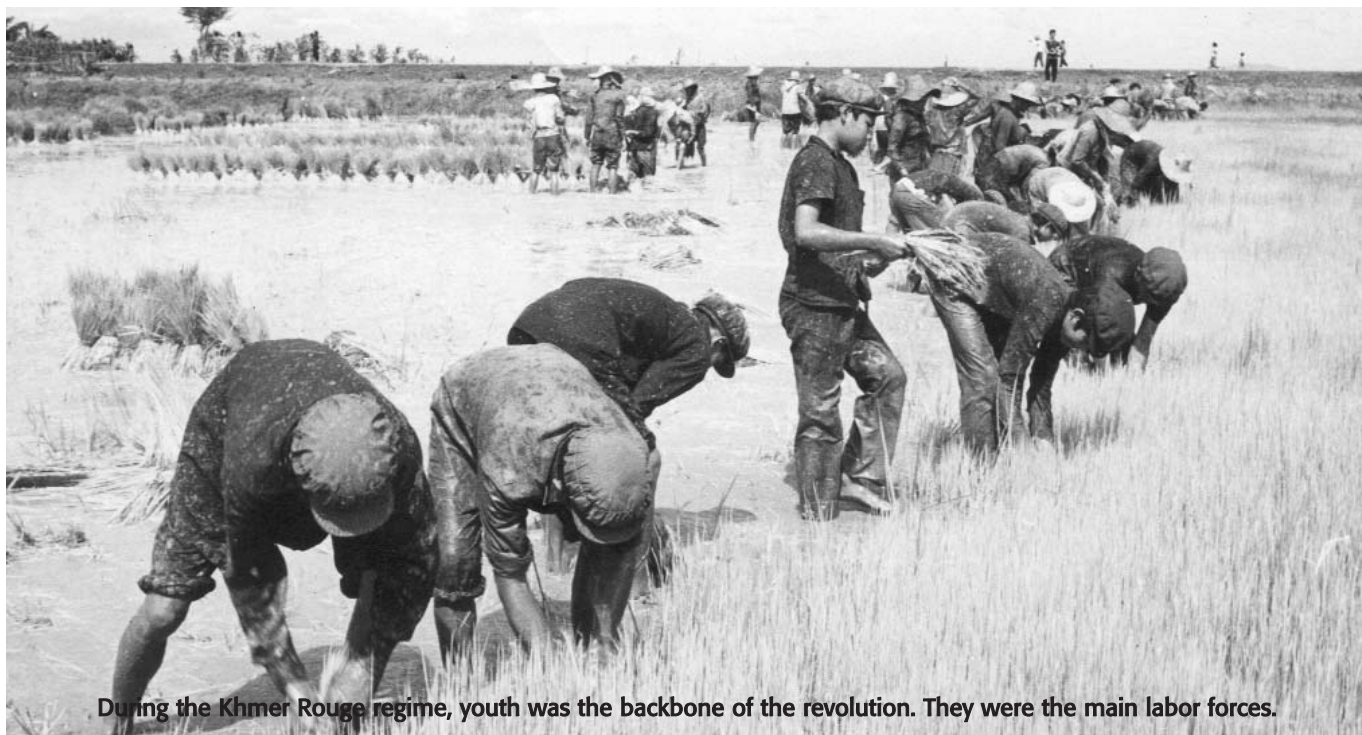
in a new image. In China the organized participation of young people had been integral to the realization of a revolutionary society, and a notable feature of youth mobilization under the Khmer Rouge was the extent to which it was modeled on ideology and practices employed by youth cadre in its communist neighbor. The quest to remake society in both China and Cambodia can be understood as a kind of utopian agrarianism—referring to the creation of an autochthone communist society based on national economic self-sufficiency and independence as well as modernization—with the provision that agrarianism in Cambodia took on particular qualities such as Buddhist characteristics that distinguished it from the Chinese experience.

Agrarianism during the Pol Pot period was influenced by the model of self-reliance and rapid industrialization Mao Zedong had promulgated in China during the 1950s. One of the Khmer Rouge's revolutionary goals was self-reliance, and Cambodian cadre used slogans similar to the Chinese in order to reach this objective. With this goal, Pol Pot intended to remove foreign influence throughout the country and take over the running of all Cambodian affairs.

Economically, Cambodian self-reliance translated into a major effort to boost rice production and irrigation.

Rice was a key element for the realization of a utopian agrarianism based on autarky and national modernization. Indeed, David Chandler explains that the Khmer Rouge planned to increase agricultural production in order to industrialize the country. The country's economic motto noted, "If we have rice we can have everything." This echoed Mao Zedong's proclamation during the Great Leap Forward that "with grain and steel, everything is possible." At a Khmer Rouge conference on "The Meaning of Youth," cadres advanced the slogan "Super Great Leap Forward Revolution" to remind young people of their duty to engage in constant labor in order to build a new nation. Cambodian youth were asked to participate in the economic goal of self-reliance and in keeping with the agrarian model they had to contribute economically to the welfare of the community. For example, referring to the activities of the Kampuchean Communist Youth League, or *Yuvakak*, created in 1971, the Revolutionary Youth Magazine noted its members' exemplary behavior:

*Yuvakak* is a good and leading role model—brave and active—in all circumstances and characteristics of work, either small or big, heavy or light, difficult or easy as required by the party. Moreover, the league becomes involved in digging canals and



During the Khmer Rouge regime, youth was the backbone of the revolution. They were the main labor forces.

ponds for irrigation systems. This helps solve water supply problems and allows the people to cultivate their farmland in order to improve the living standards of the base people.

Linked to self-reliance was the need for an instantaneous and total economic and social revolution. The leaders' goal was for Cambodia to rapidly achieve a modern and industrial status via rice cultivation and cottage industries to be established in self-sufficient communes; youth were thus asked to promote "a very fast pace" of national development. For instance, in 1976, revolutionary youth were praised for their contribution in fulfilling the goal of producing three tons per hectare. Later on, this aim became part of an unrealistically ambitious four-year plan (1977-1980) to realize an average national yield of three tons of rice per hectare. Here Cambodian leaders copied Chinese agricultural campaigns without paying heed to the fact that rice cultivation had far higher yields in China than in Cambodia. As Scott shows in other contexts, such high modernist plans often failed to take into account local practices and workable possibilities, ultimately leading to disastrous consequences.

The agrarian model was redefined in order to preserve the dictatorship of the proletariat. As official speeches emphasized, a loyal Cambodian belonged to "the people," comprising only "workers and peasants and the revolutionary army." Echoing the Chinese model, a "moral revulsion" was expressed "toward the old ruling elite and its institutions," which were described as debauched and corrupted. Peasants and workers as collective entities were to assume the agrarian functions of the individual family, including the induction of young people into economic subsistence labor. Indeed, articles in the *Revolutionary Youth Review* often reiterated that workers and peasants were the only two groups capable of educating the youth: "They [labor and peasant classes] teach them [youth] how to live with other people and share." Sharing hardship was a means of bonding youngsters not only to one another but also to the rest of the population. Workers and peasants would educate the youth about the goals of

the revolution, and promote an appreciation for collective life; they would also see to it that young people attend political indoctrination meetings for self-criticism.

Both Chinese and Cambodian leaderships saw young people as the nation-builders who required nurturing. As Mao stated in 1953: New China must care for her youth and show concern for the growth of the younger generation.

Therefore, full attention must be paid both to their work and study and to their recreation, sport and rest. Youth organizations in Cambodia and China—especially the Chinese Youth League, the most important of all the Chinese youth corps—were expected to assist the party and serve as schools for learning about communism. Created in 1960, the Cambodian Democratic Youth League, or *Yuvakap* League, was described in propaganda as an active, brave, leading promulgator and practitioner of the political lines, principles and decisions made by the party among Kampuchean circles, especially youth, workers, laborers, peasants and school age youths, as well as the entire population. It goes without saying that the *Yuvakap* League became the right hand of the party.

Another parallel with the Chinese model was that propaganda and practice were closely linked through national economic development campaigns targeting young people. For instance, youth leaders in China mobilized their rural peers to participate in the great agrarian movement of the 1950s, while Cambodian youth propaganda echoed such initiatives in precepts such as those that urged young people to "work hard in the rice fields to increase production." Chinese and Cambodian youth organizations each had their own journals; Cambodian youth reviews as well as the Chinese Youth League claimed to be playing a key role in inculcating youth cadres with communist principles and "training youth and turning them into both red and expert successors to the revolutionary cause," heralding new men and women building the utopian agrarian society.

Without acknowledging its source, Cambodian youth reviews often borrowed Mao's famous saying, "serve the people," as a motto for its cadres to follow. Notwithstanding similarities with China, utopian

agrarianism in Cambodia nevertheless took on specific traits that distinguished it from the Chinese situation.

While scholars have rightfully underlined the transformation of many Khmer values by the Pol Pot regime that served to undermine Buddhism, I would point out that some agrarian values, rather than being eradicated, were merely transposed. For instance, the values of discipline and obedience to one's parents survived but were transferred to "Angkar" (a term that meant "organization"), which included both the Khmer Rouge Party organization and the name by which the Khmer Rouge was known among the population. Mobilizing rhetoric implied that Angkar would propagate the same love and kindness toward young Cambodians that their parents had shown to them, but in return, young people would have to display an equivalent degree of faithfulness, respect, support, devotion, and subservient behavior that they had earlier shown to their parents and other benefactors. Youth literature further reinforced the virtues of obedience and discipline by insisting that young people should think of themselves as "serving the people, but not as the leader, [not as] the controller of people."

Disturbingly, such agrarian values of obedience and discipline were carried to extremes when young people were given the right to kill in order to realize the utopian agrarian society. Indeed, one of the "twelve moral precepts" for the youth stated, "combat the enemy and combat obstacles with bravery, and dare to make all sacrifices for the people, workers, farmers, the Party and the revolution without conditions at all times."

According to Alexander Hinton, the Khmer Rouge promoted a cultural model of disproportionate revenge and adapted it in accordance with Marxist-Leninist perceptions of class resentment and contradiction. It also borrowed values from the very culture it sought to destroy. For instance, both Buddhist and communist beliefs held that personalities could be wiped out and rebuilt from scratch, following their immersion in a collectivity such as the monk-hood or the Communist Party. For instance, propaganda in the Revolutionary Youth Review stated: "Most cadres in the Youth League were loyal, brave, and not afraid of any sacrifice, even

of their lives, in the service of the Party. They were trained constantly on the 'Twelve Moral Precepts'...so that they would become pure revolutionary."

The Pol Pot regime often packaged theory in terms of ten points, six points, etc., an element that had "striking parallels to Buddhist scholastic categories." Moreover, Radio Phnom Penh reiterated stereotyped slogans with mantra-like regularity. Pol Pot instructed his information minister, Hu Nim, that broadcasters should convey propaganda "like monks who lead the prayers at a wat." By adapting with little alteration the repetitious nature of most Theravada Buddhist sermonizing to their needs, the Khmer Rouge gave the impression that they could inculcate ideas in people's minds without great difficulty. Similarly, Khmer Rouge cadres had to follow an extensive list of Angkar commandments clearly grounded on monastic precepts. For example, ascetic attitudes were reflected in the strong condemnation of male cadres who fell in love or enjoyed beer, the latter of whom were known as "CIA drinkers." Such sanctions communicated the message that it was the revolutionary cadre, rather than the Buddhist Sangha, who were most worthy of the laity's deference and respect.

Ian Harris has noted that throughout the Khmer Rouge period the regime showed a propensity to reconfigure and reuse Buddhist symbolism and patterns of thought, even while carrying out extreme harassment against Buddhist institutions. For instance, the language of the wheel, an old symbol of the Buddha's teaching and the power of the righteous Buddhist monarch, evolved into the "wheel of history." The wheel "never stops" and "will crush all who place themselves in its path." Some revolutionary slogans were modified traditional didactic poems on moral themes, the very formulae learned by young monks during their training.

In addition, grand visions of Cambodia's significance came to the Khmer Rouge from prerevolutionary times. Like previous regimes, the Khmer Rouge assumed they were the descendants of the colossal Cambodian Kingdom of Angkor. Subsequently, youth were encouraged to be "the mental Great Wall of China" in order to defend traditions, Khmer culture and literature, and the national

heritage from foreign invasions. As with Sihanouk's regime, the Khmer Rouge regime also desired to "surpass Angkor in greatness," since this new society would evolve faster and more successfully toward a communist community than had any communist society.

Finally, like Cambodians from earlier generations, the Khmer Rouge also believed that foreigners, and especially the Vietnamese, were responsible for most of Cambodians' hardships. Youth magazines often reiterated that "the youth...should have strong feelings of nationalism ...for fighting the enemies, especially the Vietnamese."

Reflecting on youth mobilization under the Khmer Rouge, the juxtaposition of calls to return to an autochthone rural Khmer world, combined with campaigns to push productivity and build a new society, is best captured by the term "reactionary modernism." Such hopes were linked to a narrative of the past, of the great Kingdom of Angkor, which had dominated most of Southeast Asia between the ninth and fourteenth centuries CE. However, attempts by a midtwentieth-century communist leadership to realize such a utopian vision came at a high price. The sheer scale of lives lost as a result of Pol Pot's revolution is estimated at two million, comprising a full 21 percent of Cambodia's population. The Cambodian version of reactionary modernism reached its peak as the mobilization of young people turned into genocide. Even after the demise of Democratic Kampuchea and well into the 1990s, tens of thousands people, primarily young people, were still willing to give their lives to Pol Pot's regime, which had granted them power and self-respect. Some of these diehards went on to form the backbone of Pol Pot's guerrilla army in the 1980s.

### Conclusion

This article has tracked the evolution of youth mobilization in Cambodia from French colonial Vichy during World War II to Pol Pot's revolutionary meltdown in 1979, by way of the Sihanouk and Lon Nol regimes. In relying on young people to consolidate and protect their power, these authoritarian governments reinforced "youth" as a social category in an unprecedented manner. State-sponsored mobilization was modern in that it involved a new source of control of young Cambodians

beyond the locus of family or monastery, and under various ideological guises, the trajectory of youth mobilization reflected the general expansion of state planning in Cambodia.

While making this argument, however, I contend that the mobilizing ideologies themselves were based on existing agrarian values and practices that remained in place from the late colonial period to the Khmer Rouge regime, including the expectation for young people to make an economic contribution and uphold values of discipline and obedience to authority figures. Threats to nation and country drove leaders to draw upon agrarian ideologies as meaningful and effective tools for organizing youth. Hence, an overarching ideology of agrarianism structured the political beliefs of the leaders and of the committed cadres of these youth corps—from an ideology of civic agrarianism under colonial officials and Sihanouk, to Lon Nol's military agrarianism, and finally to the Pol Pot regime's mobilization of youth via an ideology of revolutionary agrarianism aiming to create a utopian agrarian nation. Overall, despite the dissimilar ideological viewpoints of various regimes, the desire to discipline, control, and homogenize young people in the face of internal and external threats underlay the top-down organization of young Cambodians from 1941 to 1979.

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### READ *SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH*

*Searching for the Truth Magazine has been published since January 2000. All copies of both Khmer and English Versions are available at [www.dccam.org/Projects/Magazines/Magazine\\_Searching](http://www.dccam.org/Projects/Magazines/Magazine_Searching). For more information, contact Socheat Nhean at 016 876 692 or email: [truthsocheat@dccam.org](mailto:truthsocheat@dccam.org).*

# PUBLIC INFORMATION ROOM

DC-Cam's Public Information Room (PIR) is open to students, researchers, government and non-government organizations, and interested members of the public who want to learn more about the history of Democratic Kampuchea and the developments of the coming Khmer Rouge tribunal.

DC-Cam is the largest repository of primary materials on Democratic Kampuchea (DK). The materials in its archives are consequently of the utmost historical interest and has served as important evidentiary materials in any accountability process relating to the DK regime. To disseminate the truth about the DK period and to promote lawful accountability and national reconciliation, it is imperative that materials be made available to historians, judicial officials, and other interested members of the public. Through the PIR, the public can read the documents and use them for research. The documents in our possession include biographies, confessions, party records, correspondence, and interview transcripts. We also have a database that can be used to find information on mass graves, prisons, and genocide memorial sites throughout Cambodia.

The PIR offers three services:

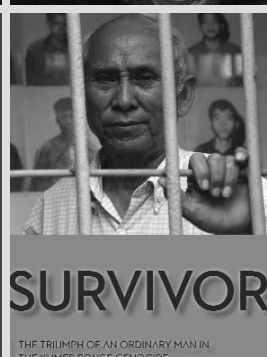
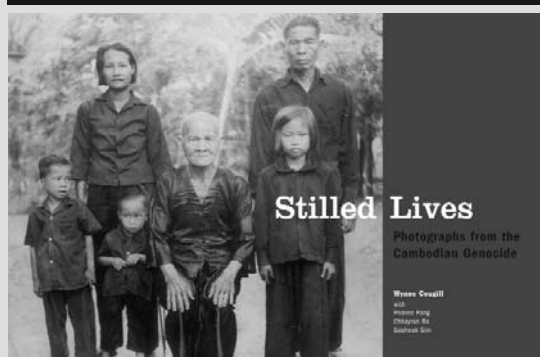
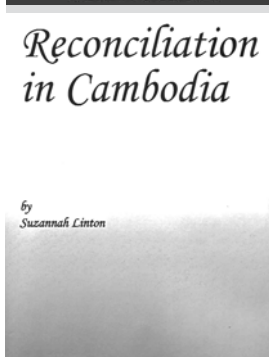
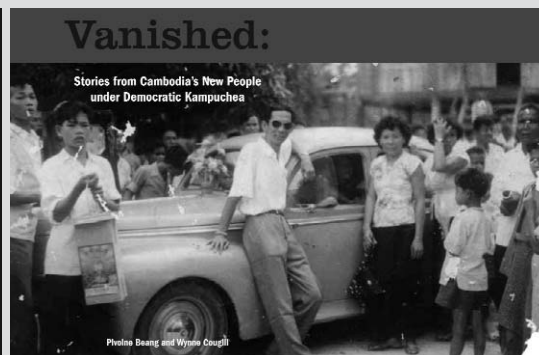
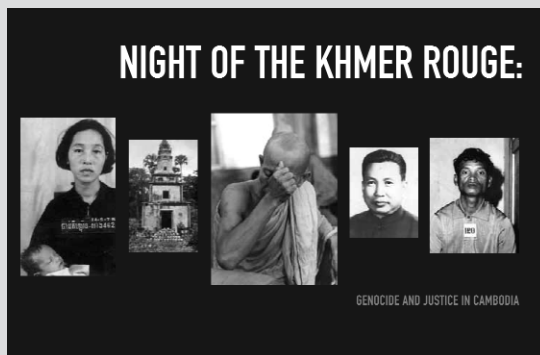
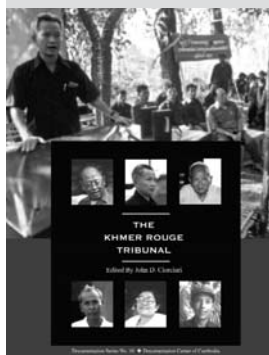
1. Library: Through our library, the public can read documents, books and magazine, listen to tapes, watch documentary films, and view photographs held at DC-Cam, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, National Archives and other locations.

2. Educational Center: DC-Cam shows documentary films and offers lectures on Khmer Rouge history, the Khmer Rouge tribunal, and other related subjects.

3. Tribunal Response Team: Our document and legal advisors have provided research assistance to the tribunal's legal experts from both Cambodia and the United Nations, as well as to the public.

Khmer Rouge documentary films are shown everyday upon request.

The PIR is located at House 66, Preah Sihanouk Blvd, east of the Independence Monument. It is open to the public from Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information or if you want to arrange a group event, please contact our staff, Savina Sirik, at [truthsavina.s@dccam.org](mailto:truthsavina.s@dccam.org) or at 023 211 875. Thank you.



# TRIAL CHAMBER DECIDES THAT ACCUSED LENG SARY IS FIT AND MAY BE ORDERED TO PARTICIPATE BY VIDEO-LINK

*Anne Heindel*

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Given the age and fragile health of the accused senior Khmer Rouge leaders currently on trial at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), there have long been fears that they would not live to see judgment. One accused has already been found unfit and dismissed from the case. Eighty-seven-year-old Ieng Sary has physical ailments, difficulty concentrating for long periods, and is unable to sit through a full day of trial. He regularly appears at the start of the day and then requests permission to participate from the holding cell during the midmorning break, although proceedings generally last until at least 4 p.m. His medical problems have thus far resulted in a loss of 12 days of trial. On his recent return from a three-month hospitalization, the Trial Chamber found him fit and decided that, in order to mitigate the effects of his ongoing health issues, should he refuse to waive his right to be physically present, it may order him to participate by video-link from the holding cell. Previous international courts have contemplated requiring accused to take part in proceedings by video-link; however, it appears that as of yet, no court has found it appropriate to do so.

In 2011, Ieng Sary's defense counsel sought half-day trial sessions, arguing that Mr. Sary "has a right to be present and intends to exercise this right, yet his age and ill-health prevent him from sitting in the courtroom for an extended period of time." Nevertheless, the team did not contest a geriatric expert's finding that Mr. Sary's health problems did not affect his fitness to attend trial.

Shortly thereafter, the ECCC judges amended the Court's Internal Rules to explicitly provide for audio-visual participation without an accused's consent "where [his] absence reaches a level that causes substantial delay

and, where the interests of justice so require[.]"

Thus far, the Trial Chamber has suspended proceedings when Ieng Sary has been too ill to participate, except during a recent three-month hospitalization, during which time he waived his right to be present for specific witnesses not anticipated to testify about his conduct or crimes attributed to him. Now that Mr. Sary has returned to the ECCC detention center, the Defense says he is not fit to follow proceedings but will maintain his waivers for non-critical witnesses in the hopes that his health will improve. However, the Defense states, should the Trial Chamber rule, as it has now done, that he is fit for trial, it will advise Mr. Sary to withdraw his waivers and seek his immediate severance from the proceedings.

The ECCC, like all internationalized courts, guarantees the right of an accused to "be tried in his or her presence." To facilitate the elderly accused's participation, the ECCC has set up a special room where they may watch the trial and instruct their counsel through a two-way audio-video link. The Ieng Sary defense has argued that "video-link technology must not be equated with physical presence at trial." In support, it cited jurisprudence from the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which confirmed that "accused's right to be tried in his or her presence implies a right to be physically present at trial" and found that neither its rules nor those of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Court, nor the Special Court for Sierra Leone equate physical presence with participation by video-link.

Nevertheless, these courts have determined that

the right to presence is not absolute, and may be either waived or forfeited where there are “substantial trial disruptions.” Limitations on the right to presence must be evaluated in light of “the proportionality principle, pursuant to which any restriction on a fundamental right must be in service of a sufficiently important objective and must impair the right no more than is necessary to accomplish the objective.”

The ECCC Co-Prosecutors have argued that, unlike the ICTY and ICTR, the ECCC is a civil law court, which allows trials in absentia. They note that, at the civil law-based Special Tribunal for Lebanon, “presence” is not defined exclusively as “physical presence” but also includes “legal presence.” Moreover, they emphasize that even at the ICTY and ICTR, trial may continue in the absence of an accused who causes persistent trial disruptions, even if such disruptions are not intentional, as long as the restrictions imposed are “a proportional response.”

In determining that Ieng Sary is fit for trial, the ECCC Trial Chamber rejected the Defense request to have additional experts examine his fitness, and noted that his attendance in the holding cell, where he can lie down, would alleviate most of his physical challenges to participation. It also rejected the defense team's request that he “be filmed in the holding cell or be present in the courtroom, where the court and public can observe his participation” and evaluate whether or not it is meaningful. Instead, the Trial Chamber ruled that it may order Mr. Sary to participate from the holding cell “in the interest of justice ... where no medical basis exists to justify the Accused's absence from proceedings, but where the Accused's presence in the courtroom would be contrary to his medical interests and/or to the expeditious conduct of trial.” It also found that video-recording was not “necessary to ensure that the Accused is appropriately monitored.”

In the Stanisic & Simaetovic case, the ICTY Appeals Chamber faced a similar defense challenge and considered if the Trial Chamber “abused its discretion in ordering the establishment of a video-conference link to allow the Accused to participate in the proceedings from [the detention unit] on days that he is too unwell to attend

court.” It found that although the Trial Chamber had appropriately balanced the accused's right to be present with both his and his co-accused's right to an expeditious trial, it had failed “to give sufficient weight” to the right to presence and had overlooked other potential options, including “allowing the case to remain in the pre-trial phase for three to six months.” Moreover, it ruled that the Trial Chamber had erred by “fail[ing] to consider whether, given his physical and mental state, [the accused] would nevertheless be able to effectively participate in his trial via the video-conference link.”

Should Ieng Sary withdraw his waivers and the Chamber order him to participate from the holding cell, the Defense is likely to argue that, as only 12 days of trial have been lost due to Mr. Sary's health concerns, there has been no “substantial disruption” of proceedings, and its response is both disproportionate and inadequately considers whether or not his remote participation is effective, setting the stage for a prolonged fight over a second accused's fitness for trial.

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***Anne Heindel is a legal advisor of the Documentation Center of Cambodia***

## LOST RELATIVES

My name is Elfa Wong, from Hong Kong. My mom came to Hong Kong from Cambodia in the 1970s, before the massacre. But somehow, her parents, sisters, and brothers were lost during the tragedies because they did not get out from the country. My mother went back to Cambodia in 1998, trying to find her family, posting news on newspaper, but nothing were found. I would like to get any more information about my mother's family during that period. My mom's relatives who remains in Cambodia after she left: 1. Guok Mou Heng/ Guo Wu Han, 2. Guok Mou Qeng/ Guo Wu Qing, 3. Guok Mou Hein/ Guo Wu Xian, 4. Guok Ka Gim/ Guo Qiao Jin and 5. Guok Ka Eg/ Gui Qiao Yu.

If anyone have information about above names, please contact me at: elfa226@gmail.com. Thank you.

# TRIAL CHAMBER REJECTS REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION OF GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE IN CASE 002

*Anne Heindel*

In April, Nuon Chea's international defense counsel asked the Trial Chamber to stay Case 002 proceedings at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) and investigate reserve international Co-Investigating Judge Kasper-Ansermet's allegations that Cambodian Court officials had obstructed his efforts to investigate Cases 003 and 004. By the Defense Team's count, this was its fourth major submission challenging the fairness of Case 002 in light of alleged pervasive Cambodian Government interference in the work of the Court.

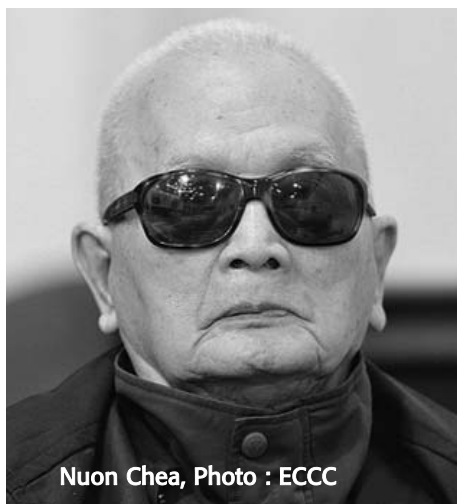
In its filing, the Team asserted that Judge Kasper-Ansermet's resignation and public allegations were "conclusive proof" that the Cambodian Government's influence at the Court "affects each and every national staff member [including the national Trial Chamber judges] and infects each and every pending case." Moreover, it argued that outspoken Government opposition to stymied Cases 003 and Cases 004 has a "crucial corollary" in Case 002: "[A]s much as the Government is refusing to allow additional prosecutions [in those Cases], it is

supporting the current ones[,]" and thus convictions of the accused in Case 002 are inevitable "regardless of the factual record established in court." The Team said:

It would be particularly objectionable to continue hiding behind the fiction that only Cases 003 and 004 are afflicted by Government interference. While the manifestations of [Government] meddling in those cases (overt blocking at every step of the process) are clear, such brazenness does not obscure the relatively subtler methods employed by the same individuals in order to ensure convictions in Case 002 and shield [Government] officials from potential embarrassment and/or exposure.

Most specifically, the Team alleged that the Government interference has prevented its repeated efforts to have the Court summon (now deceased) King Father Sihanouk and six Government officials to testify as witnesses.

In response, the Prosecution argued that the Defense motion "fails to demonstrate any violation of



Nuon Chea, Photo : ECCC



Ieng Sary, Photo : ECCC



Khieu Samphan, Photo : ECCC

the Accused's rights in the on-going trial in Case 002 and is instead based upon speculative conclusions derived from Cases 003 and 004." Moreover, it described the allegations as "substantially repetitive of previous motions that have been rejected both at trial and on appeal."

In its November ruling on this outstanding application, the Trial Chamber agreed with the Prosecutors that the Nuon Chea filing is "almost entirely repetitious" of submissions previously rejected by both the Trial and Supreme Court Chambers. It found the motion was "lodged despite repeated indications from the Chamber that repetitious filings ... may jeopardize the Accused's right to an expeditious trial" and could result in sanctions. Moreover, it found the Team's suggestion that Cambodian Trial Chamber judges do not act independently of Government instructions to be disrespectful, discriminatory, and potentially subject to sanction as they were made without "reference to decisions of the Trial Chamber or any other part of the trial record."

Although the Trial Chamber says that the filing amounts to "misconduct," its ruling appears to accept implicitly that there are reasons to believe that interference in the administration of justice may have occurred. According to a recent Supreme Court Chamber decision, "Pursuant to Rule 35, the body seized of a request must examine the allegations, assess whether there is, at a minimum, reason to believe that any of the acts encompassed by Rule 35(1) have been committed; and decide on the appropriate action, if any, to be taken pursuant to Rule 35(2)."

However, in its decision, the Trial Chamber never applies the Rule 35(1) standards of proof to the Kasper-Ansermet allegations, despite the fact that there is no prior ruling addressing this subject. Instead, the Chamber focuses entirely on Rule 35(2), which "delineates procedural avenues open to a Chamber where there are reasons to believe that a person committed interference with the administration of justice." If there were no "reasons to believe," there would seem to be no need to determine a course of action.

In considering the "relief sought," the Chamber

notes that a stay of proceedings is inappropriate in a situation such as the one at issue, "where the Accused fails to identify any tangible impact of the allegations on the on-going trial" or fails to show that a stay is the only way to "address any alleged violations of the Accused's rights." With regard to Judge Kasper-Ansermet's statements "indicating that certain staff members of the ECCC have interfered with the investigation in Case File 004," the Chamber finds that they do not cure this deficiency because the Judge "makes no mention of potential interference with the investigation in Case 002." The Chamber therefore emphasizes its discretion under Internal Rule 35(2) to decide not to investigate "for the sake of efficiency," and notes that a "fair and public trial" is the appropriate remedy for any alleged procedural defects in the investigation.

Notably, a new international Co-Investigating Judge, Mark Harmon, has recently replaced Judge Kasper-Ansermet and is believed to be working on the Case 003 and 004 investigations. Although only one of the five suspects in these Cases has yet been assigned defense counsel, it may be assumed that their lawyers will raise Judge Kasper-Ansermet's allegations before both the Co-Investigating Judges and the Pre-Trial Chamber. As for the six Government witnesses requested by the Nuon Chea team, the Trial Chamber notes that "determinations of which, if any, of these additional witnesses will be heard at trial remain pending and under review by the Chamber as the trial in Case 002/01 proceeds." Additional efforts by the Nuon Chea Team to secure their testimony should therefore be expected.

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***Anne Heindel is a legal advisor of the Documentation Center of Cambodia***

## ANTI-GENOCIDE SLOGANS

- ♦ Learning about the history of Democratic Kampuchea is to prevent genocide.
- ♦ Talking about experiences during the Khmer Rouge regime is to promote reconciliation and to educate children about forgiveness and tolerance.

# A HISTORY CLASSROOM AT FORMER KHMER ROUGE S-21 PRISON

The Khmer Rouge regime turned public schools and pagodas into prisons, stables and warehouses. Tuol Sleng prison, also known by its code name of "S-21," was created on the former grounds of Chao Ponhea Yat high school, originally constructed in 1962. The Khmer Rouge converted the school into the most secret of the country's 196 prisons. Most of the prisoners taken to Tuol Sleng were Khmer Rouge cadres accused of largely fictitious acts of treason, such as collaborating with foreign governments, or spying for the CIA or KGB. Typically the entire family an accused traitor would be imprisoned. Most often, prisoners had no knowledge of the charges against them when arrested, but they were tortured until they confessed whatever crimes they had been accused of. After having confessed, each prisoner was marked for execution.

Experts estimate that somewhere between 14,000 and 20,000 people were held at Tuol Sleng and executed. Only seven known prisoners survived after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed. The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) held that at least 12,273 prisoners passed through Tuol Sleng in its trial judgment



against former Tuol Sleng commander Kaing Guek Eav alias Duch. As the number of survivors has received less attention, most Western media repeated the figure of seven survivors and this has been repeated for over 30 years. However, after several years of research, the Documentation Center of Cambodia estimates that at least 179 prisoners were released from Tuol Sleng from 1975 to 1978 and approximately 23 additional prisoners survived when the Vietnamese ousted the Khmer Rouge regime on January 7, 1979.

Today the four buildings in the compound of the prison form the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, which was opened to the public in 1980. Within the first few months of its opening, over 300,000 locals and 11,000 foreigners visited the museum (Chandler, 1999). People from all over the world visited the museum and currently, approximately 250 people visit on an average day. Many Cambodian visitors travel to Tuol Sleng seeking information about their relatives who disappeared under the Khmer Rouge.

While the museum has been a success in generally raising awareness of the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge, it still lacks a thorough educational dimension, which could make the experience of visiting more dynamic, educational and memorable. Since its conversion from a place of learning to a place of horror and degradation, Tuol Sleng has never reclaimed its original status. However, in the future, in order to reclaim the positive, educational heritage of Tuol Sleng and add an educational element to the museum, a classroom has been created to provide free lectures and discussions on the history of the Khmer Rouge regime and related issues, such as the ECCC. The classroom will also serve as a public platform for visitors and survivors to share information and preserve an important period of Cambodian history for future generations to learn from.

◆ **LECTURERS:** Staff members from the Documentation Center of Cambodia and Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

◆ **GUEST SPEAKERS:** National and International Scholars on Cambodia and S-21 Survivors

◆ **TOPICS COVERED:** Who were the Khmer Rouge? ◆ How did the Khmer Rouge gain power? ◆ The Khmer Rouge Hierarchy ◆ Khmer Rouge Domestic Policies ◆ The Khmer Rouge Security System ◆ Office S-21 (Tuol Sleng Prison) ◆ Khmer Rouge Foreign Policies ◆ The Fall of the Khmer Rouge ◆ The Verdicts of the ECCC.

◆ **SCHEDULE:** Monday 2pm-3pm ◆ Wednesday 9am-10am ◆ Friday 2pm-3pm.

◆ **VENUE:** Building A, top floor, 3rd room

# INSTITUTIONALIZING HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

*John D. Ciorciari*

## I. Introduction

In 2007, the heads of the ten states comprising the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam—signed the organization's first-ever Charter. Its most heralded provision was an article announcing that ASEAN would create a new human rights body. That article led to the 2009 establishment of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), an entity with a mandate “[t]o promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples of ASEAN.” Just six months later, ASEAN followed by inaugurating a second body with a more specific focus—the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

The process of creating AICHR and ACWC was neither quick nor easy. Although the idea for a regional human rights body first appeared on ASEAN's official agenda in 1993, it took sixteen years and many rounds of debate, both within the region and among ASEAN and its major external partners, for AICHR (and then ACWC) to come to fruition. Their establishment was noteworthy for an association that has long clung to the norm of noninterference and resisted pressures to prioritize human rights at the regional level—especially rights related to civil and political liberties. Nevertheless, reactions from human rights advocates have ranged from cautious to cool. AICHR has been the main target of commentary and criticism. Some have condemned it as toothless, describing it as “window dressing” or “a lame duck.” Others, including Amnesty International



Asean heads of states and other leaders of Asean's parnters posting a picture at Koh Pich Convention and Exhibition Center, Photo : Reaksmei Kampuchea

and Human Rights Watch, greeted the Commission's arrival with faint and cautious praise, viewing it as a potential step forward but concerned at its lack of independent authority.

This article examines why the commissions were created, why they have such limited initial capacity, and some ways they could evolve. The argument advanced here is that AICHR and ACWC institutionalize human rights in two different senses of the word. From one perspective, they “institutionalize” human rights in the sense of confining them to a controlled bureaucratic environment, enabling ASEAN members to address (or deflect) criticism by discussing human rights in a safe political space in which incumbent government officials control the pace and content of the discourse. From another vantage point, however, AICHR and ACWC may institutionalize human rights in the sense of solidifying norms and the regimes responsible for their enforcement. The new commissions embody the normative and political tensions surrounding ASEAN's struggle over how to handle human rights. Part II of this article discusses the difficult normative and political debates on the road to creating an ASEAN human rights mechanism. Part III examines the way in which ASEAN ambivalence toward human rights is reflected in the features of AICHR. Part IV briefly explores differences in ACWC and its relationship to AICHR. Finally, Part V concludes by discussing the near-term prospects for institutional evolution.

## **II. The Road to an ASEAN Human Rights Body**

### **A. An Uphill Normative Battle**

From a human rights perspective, ASEAN had inauspicious beginnings. The Association was established in 1967, when five conservative Southeast Asian governments came together to manage neighborly feuds and ward off communist advances. The Association developed diplomatic norms and practices designed to manage intergovernmental relations by discouraging member states from peering into one another's domestic affairs. These included a strong norm of non-interference and the “ASEAN Way” of diplomacy, which emphasizes consultation and consensus-building rather than formal and legalistic decision-making procedures. In exchange for regional

cooperation and restraint, member governments would enjoy relatively free hands in their home jurisdictions, contributing to what Erik Kuhonta has dubbed an “illiberal peace.” ASEAN's illiberal peace was preferable to a state of illiberal interstate war but carried an important downside: member governments faced scant regional opprobrium when they used the specters of communism and separatism to justify excessively repressive internal practices.

Human rights rarely surfaced in official ASEAN discourse during the Cold War. Governments faced occasional pressure from their constituents and Western capitals to address human rights abuses, particularly when left-leaning parties were in power in the United States and Europe, but that pressure was generally weak. ASEAN states and their Western security partners were primarily concerned with battering down the hatches against communist foes amid festering insurgencies and the Indochina Wars.

### **B. An Early Push for Human Rights in ASEAN**

Human rights entered much more prominently into official ASEAN discourse in the early 1990s. Internal and external pressure on ASEAN governments provided the impetus for that change. As Cold War threats receded, it became more difficult for Southeast Asian governments to justify domestic political repression, and a series of brutal episodes drew international attention to rights abuses in the region. The most glaring example occurred in Myanmar, where a military junta negated the results of a 1990 national election and imprisoned the iconic Aung San Suu Kyi. The Santa Cruz massacre of 200 Timorese protesters in Dili by Indonesian troops in 1991 and the 1992 “Black May” military crackdowns against pro-democracy protesters in Thailand also mobilized local and international criticism.

Although criticism was primarily directed at national governments, ASEAN also faced demands to act. External pressure came from various sources, including international watchdog groups and governments. Western governments slapped sanctions on Myanmar, and Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize. Friends of the West were not immune from invective. The United States curtailed military ties with Bangkok and Jakarta, signaling that Washington was more willing to promote

liberalism and less ready to condone heavy-handed security tactics in the New World Order. ASEAN also began to face pressure to address human rights from within the region. Most notably, leaders of the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN ISIS)—a network of influential think tanks—recommended in 1992 that ASEAN foreign ministers consider creating a regional human rights mechanism.

It was in that context that ASEAN ministers joined a pan-Asian meeting on human rights in Bangkok in March 1993. There, in anticipation of the UN World Conference on Human Rights, Asian governments issued the Bangkok Declaration, which affirmed their commitment to human rights and planted the seed for a regional human rights body by reiterating “the need to explore the possibilities of establishing regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in Asia.”

A few months later, the UN World Conference adopted the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, calling on member states to establish regional human rights bodies where they did not already exist. At their July 1993 annual meeting, ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed their “commitment to and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,” and agreed that “ASEAN should also consider the establishment of an appropriate regional mechanism on human rights.” Two months later, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization—a group formed by Southeast Asian legislators in 1977 to better connect ASEAN to their constituents—issued a declaration echoing that call.

### C. The “Asian Values” Defense

Despite those developments, ASEAN governments were far from granting the Association an expansive role in promoting and protecting human rights. In the years immediately following, no Southeast Asian government came forward with a concrete proposal or put the issue on the Foreign Ministers’ agenda. Moreover, the 1993 Bangkok Declaration did not simply affirm the importance of human rights; it was also a shot across the bow of Asia’s growing armada of Western critics as the battle over “Asian values” unfolded.

Much has been written about the Asian values

debate, in which Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, Singaporean leader Lee Kuan Yew, and others accused the West of force-feeding occidental conceptions of human rights to Asia, where culture and history led people to prioritize other ends. Asian values proponents claimed that Asian societies put greater relative importance on the community than the individual. They also argued that stability and economic development are necessary precursors to political liberalism—reversing the notion of “first-generation” and “second-generation” rights often used in Western discourse, which put civil and political rights first in sequence.

Although the Asian values debate sometimes descended into blunt culturalist sound bites and self-serving political rhetoric, it also reflected genuine normative contestation and illuminated political concerns that the human rights movement generated in Asian halls of power. Those concerns help explain the eventual constraints placed on AICHR and ACWC.

One widely shared concern in Asia was that the human rights movement would be used as a wedge for the exercise of Western political prerogative. The 1993 Bangkok Declaration warned against “double standards” and the use of human rights as a condition for development lending or “instrument of political pressure.” It also stressed the importance of “non-interference in the internal affairs of States,” the primary role of states as guardians of human rights, and the need to consider “national and regional particularities” and cultural contexts. These were clear admonitions, particularly to Western governments, not to use human rights as a pretext to chip away at disfavored incumbent regimes in Asia. For many Southeast Asian officials, relatively recent experiences with colonial rule and foreign intrusion have made this a pressing concern and an understandable basis for charges of Western hypocrisy, if not a legitimate reason to violate human rights themselves.

Many Asian officials also feared that the human rights movement and particularly the push for civil and political rights—could contribute to pulling the lid off the kettle of simmering domestic resistance. Most Southeast Asian governments had spent decades consolidating post-colonial rule and managing restive populations—

including elements funded by foreign powers.

Increasing political freedom meant incurring risks of domestic instability, economic dislocation, and losses of personal power and privilege. Advocacy groups, international organizations, and Western governments tended to emphasize civil and political rights—such as freedoms of speech, assembly, and the press—precisely the types of rights most likely to empower political oppositions. They also tended to couple demands for human rights protections with demands for democratization, which added to threat perceptions in many Asian capitals. Asian governments pushed back by stressing the collective good and economic, social, and cultural rights such as entitlements to education, health, and decent standards of living. The 1993 Bangkok Declaration emphasized the “indivisibility of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights,” expressed concern that human rights mechanisms “relate mainly to one category of rights,” and cited poverty alleviation as a key to the enjoyment of human rights.

The declaration's sole reference to a “universal and inalienable right” was the collective “right to development” articulated in the 1986 UN General Assembly Declaration on the Right to Development.

Shifting the focus from civil and political freedoms toward collective economic needs served instrumental aims. It sought to diminish focus on political freedoms and used the language of human rights to help justify the heavy role of Asian governments in managing the development state and at least occasionally repressing political foes in the name of collective order. It also sought to turn the tables on Western critics, who were generally slower to acknowledge economic and social rights than civil and political ones. The “right to development” in particular put the first world on defense, because it implied an obligation for rich countries to provide more financial succor to the Global South.

Arguments based on Asian values—led by senior ASEAN statesmen—were rooted partly in legitimate (and enduring) differences of opinion on the relative priorities to assign to different types of social goods. However, they were also fundamentally about incumbents' preservation of political power. “Soft authoritarian” leaders such as

Mahathir, Lee, and Suharto did not reject individual human rights and freedoms as theoretical propositions and societal aspirations, but as Li-Ann Thio argues, they took a “contextual approach.” Rather than accepting human rights as natural endowments beyond the reach of government discretion, they treated rights as products of social deliberation dependent on a society's culture and stage of development.

Importantly, the political champions of the Asian values movement viewed themselves as the appropriate authorities to lead the discussion of what rights are to be recognized, and to what extent. Unsurprisingly, incumbents often arrived at self-serving depictions of social consensus, helping to legitimate their continued rule and forestall the emergence of multiparty systems that would enable a broader societal deliberative process about human rights. Thailand and the Philippines were somewhat more forward-leaning, but when ASEAN added four illiberal states to its membership roster between 1995 and 1999—the “CMLV” countries of Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam—the ideational balance within the Association tilted away from openness to broad domestic (or regional) deliberation on civil and political freedoms.

#### **D. Changing Forces in Southeast Asia**

Despite the Asian values debate and accession of the CMLV states, human rights rose in prominence on the ASEAN agenda in the years following the 1993 Bangkok Declaration. Western pressure contributed in a variety of ways—through naming and shaming, support for local civil society groups, educational exchanges, and sanctions or suspensions of aid. Just as important were forces aligning within Southeast Asia, including increased mobilization of Southeast Asian civil society groups, think tanks, and sympathetic officials and domestic political change in key Southeast Asian states.

Civil society groups and think tanks were important agents for change, helping create bottom-up pressure on Southeast Asian governments lodging human rights on the ASEAN agenda. In 1994, the Institute for Strategic and Development Studies in Manila hosted the first annual ASEAN SIS Colloquium on Human Rights. The following year, LAWASIA—an international organization

led by lawyers, judges, and legal academics—set up the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism to press for a human rights body. In 1998, ASEAN formally cited the Working Group as a partner. The Working Group inaugurated a series of meetings involving civil society and government actors and presented a draft plan for a regional human rights commission in 2000.

That year, ASEAN ISIS also launched an ASEAN People's Assembly (APA)—a diplomatic “track two” process designed to connect officials with civil society advocates. The APA's first report set out nine core recommendations for ASEAN heads of state, and five explicitly referenced human rights. The APA designed a new ASEAN Human Rights Scorecard and called on ASEAN leaders to set up a regional mechanism for promoting and protecting human rights.

Interstate political dynamics were also at play as some Southeast Asian governments came to the view that the Association should play a stronger role in defending human rights. By the late 1990s, comparatively liberal Southeast Asian officials began to challenge the norm of non-interference, as when then Thai Foreign Minister (and now ASEAN Secretary-General) Surin Pitsuwan advocated a policy of “flexible engagement” to deal with the problems emanating from Myanmar, which damaged ASEAN's external reputation and hampered its collective relations with the West.

Another important regional dynamic was a trend toward institutionalizing human rights within key ASEAN states. At the start of the post-Cold War period, only the Philippines had a national human rights commission—one set up in 1986 by decree of President Corazon Aquino following the ouster of the authoritarian Ferdinand Marcos. In 1993, Indonesia followed by creating a national commission, Komnas HAM, apparently motivated in large part by the international outcry over the Dili massacre. An even more important change was the shift of Indonesia from a heavy-handed military regime to a more liberal and democratic government after the fall of Suharto in 1998. Malaysia created a commission (called Suhakam) in 1999, at a time when opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim and US Vice President Al Gore were heaping criticism on Mahathir's

human rights record. Thailand set up a National Human Rights Commission in 2001, which grew out of a cabinet resolution passed shortly after the 1992 Black May affair, when the Thai government faced stiff pressure from human rights organizations.

### **E. Plans for a Commission on Women and Children's Rights**

By the late 1990s, human rights had become increasingly entrenched in ASEAN discourse and the Association's human rights objectives became slightly more ambitious and concrete. In the 1998 Hanoi Plan of Action—the first of a series of five-year plans to reach ASEAN's goal of a region of “peace, stability, and prosperity” by 2020—members agreed only to “enhance exchange of information in the field of human rights” and work toward implementation of international conventions on the rights of women and children. Progress was easiest to obtain in those areas, because most ASEAN member states had already recognized the rights of women and children at international law. All had ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and nearly all had ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

In the 2004 to 2010 Vientiane Action Programme, members agreed to “promote human rights,” complete a review of existing human rights mechanisms, formulate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate cooperation among them, promote human rights education, “elaborat[e] an instrument on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers,” and “establish an ASEAN commission on the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children” by 2010. The Working Group on an ASEAN Regional Mechanism on Human Rights saw a commission focusing on the narrower and somewhat less controversial topics of women and children as a “first step” toward the establishment of a general human rights body. In contrast to the CRC and CEDAW, by 2004 only four ASEAN members were parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and just four had ratified or acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Between 2004 and 2007, ASEAN members also

concluded a trio of regional declarations underscoring their commitment to eliminate violence against women, prevent human trafficking—particularly of women and children—and uphold the rights of migrant workers. Members also established a committee to implement the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. Consensus to sign these declarations and establish the committee was possible because they were less directly related to core concerns about political opposition. Current Thai representative to AICHR Sriprapha Petchamesree has explained, “the rights of women and children are considered to be a ‘soft issue’ and less threatening” to ASEAN members than civil and political liberties. In fact, even these have been controversial, as reflected in the numerous reservations ASEAN states have entered to the CRC and CEDAW.

#### **F. Lodging Human Rights in the ASEAN Charter**

The possibility of a human rights body became a major topic of discussion as the Association began work on drafting its first Charter. ASEAN leaders began by appointing an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to issue recommendations for the drafting of the Charter. The EPG consisted largely of retired officials who had different incentives with respect to human rights than the incumbent leaders who had appointed them. The EPG consulted regional civil society organizations and other non-governmental groups that had been influential in putting human rights on the agenda. These included ASEANISIS, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization, and the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism. The EPG also consulted with the Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy (SAPA), a network of roughly thirty civil society groups established in 2006 to coordinate and pool their influence in discussions leading to the ASEAN Charter.

The EPG's report, issued in December 2006, put considerable emphasis on “human rights and fundamental freedoms,” urged the development of democracy, and recommended regular official consultations with civil society and parliamentarians. With respect to an ASEAN human rights mechanism, it recommended that: “this worthy idea should be pursued further, especially in clarifying how such a regional mechanism can contribute

to ensuring the respect for and protection of human rights of every individual in every Member State.”

That ambitious language—including a specific emphasis on the protection of individual rights—pleased many non-governmental audiences but was not welcome in all Southeast Asian capitals. Although human rights had become more prominent in ASEAN discourse and became more formally embedded in some domestic systems, the human rights conditions in most Southeast Asian countries showed little improvement. Freedom House scores and qualitative metrics from the US State Department and Amnesty International suggested significant progress in Indonesia, stasis in much of the region, and backsliding in a few key cases (namely Thailand and the Philippines). By some metrics, the region looked remarkably similar to how it had appeared in 1976. Concerns about the political ramifications of the push for human rights and democracy remained acute in many Southeast Asian governments—especially the CMLV states, which opposed creating a regional human rights body.

The EPG report set the stage for a diplomatic brawl over human rights in the ASEAN Charter. Governments appointed a High Level Task Force (HLTF) to draft the Charter, and Singaporean representative Tommy Koh asserted that “[t]here was no issue that took up more of our time, no issue as controversial and which divided the [ASEAN] family so deeply as human rights.” The debate took place at a time when ASEAN faced internal pressures for reform manifest in the EPG report, through SAPA and related civil society groups, and through initiatives such as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus, a group established in 2004 to promote human rights reform by the junta.

Western political pressure also helped motivate interest in an ASEAN human rights body. First, the United States, European Union, and others sought to impose direct material costs on ASEAN members for failure to deal with human rights issues. Clear examples included US and EU pronouncements that ASEAN-wide free trade agreements were off the table until the Association dealt more assertively with the Burmese junta. The importance of these carrots and sticks should not be exaggerated,

however. Western states applied pressure unevenly across the region, tending to single out adversaries. Concerns about terrorism and waxing Chinese influence led the United States in particular to pursue trade and military ties energetically and demote human rights concerns when broader strategic and economic interests were at stake.

Perhaps more important than forsaken trade or military assistance was the reputational impact that Western censure had upon ASEAN. The Association is comprised at least partly of governments that aspire to high status as "developed" members of international society. It also engages hundreds of individual officials who seek to build ASEAN's reputation in diplomatic circles. Being labeled a laggard on human rights was a form of social ostracism by the West and incentivized some ASEAN officials to take action.

ASEAN's more progressive governments and Western critics spoke about the importance of the Association's "relevance" and "credibility." Neither term has been well-defined, but both carry strong reputational elements. In the diplomatic discourse surrounding ASEAN, being "relevant" generally has meant being viewed as an institution with the capacity to address some of Southeast Asia's most difficult challenges. Being "credible" usually has meant possessing the apparent collective political will to pursue ASEAN's lofty espoused aims. Implicit in these terms was a threat to ASEAN's international social standing; extra-regional diplomats only spend time and resources on organizations they see as relevant and credible. Following the Saffron Revolution in Myanmar in 2007, when a brutal Burmese crackdown on unarmed demonstrators sparked intense international criticism, ASEAN entered something of a credibility crisis.

Some ASEAN officials expressed clear concerns about ASEAN's reputation and status vis-à-vis other regional bodies. Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa said:

[W]e look around us to other developing regions and see that we cannot be left behind if we want to be at the center of things. Look at Africa—they are being quite strategic and farsighted in developing their human rights mechanisms. We

must not set too low a standard.

His predecessor, Ali Alatas, asked: "how can we avoid having [a human rights body] when all other regional organisations have one already?" These factors did not have uniform effects across the region, but collectively they led many officials to conclude that the Association had to tackle human rights, either for normative reasons or simply to protect the Association's institutional standing.

A number of ASEAN governments remained skeptical. According to Tommy Koh, who chaired many of the HLTf meetings, negotiations over human rights tended to divide the countries into three groups. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand were generally supportive; the CMLV countries were "not enthusiastic;" and Singapore and Brunei were in the middle. The High-Level Task Force debated whether to include references to human rights in the Charter, but ultimately the progressive camp won agreement to do so.

### **G. Human Rights in the ASEAN Charter**

The HLTf clawed back some of the EPG report's more ambitious recommendations. The Charter does refer on four occasions to "human rights and fundamental freedoms"—a significant step given the Association's history. Moreover, by referring to fundamental freedoms, the Charter points to the civil and political rights ASEAN was traditionally shy to acknowledge.

The Charter does not include similarly clear references to rights as individual entitlements, however, and emphasizes the contextual and contingent nature of human rights more forcefully than the EPG report. Provisions relating to human rights are consistently balanced by commitments to uphold the principle of non-interference and the "ASEAN Way" of diplomacy.

For example, the preamble describes the Charter's signatories as "adhering to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms." Yet that phrase's immediate antecedent emphasizes "respecting the fundamental importance of amity and cooperation, and the principles of sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, non-interference, consensus, and unity in diversity."

Article 1(7) identifies human rights as an explicit goal of the Association but again places that objective in dynamic tension with the rights of sovereign member states. The espoused goal is: “[t]o strengthen democracy, enhance good governance and the rule of law, and to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, with due regard to the rights and responsibilities of the Member States of ASEAN[.]” Thus, the provision treats human rights as norms to be reconciled with and sometimes balanced against norms of sovereignty and non-interference. The Charter’s carefully chosen words do not paint a picture in which rights rest on one side of a scale and national interests or security imperatives rest on the other. Instead, they depict a struggle of rights against rights.

The Charter also frames human rights as goals of the Association but does not specify the concrete means by which those goals would be achieved or the sanctions that would follow non-compliance. According to one participant, the issue of a human rights body was “the most explosive and tense” debate during the drafting process. The CMLV countries and other members segregated during key negotiations to devise joint strategies, and ultimately the drafters compromised by punting to a considerable degree. The Charter merely states that ASEAN would establish a “human rights body,” leaving the specific features of that body to be negotiated by ASEAN foreign ministers.

### III. AICHR’s Institutional Handicaps

In July 2008, ASEAN foreign ministers appointed a High Level Panel (HLP) of government officials to hammer out the details of the human rights body envisioned in the Charter. By that point, the discussion had moved from the idea of a commission for women’s and children’s rights to talks of a more general body, because human rights advocates and progressive ASEAN officials prioritized the broader of the two. The name of the body was subject to considerable dispute, with members wrestling over nouns that would convey greater or lesser independent decision-making power; a “council” or “commission” would sound more authoritative than a “mechanism” or “forum.”

The scope of the body’s authority was also debated, with the CMLV states perceived as most wary of a strong

human rights body. ASEAN officials sought to manage expectations. Termsak Chalermpananupap, a senior official at the ASEAN Secretariat, argued that ASEAN’s “political diversity” made it “unrealistic to try to start human rights cooperation with a ‘Big Bang’” and characterized the new body as an important “building block.” He added:

[T]he dilemma facing ASEAN members states as well as the HLP is how to reconcile national political reality with new regional obligation[s] to promote and protect human rights. The ASEAN human rights body is expected to be “realistic,” “credible,” “workable,” “effective,” “evolving” and most importantly “acceptable” to all member states. . . . As such, the ASEAN human rights body is never intended to be a stand-alone independent entity—let alone an autonomous regional watchdog with “sharp teeth.”

Singaporean Foreign Minister George Yeo suggested that the body would “at least have a tongue[.] and a tongue will have its uses.” In October 2009, the appointed group and foreign ministers unveiled their product: the Terms of Reference (TOR) for an ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. ASEAN heads of state, arrayed in Bangkok for the Association’s 15th summit, lauded the new Commission in a declaration calling AICHR an “historic milestone[.]” a “vehicle for progressive social development and justice,” and “the overarching institution responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN.” Behind the lofty rhetoric, however, the TOR established an institution with very limited reach.

The TOR set up the same basic normative tug-of-war that exists in the ASEAN Charter. Article 1 states that the purpose of AICHR is to “promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples of ASEAN.” However, its work is part of a broader effort to “promote stability and harmony in the region” while “bearing in mind national and regional particularities and mutual respect for different historical, cultural and religious backgrounds, and taking into account the balance between rights and responsibilities[.]” Article 2 proceeds to emphasize that the Commission will promote and protect human rights in a manner consistent with the

norm of non-interference, with deference to the primary responsibility of states and “avoidance of double standards and politicisation” (a thinly veiled swipe at the West). Instead, ASEAN will pursue a “constructive and non-confrontational approach,” stress “cooperation,” and take an “evolutionary approach.”

AICHR was also born with institutional features that impose serious constraints on its capacity to impact ASEAN human rights practices. ASEAN governments—especially the least liberal ones in the Association—are well aware of the potential of a human rights body to generate unwanted pressure. Thus, they designed the Commission in a manner that constrains its activities tightly and limits ASEAN governments' exposure to unwanted pressure on human rights issues.

### **A. Weak Independent Authority**

When they are given sufficient autonomy and backed by enough political muscle, regional human rights bodies can serve as independent adjudicators, enforcement agencies, and “norm incubators” that provide fertile institutional ground for the development and dissemination of human rights principles.

The European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission and Court of Human Rights are perhaps the best regional examples. Both courts can investigate cases brought by private citizens and issue judgments against states. Some have argued that Southeast Asia merits a similar regional court in which Southeast Asians could get fairer hearings than many can currently get at home. However, AICHR is far from that model, both in terms of political independence and institutional power.

Its architects pointedly labeled it an intergovernmental commission. That adjective is a salient reminder that AICHR is essentially a governments' club, like ASEAN itself. AICHR's TOR make clear that it is a “consultative body” in which decisions are made based on the common ASEAN diplomatic practice of “consultation and consensus.” In other words, each member state has an effective veto over the Commission's decisions, even when the decisions pertain to that state's malfeasance.

The consensus requirement is potentially stifling

because the officials who comprise the commission are government appointees (normally from foreign ministries) and are accountable to their host governments. They are called “Representatives” rather than “commissioners,” which puts an emphasis on their loyalty to their home capitals. Two of the Representatives—Indonesian Rafendi Djamin and Thai Sriprapha Petcheramesree—were elected by independent teams in their host countries after a transparent process allowing for public nominations, but others were simply appointed by their governments.

AICHR has no permanent secretariat; Representatives have neither a permanent brick-and-mortar hub nor a dedicated bureaucracy. Instead, most work from offices in their home ministries and report to foreign ministers, and most appear to have relatively short leashes. They convene at least twice a year at the ASEAN secretariat in Jakarta or in the capital of the annual ASEAN country chair. This setup makes it less likely that Representatives or their staff members will develop the sense of independent institutional identity or the interpersonal bonds required for strong norm incubation.

AICHR also has weak formal powers. It reports to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting and thus sits well below the metaphorical plane defined by the Association's sovereign leaders. It lacks the ability to hear cases or initiate independent investigations of particular alleged rights abuses.

Rather, its mandate includes a list of politically inoffensive goals. These include developing collaborative strategies, developing a regional human rights declaration, educating the public, providing technical assistance and aid for capacity building, promoting international human rights principles and instruments, obtaining information, and engaging in dialogue with governments and civil society to develop “common approaches and positions.” The Commission's focus is decidedly on human rights promotion rather than protection. This conscious choice reflected an effort to keep all members on board. “ASEAN is operating in the real world” explained senior ASEAN official Termsak Chalermphanup, “and has to be realistic... [i]t is not desirable to try to [foster human rights cooperation] on the basis of 'ASEAN minus X.'”

Robust protection would entail exercising authority

vis-à-vis member states to enforce human rights obligations and defend individual rights. In theory, this should be possible. All ten ASEAN states have undertaken formal commitments to uphold certain human rights norms. All ten states have ratified the CRC and CEDAW (albeit with reservations in some cases).

Since 2004, ASEAN members also have concluded regional declarations underscoring their commitment to eliminate violence against women, prevent human trafficking—particularly of women and children—and uphold the rights of migrant workers. These instruments could provide useful starting points for protecting the human rights of some of the region's most vulnerable populations. AICHR's TOR grant the Commission no explicit enforcement powers, however. The Commission is instead equipped to draft a regional declaration, hold consultations, and issue general reports about regional human rights conditions. Those reports have unsurprisingly pulled punches and will almost certainly continue to do so as long as they require consensus approval.

### **B. Narrow Channels for Lateral Pressure**

A second way for a regional body to drive human rights reforms is by providing a forum for other governments to apply “lateral” pressure. AICHR (like ASEAN itself) is designed—normatively and structurally—to head off lateral pressure from both inside and outside the region. The TOR authorizes AICHR Representatives to consult with other national, regional, and international human rights bodies, but it does not mandate that they engage with foreign governments or international forums. AICHR also limits the scope for external influence through funding channels. Some of ASEAN's existing programs related to human rights have been funded by Western donors, but the TOR notably contains a provision that “[f]unding and other resources from non-SEAN Member States shall be solely for human rights promotion, capacity building and education.” Thus, external (read: Western) funds cannot be channeled into the more controversial efforts to protect human rights.

Southeast Asian states could apply lateral pressure in the form of persuasion or incentives if groups of like-minded states—including Indonesia and perhaps

Thailand and the Philippines—gang up and put human rights near the top of their agendas. In the near term, it is more likely that they will stick to a gentle (or even meek) form of persuasion, as other priorities usually trump human rights concerns. On introducing AICHR, Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said: “the issue of human rights is not about condemnation but about awareness, empowerment and improvement.” Indonesia's more liberal outlook in recent years has been an important regional shift, but it has been offset to some degree by a period of back-sliding in Thailand and the Philippines. The shadow that China increasingly casts over the region also helps insulate members from criticism, as Beijing seeks strategic gains by opening its arms to regimes spurned by liberal neighbors and the West.

Lateral pressure also depends on prevailing norms. ASEAN's strong norm of non-interference and consensus-based diplomacy are still formidable barriers to interstate human rights advocacy. AICHR adopts these norms, usefully drawing illiberal states into dialogue but regrettably protecting them from censure. To some extent, ASEAN leaders have been justified in trying to avoid unduly poking one another and have benefitted from banding together and maintaining peaceful relations. Too often, however, this approach simply enables elites to scratch one another's backs and shield themselves from criticism. The possibility of group pressure will depend heavily on the correlation of ideational forces in Southeast Asia over time.

### **C. Insulation from Public Demands**

A third mechanism for policy change could come from the bottom up. A regional human rights body can serve as a portal through which civil society and members of the public apply pressure on the government. Local civil society groups and other citizens or collectives could change the cost-benefit calculation of their national leaders even if reshaping their leaders' normative beliefs proves too formidable a task.

The ASEAN Charter includes the goal of establishing a “people-centered Association,” and AICHR is entrusted with engaging in “dialogue and consultation” with other ASEAN bodies and accredited civil society organizations.

However, Southeast Asia's more illiberal leaders generally see strong civil society pressure as anathema to their short-term interests. That helps explain why AICHR put in place little institutional space for civil society and public involvement.

AICHR rebuffed petitions by civil society groups to be involved in discussing the Commission's rules of procedure. At the ASEAN summit announcing AICHR's creation in October 2009, representatives from several civil society groups walked out of the meeting, arguing that the Commission lacked independence, teeth, and transparency. Human rights watchdogs have heaped scorn on AICHR's limited connection to civil society. Brad Adams of Human Rights Watch lamented that "an intergovernmental body has always been second best, but an intergovernmental body that won't even talk to its own citizens is a joke, and worthless."

In the first year of AICHR's operations, human rights groups accused members of dragging their feet on adopting procedural rules as an excuse for shutting its doors to civil society and avoiding substantive discussions on human rights issues. Procedural rules were adopted at AICHR's fourth meeting in February 2011 and are called the "Guidelines on the Operations of AICHR." The semantic shift from rules to guidelines may be another subtle effort to emphasize the Commission's consultative, non-legalistic nature. Despite a request from SAPA to disclose the Guidelines publicly, AICHR has not distributed them widely in the year since their adoption.

The continuing loathness of many Representatives to meet with civil society groups critical of their policies—and the continued dominance of official dialogue in subsequent AICHR meetings—suggest that the Guidelines provided little if any new room for civil society engagement.

Its inability to receive and act upon complaints from victims or their advocates may be the Commission's most hobbling handicap. That feature has already undermined AICHR's public reputation. In late 2009, fifty-six people were massacred in the southern Philippine province of Maguindanao, including a large number of journalists and family members of a local opposition

political candidate. Families of the victims petitioned AICHR to help them seek justice and compensation from the Philippine government. The Philippine government insisted that the matter was an internal affair, and AICHR did not seize the issue. Indonesian Representative Rafendi Djamin expressed his regret and explained:

If it were up to me, I [would] take it up immediately. But AICHR is composed of 10 countries. This will have to be discussed, especially how we are going to deal with the complaints. I can only say that I will do my best to really strengthen the position of AICHR—our power and mandate. It will take a bit long time [sic].

Advocates for the Philippine victims argued that the Philippine government's invocation of immunity would prevent a domestic legal suit and that AICHR's decision left them with no recourse. A local editorial lamented that "the high hopes for the commission proved short-lived." Since the Maguindanao incident, other victims of alleged human rights abuses have also sent complaints to AICHR to no avail.

Amnesty International issued a scathing critique of AICHR's response to the Maguindanao petitioners, urging the Commission to "apply its mandate, which includes protection of human rights, in line with international law and standards. Otherwise, AICHR risks reducing itself to an irrelevant and futile exercise in public relations." Even worse, if the Commission does just enough to placate some constituencies and outside observers, it may actually provide a thin layer of added political cover for continued abuses. This is the sense in which "institutionalizing" human rights can mean something more akin to imprisonment than reification.

#### IV. Addition of ACWC

##### A. Distinguishing Institutional Features

Even before AICHR was officially established, women's groups convened in Bangkok and advocated for a return to plans for a commission dealing specifically with women's and children's rights. Somewhat ironically, AICHR's inauguration provided a catalyst for restarting relatively dormant discussions on the commission once

envisioned as its predecessor. ACWC was established just six months later in April 2010 and bears many similar features. Like AICHR, it is a consultative intergovernmental body without a central secretariat or significant enforcement authority. Each ASEAN member state dispatches two representatives—one to focus on women's rights and the other on children's rights—to meet biannually. Its TOR include many of the same caveats as those governing AICHR: emphasizing the primary role of national governments and requiring “consultation and consensus,” “avoidance of double standards or politicization,” and “constructive non-confrontational and cooperative approach.”

There are meaningful differences between AICHR and ACWC, however. First, ACWC specifically links its mandate to the CRC and CEDAW and the UN committees responsible for their implementation. Anchoring the ACWC's work in treaty obligations could theoretically make it easier for the commission to forge consensus, though the many reservations lodged by ASEAN signatories to those instruments suggest that devils lurk in the details. A second difference is that ACWC appears to have a slightly longer leash for engaging in human rights protection. Among other things, its TOR authorizes it to “advocate on behalf of women and children,” promote implementation of relevant laws, and propose policies and programs to protect their rights. ACWC's stronger protection mandate likely results from the perception that women's and children's rights are less politically sensitive than the rights of political dissidents.

### **B. Relationship to AICHR**

The establishment of fraternal human rights commissions presents possible synergies but is also institutionally awkward in certain respects. The Charter referred to a single human rights body, not a pair. When AICHR was established, former ASEAN Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong recommended that it focus first on the rights of women, children, and migrant workers and thus “deal with some of the areas that have brought consensus.” The creation of ACWC thus raised the likelihood of two commissions dealing with nearly identical issues as both seek to build forward momentum.

AICHR is officially the “overarching human rights

institution in ASEAN,” and ACWC is required to coordinate with AICHR on matters related to women and children, but it is not subordinate. This presents what ASEAN officials call a “problem of alignment” but other analysts describe as a “turf war.” In addition to vague spheres of authority, the two bodies could compete for money, as both are permitted to seek both regional and external funding.

If the two work redundantly, one or both could lose appeal from donors. AICHR and ACWC did not convene together until AICHR's seventh meeting in December 2011. That meeting produced a bland statement of mutual acknowledgement and a pledge to cooperate. Although ASEAN foreign ministers and both AICHR and ACWC have cited sound “alignment” as a priority, no specific plan is yet apparent.

### **V. Conclusion: Future Institutional Evolution**

The concept of institutionalization captures two prominent dimensions of ASEAN's struggle over how to handle human rights—as a potential threat to incumbent interests and as a set of norms that could help the Association develop better lives for its citizens. Both of these lenses reflect important aspects of the truth. In its current form, AICHR is unlikely to have a major effect on political and civil liberties in ASEAN member states. Its structure and decision-making rules essentially foreclose “top-down” organizational mandates and impose serious constraints on “lateral” peer pressure or “bottom-up” challenges from civil society and the public. It will likely focus, alongside ACWC, on specific sub-areas that have been less politically threatening to ASEAN governments—namely seeking added protections for women, children, and migrant workers.

Nevertheless, both commissions are concrete acknowledgments by ASEAN heads of state that their citizens are entitled to certain protections. The door to a regional human rights regime is now slightly ajar, and advocates are bound to push on that door to open it further. External actors and local civil society are eager to exploit this opportunity. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton voiced “strong support” for the Commission, and both the United States and European Union hosted official visits by AICHR Representatives or their staff in

late 2010. ASEAN will likely reap some Western rewards if the commissions pursue ambitious practical agendas.

AICHR and ACWC were also born into an increasingly dense network of multilateral human rights institutions, including other regional commissions in Africa and Latin America and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, which includes several national commissions from Southeast Asia, and global bodies. The UN Office for the High Commissioner on Human Rights has a regional office in Bangkok, and two Southeast Asian states—Malaysia and Thailand—recently took up seats on the UN Human Rights Council. Interaction with those groups by no means guarantees measurable near-term change in ASEAN's approach to human rights, but it does present clear opportunities for learning and norm transmission. AICHR and ACWC representatives (particularly the former) have limited authority to engage with civil society, but they are allowed to consult. In its first year of operations, AICHR alone received sixteen cases of reported human rights abuses. Despite its relative lack of response, such complaints are bound to continue, pressing ASEAN and its member governments to react.

AICHR provides a forum in which national advocates could lobby for human rights concerns at the regional level—and in some cases get a more sympathetic ear than they would at home. Its meetings and reports need not produce decisions that bind member states to be useful instruments in nourishing grassroots movements and catalyzing reform, which will often be instigated by civil society actors and politicians in domestic Southeast Asian systems. Ultimately, these bottom-up pressures will likely be the most important drivers for change in human rights practices in Southeast Asia.

In addition to external influence and bottom-up pressure, national leadership within ASEAN will be a key factor in the commissions' evolution. ASEAN often moves slowly to keep lagging members on board. However, Southeast Asian governments have occasionally expressed frustration at the sluggish pace of change. Indonesia—which accounts for roughly 40 percent of the region's population—is now the country most assertively pushing the bounds of consensus on human rights, prompting

one regional expert to ask if it is “outgrowing ASEAN”—a prospect quite threatening to smaller ASEAN members. Maintaining “credibility” and “relevance” loom large in ASEAN calculations.

States could lead by inviting the commissions to conduct investigations on their soil—a real show of commitment—or simply host educational programs in line with the commissions' promotion mandates. The Philippine government has already offered to host an AICHR Secretariat—an offer made by Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and affirmed by her successor, Noyon Aquino. The Indonesian government under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has also taken pride in developing its human rights commission and has expressed an interest in hosting AICHR. A race among three or four of ASEAN's most influential states to develop a model commission would be a significant institutional knock-on effect. A national commission in an opinion-leading state like Singapore—often seen as the intellectual vanguard for the “Asian values” position—would also have an important demonstrative effect.

Institutional change will not happen overnight at AICHR and ACWC; regional bodies cannot soar too far above the plane of relevant political will without getting their wings clipped. Those that have developed real teeth—such as the European Court of Human Rights and increasingly the Inter-American Commission and Court of Human Rights—earned their influence gradually. AICHR and ACWC will have to do the same. As of this writing, AICHR representatives have drafted an ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, which was scheduled for completion in 2011 but was pushed back for consideration at the July 2012 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting.

AICHR Representatives drafted the text behind closed doors, prompting complaints from civil society advocates who demanded an opportunity for public commentary. The near-term effects of the declaration will probably be modest, like other steps in ASEAN's slow march toward a robust regional human rights regime. Surin Pitsuwan, an important advocate of AICHR and ACWC, concludes his term as ASEAN Secretary-General in 2012, and his successor's disposition will be an important variable.

Also relevant will be the rotating country chairmanship of ASEAN. The 2012 chair is Cambodia, followed by Brunei and Myanmar—two countries apt to approach the human rights issue with considerable caution. Under the Terms of Reference, the commissions will be reviewed and reassessed on their fifth birthdays. It is highly unlikely that ASEAN's human rights regime will have grown up,

but it ought to be able to stand and move forward on its two new legs.

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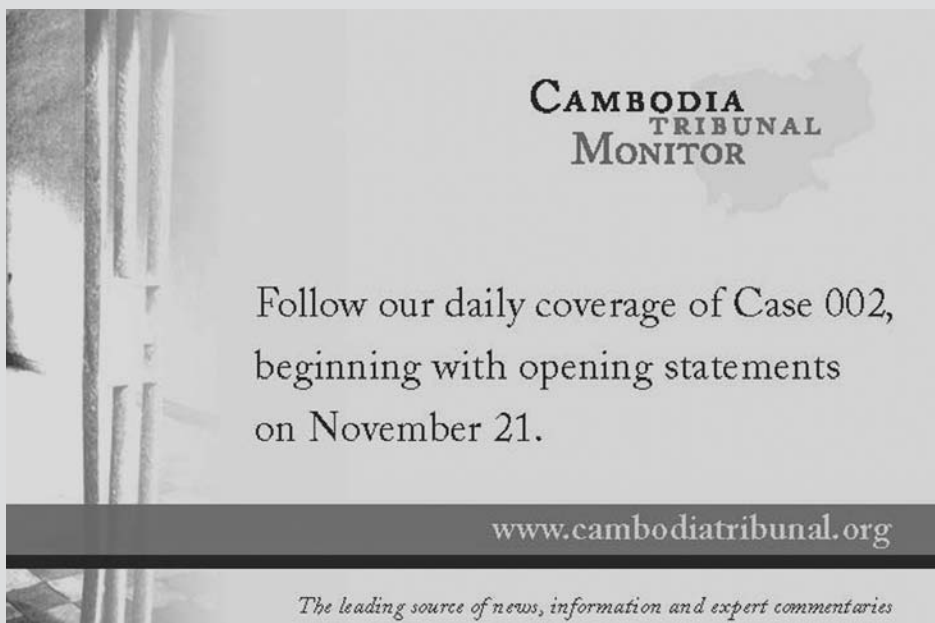
## CAMBODIA TRIBUNAL MONITOR

The Cambodia Tribunal Monitor ([www.cambodiatribunal.org](http://www.cambodiatribunal.org)) provides extensive coverage throughout the trial of three former senior Khmer Rouge officials accused of atrocity crimes. The Monitor provide daily in-depth analysis from correspondents in Phnom Penh, as well as complete English-translated video of the proceedings, with Khmer-language video to follow. Additional commentary is provided by a range of Monitor-affiliated experts in human rights and international law.

The Monitor has been the leading source of news and information on the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC) since its inception in 2007. The website hosts an archive of footage from the tribunal and a regularly updated blog containing analysis from expert commentators and coverage by Phnom Penh-based correspondents.

An estimated 1.7 million Cambodian citizens died under the Khmer Rouge regime between 1975 and 1979. The former Khmer Rouge officials to be tried in the ECCC's "Case 002" are Nuon Chea, former Deputy Secretary of the Cambodian Communist Party's Central Committee and a member of its Standing Committee; Ieng Sary, former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Democratic Kampuchea and Khieu Samphan, former Chairman of Democratic Kampuchea State Presidium.

The Cambodia Tribunal Monitor was developed by a consortium of academic, philanthropic and non-profit organizations committed to providing public access to the tribunal and ensuring open discussions throughout the judicial process. The site sponsors include Northwestern University School of Law's Center for International Human Rights, the Documentation Center of Cambodia, the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation and the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. The concept for the website was conceived by Illinois State Senator Jeff Schoenberg, a Chicago-area legislator who also advises the Pritzker family on its philanthropy.



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# WORLD-WITHOUT-WAR

*Kok Thay-Eng*

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## I. Introduction

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized a wide range of rights, including access to education, health care, and an adequate standard of living. Half a decade later the majority of the world are still poverty-stricken. I dream of a world-without-war, a world which is in contrast to where I am from, Cambodia. It is a world in which the “cycle of non-violence” prevails over the cycle of violence, one never hears an armed conflict for decades on end, all people are able to fulfill their potential and it is a world that we can be proud of. I believe where there is a will, there is a way, in a sense that peace or war is simply our choosing. The study of peace is special not only that it draws on many disciplines, but also it envisions attainable peace.

To fully address the topic question, I began with a discussion on the appropriate meaning of the terms world-without-war, based on definitions of peace and violence given by the famous Norwegian peace researcher, Johan Galtung. I then make a comparison between the terms world-without-war and utopia to point out that a world-without-war is feasible. Then I envisage a favorable world-without-war and discuss how it might come into being. This vision is largely influenced by my personal background as a war victim. Finally I propose solutions which could bring about the world-without-war.

## II. World-Without-War

### 1. Define World-Without-War

The words world-without-war could mean two ways, as the term 'without war' means peace. According to Johan Galtung, peace has two forms-negative and positive. Thus the terms world-without-war means world in negative peace and positive peace. Negative

peace is the absence of direct violence and war. This includes the present world with the majority of population in the south living in dire poverty and a world under dictatorial repression such as the Nazi Germany. In contrast, positive peace refers to a social structure and culture which does not give rise to violence. Positive peace should covers negative peace, because the violence must cease first before peaceful way of living happens. Therefore, the optimistic world-without-war has to be a world in positive peace—no direct, structural and cultural forms of violence. Barash and Webel put it that being against only war is not enough. We need more than that and it is positive and affirmative peace.

Many pacifists have supported my view of seeing a world-without-war as not just the absence of war, but a world with a structure which perpetuates peace. In his book, *Engaging the Powers*, Walter Wink explains his idea of a peaceful, non-violent world in the form of a tribal community, called Batek Negrito, dwelling in the jungle of the Malay Peninsula. The Batek, Wink puts it, is a “surprisingly egalitarian society in all aspects”. Everyone is equal and men have no control over women. There is no need for prestige and status. Yet the society is peaceful and there is a strong bond between members. He believes that “human beings are capable of living without violence,” and that a world-without-war is not an ideal or something that cannot be achieved. Tony Augarde describes his positive world-without-war as comprised by citizens who do not know what war is and does not understand why it is necessary to use weapons. The only problems needed to be addressed by collective efforts, similar to that of war, are environmental problems and natural disasters, while killing and hurting each other are unimaginable.

The famous singer, John Lennon, portrays a world in positive peace in his song imagine as there is nothing to kill or die for and people live a peaceful life. When everyone loves peace the world will be as one.

Moreover, a world-without-war is different from the concept of utopia in many ways. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, utopia is "a perfect society in which everyone works well with each other and is happy". In the Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary, utopia is derived from the Greek words *ou* (not) and *topos* (place) and so it means imagined perfect place. Also, utopia is a title of the novel *Utopia* by Sir Thomas More in 1516, which described a secluded island called Utopia with heavenly society. The definitions of utopia provided from various dictionaries reveal common points—imagined and perfect world in all aspects.

There are other aspects of utopia to observe. Politicians with utopian ideas have brought unimaginable havoc to societies because their ideas were impractical. Prof. Andrew Rigby puts it, there is nothing more dangerous than a utopian with the power to implement his plan, as in Germany during the Nazi rule, China during the cultural revolution and Cambodia during the Democratic Kampuchea from 1975 to 1979.

In short, from my definition of a world-without-war above, utopia and world-without-war are two starkly different concepts. Utopia is a dream and unrealistic, whereas world-without-war is a world in positive peace, feasible and realistic and it is something that we must have now, given the devastating force of our weapons. If utopia ever existed, a world-without-war had to happen first.

## **2. Envisage a World-Without-War**

When I was young, I saw wounded soldiers or villagers being carried on uncovered, blood-soaked stretchers through my village toward the only, dirty, crowded hospital in town. Sounds of explosion is heard almost daily. Cars traveling on roads were blown off by landmines. People venturing into the field were maimed or killed by forgotten landmines or unexploded ordinance left behind by previous US bombing and war. Food was always scarce. Schooling is conducted

under large trees, while large artillery cannons were being fired from the schoolyard on Khmer Rouge positions. There was no peaceful nighttime and fear never went away. In the midst of the destructive and protracting war, people talked about "soksantran" and recalled the peaceful, prosperous and happy time during the Sangkum Reastr Niyum in the 1950s and 1960s. The word was very special for us, as by then Cambodia had been at war for more than a decade. It gave hope to us in a situation where the end of war was nowhere to be seen.

It all began when the Vietnam War broke out in neighboring Vietnam. Sihanouk first adopted a policy of neutrality to stay out of the war between the contending giants. As the war went on, Cambodia was destabilized economically and politically. Rice, a major source of income, was smuggled to feed the fighting population in the neighboring country. Refugees, especially the Khmer Krom, flooded in from South Vietnam. In late 1960s North Vietnamese troops began establishing camps in the northeastern part of Cambodia and supporting and training anti-Sihanouk's communist group, which had gone underground after Sihanouk's fierce repression. Meanwhile the US and South Vietnam began chasing and attacking North Vietnamese troops inside Cambodian territory. At one time, Sihanouk supported both sides—North Vietnam and the US by giving each a favor. Lon Nol, Sihanouk's prime minister and a staunch anti-communist, supported by the US, deposed Sihanouk in a coup in 1970.

As Sihanouk joined the communist forces to regain his power, supported by North Vietnam, and Lon Nol was supported by the US, Cambodia was finally dragged into the Vietnam War in 1970. The bloody war went on for five years and ended when the Khmer Rouge took control of Phnom Penh in April 1975. North Vietnam ceased Saigon in the same month. For Vietnam that was the end of the war and so the country began recovering. But for Cambodia the worst was yet to come. In the next three years, eight months and twenty days, two million Cambodian or 30% of the total population would die of summary execution, forced labors, diseases and starvation. Yet that was not

the end. As Vietnam invaded and liberated the country from genocide in late 1979, the deposed Khmer Rouge was sympathized by the west as a government in exile and occupied Cambodian seat in the UN until 1989. With the support from the west, the Khmer Rouge was able to recover from defeat and fight for another ten years. The war in Cambodia was the hot part of the cold war in foreign land. The superpowers brought the war to Cambodia and were actively involved in it during the 1980s civil war. As a result of the war, millions of lives were lost, many people traumatized, family separated, entire livelihood destroyed and the country is devoid of forest and wildlife, replaced by landmines and other signs of destruction. Corruption, impunity and violence are common practice.

I want a world in which there is no violence, everyone has a decent living, people are clothed, sheltered and fully fed, they do not have to worry about being attacked by guerillas or armed groups, they can roam their land without fear of landmines, when they are sick they are properly treated, all children have equal opportunity to education. Human rights are respected, one never hears an armed conflict for decades on end, all people are able to fulfill their potentials and it is a world that we can be proud of.

### **III. Solutions for a World-Without-War**

I propose four separate solutions for a world-without-war. The first two result from the action of the world itself, that peace tends to happen without much more manipulation from activists, in a similar way to Adam Smith's "invisible hand" in a free market economy. The third solution is "non-violent revolution to create a global structure of non-violence," which should be achieved by intervention and great efforts of pacifists, in the way that Gandhi made non-violent liberation movement popular in British India. This should happen through personal conversion to peaceful way of living. The final and new solution is forgiveness education.

#### **1. Destruction Scenario**

In this scenario, wars that happened are not enough to make people love peace and to organize themselves for peaceful living. Throughout history we

witness similar human destructions repeat itself. There were long lasting wars throughout the world before the 20th century, which led Immanuel Kant to publish his *Perpetual Peace* in 1795 for peaceful coexistence between states. In the 20th century, wars grew even to a larger scale. We had World War One, World War Two and many more regional and civil wars.

Accompanying these declared and undeclared wars, new mass crimes emerged such as genocide and crimes against humanity. The Armenian genocide occurred in 1917 against the Armenians by a group called the Young Turks. The world responded by saying "never again." Still during World War Two, there were Jewish Holocaust by the Nazi against the Jews, the Rape of Nankin by the Japanese dictatorship against Chinese locals and Stalin's forced famine against the Ukrainians. All of these genocides killed countless people. Yet in 1975, there was the Killing Fields by the Khmer Rouge against Cambodian people. Still genocide went on again and again with no sign of stopping. In 1994, the Rwandan genocide conducted by Hutu ethnic group against the Tutsi minority occurred at full intensity for three months, killing 800,000 people without intervention from the global community. Again from 1992 to 1995, there was ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Currently, a genocide is being committed in Darfur, Sudan.

The repetition of history leads to the belief that only more wars and sufferings will bring peace and make people love peace. So there could be more major wars, possibly a nuclear war between the superpowers or countries ruled by dictators, in the future which inflicted so much destruction and sufferings. Only then would people change their mindset and become critical of anything violence. People would voluntarily adopt non-violent culture, as lessons of war would by then be clear enough. For instance, people in Rwanda, South Africa, Japan, Cambodia and other countries tend to embrace non-violence and peace after experiencing destruction by violence and war.

#### **2. Gradual Change Scenario**

In this scenario, on the other hand, the world

already has enough violence and sufferings, such as those created by the two world wars, regional wars, civil wars, ethnic cleansing and genocide and war has become more and more unjustifiable and destructive. Between 1500 and 1942, there was an average of one declared war a year. From 1900 to 1965, there were about 350 armed revolutions<sup>16</sup>. There were more than a hundred wars in the second half of the 20th century, which mostly occurred in the South. These destructions have produced enough momentum to gradually push the world forward in the direction of a peaceful world in the end.

This tendency reveals itself in the way the world has progressed. After World War One, the idea of a world governing body in the form of the league of nation was created. In 1928, the General Treaty for the Renunciation of War, aka the Kellogg-Briand Pact was adopted renouncing any use of force or threats of force to settle differences. By 1930, sixty-one nations had signed the pact. The United Nations, the hope of a world peace today, was created as a result the devastating World War Two. In 1961, representatives from the United States and the Soviet Union "reached an agreement on principles to govern negotiation aimed at general and complete disarmament." In 1973, another agreement between the two superpowers was reached on the prevention of nuclear war.

Regarding state sovereignty, in 2001 a Canadian commission supported by governments and institutions released the "Responsibility to Protect" for humanitarian intervention to take place in countries where genocide and mass violations on population occur. The International Criminal Court's statute was promulgated in 2001 to prosecute criminals who committed crimes against humanity. Many other forms of national and international organizations were created as a result of past problems. The recent earthquake triggered tsunami, which killed more than 160,000 people in a dozen countries in South Asia, received unprecedented international support from both private sources and sympathetic governments from around the world, with the UN as an important coordinator of the efforts. This

reveals that people start to think that we all live in one world and we need to help each other in time of crisis.

The humanitarian progress in the direction of a just world is the result of the problems that happened in the past. The absence of war will happen from top to bottom in terms of actors. First there will be no more world war between world major powers, then no regional war between less powerful countries, then no civil war inside a country and finally no ethnic war between communities. In other words, the world is now gradually moving toward a better and better peace-loving community.

### **3. Non-Violent Revolution**

The idea of "non-violent revolution" appeared in 1968 in Peace News, opposing wars and war preparation and aiming to construct mass non-violent movement for a new society founded on anarchism and pacifism.

In our world with violent structure, in which violence has taken up deep root into social mindset, only violence works. As violence is used, the act is the perpetuation of violence itself. We cannot disarm fanatics, like Hitler and Saddam, who are the product of previous violent structures, non-violently. Violence is created by violence, so it has to be suppressed by violence. A Chinese proverb goes, "The only way to cut diamond is diamond itself." However, it has been proved that violence is not a human nature, as in the case of the Batek Negrito tribal community and that we can live non-violently. There is no way we can eliminate wars or armed conflicts, unless we make conscious efforts to eliminate violence. In the same way as revolutionaries did to liberate, reform and develop their countries, it is vital that for non-violent system to exist we need to wage a "non-violent revolution." Non-violence and violence are two incompatible concepts which exist without one another and they cannot be compared. Non-violence will work best when the world structure is designed for it. Robert Holmes agrees that we cannot compare non-violence to violence that is well-established in social and economic systems of the world. Wink added that comparing violence to non-violence in effectiveness is not fair because non-violence advocates are not supported by millions of

trained non-violence soldier.

### **How the Revolution Should Be Waged**

The great pacifist A. J. Muste wrote: "There is no way to peace, peace is the way." A non-violent social order is a result of our practice and action in everyday life. "We can all begin to make gradual changes in the way we live, evolving one step at a time towards a truly non-violent lifestyle." Believed by Gandhi and King as strongest force of all, non-violence still needs the support from each of the world citizens, just like violence institutions are being supported financially and intellectually. Dick Sheppard, the founder of Peace Pledge Union, tried to prevent World War two by mobilizing support from the people who disliked war. He said before the war, "If we got, say, a million voters actively insisting that they'll never take part in any war, the government would have to take notice." Less than enough supported him, however, and so the influence was limited. His failure was partly due to the fact that pacifists had no immediate alternatives to the war and had no real aims, which was reflected in the articles in the Peace News, in which different campaigners wrote different ideas. It was because the public put up the hypothetical question—demanding non-violent actions to work when violence was about to happen—and was not convinced by the conflicting views of the campaigners. Gene Sharp's civilian-based defense (CBD) is not an answer to such a situation.

Gene Sharp proposed non-violent civilian-based defense as an alternative to armed defense. In this theory, a country could defend itself without the need for weapon. It does that by withdrawing supports for the attackers through "disrupting, paralyzing, or coercing the opponent by denying the cooperation he needed and disrupting the normal operation of the system." CBD requires individuals in the society to be non-violent. It can't be used at the present in which states' interest is guarded by its military power. In the case of nuclear attack, the civilians do not even have time to show their non-violent actions. Therefore, non-violent behaviors have to be revealed long before tension, before the war happens, and that non-violent way of living is the key. CBD can be used when the world has become less and

less violent on its way toward complete non-violence.

Non-violent revolution needs to be carried out over an extended period of time and needs the help of many members of the society who are willing to live in peace to demonstrate that peace is possible. That will open a way for further progress of the revolution.

### **4. Forgiveness Education**

Many proposals have been made for the elimination of war, but none has explored deeply into forgiveness as a tool to change the world. Wars have been fought on retaliation, lack of understanding and false belief about the opponents. In World War II, as the first German bomb was accidentally dropped on London, the time of "area bombing" or city bombing, killing countless civilians, began not necessarily as a direct destruction on military inventory, but as retaliation. The cold war's deterrence doctrine was based on the belief that if one side acts, the other will act for nothing, but revenge in order to make sure both sides are equally destroyed.

Along the world's history of war, apart from the preaching of religions, forgiveness had never been studied scientifically by the academic community. From the early fifth century to 1970, Robert Enright has found only about 110 writings on interpersonal forgiveness. He calculated that at most there was one writing on forgiveness every ten to fifteen years. Forgiveness research has only begun in the 1980s. Some of the reasons why forgiveness was ignored for so long is that as forgiveness was closely associated with religions, the social science tends to consider forgiveness as religious matters; and as the twentieth century has been the bloodiest, people think forgiveness is nonsense. Indeed, Everett Worthington argued that "increased racial tensions in communities and violent conflicts within and between nations argue for increased knowledge about how to repair the damage," which is a positive trend toward the utilization of forgiveness as a cure for war. Many researches have revealed that forgiveness can be taught and that everyone can learn to forgiveness and there seems to be no significant limits yet to the advantage that forgiveness gives to those who forgive and the

entire community which adopts forgiveness as a "practical politics" to end war and to reconcile the community. Forgiveness enriches mutual understanding, tolerance and restraints from violence. Forgiveness education in school will allow the next generations to adopt non-violent behaviors, cope with negative feelings resulted from crisis, to be prepared for peaceful resolution of conflict and to promote understanding and respect.

War has become more and more destructive. There is "an increase in the human, environmental, and economic costs of war, and in the number of civilian casualties," as witnessed in the two world wars in the last century with unprecedented destruction to the world. This trend will continue to occur as the world's weapon is now unimaginably lethal. Mikhail Gorbachev alarmed that nuclear proliferation, particularly the recent test in India and Pakistan, has made the world more and more unstable and the treaty on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is not working any more.<sup>31</sup> With this prospect, everyone is likely to arm themselves with nuclear weapon, and thus it seems that in the future any war is disastrous. In that case, forgiveness education will be the only choice to insure that war will not happen and the world will continue to exist. Archbishop Desmond Tutu noted:

"...I hope that one day you will have the opportunity of going to Hiroshima and seeing the memorial .... The world is on the brink of disaster if we don't forgive, accept forgiveness, and reconcile. Forgiveness is an absolute necessity for continued human existence. Without forgiveness there is no future."

#### IV. Conclusion

Although some people see world-without-war as an imagination and utopian, by definition utopia and world-without-war are basically different. Utopia is an imagined and perfect world, too perfect to achieve with all the means that we currently have. Often when it was tried by revolutionaries and radical, the results were the destruction of millions of human lives. A world-without-war is a world in positive peace, that is the absence of war and violent social structures. It is realistic, a must

and its characteristic is limited by the scientific knowledge that we have. From war-torn Cambodia, my world-without-war is peaceful and consists of appropriate conditions for everyone to realize their potentials and enjoy life. For those who never knew war, this kind of wish is too simple, but to extend this wish further is to make it impossible to build world peace and better world for all.

Two possible scenarios which might lead to the creation of world-without-war without much intervention by pacifists include destruction and gradual-change scenarios. In destruction scenario, what the misery resulted from war and violence in history is not enough to make people to refashion their own thinking in favor of peace. More of such experience is needed for the realization. In contrast, in the gradual-change scenario, the world already had enough sufferings and that little by little it is moving toward peace.

I propose further two solutions-non-violent revolution and forgiveness education. Because the world has a system of violence, there is no way we can get out of it, unless all of us support non-violent way of living. Forgiveness is a newly emerging field of study in psychology which has already been used to bring about peace and reconciliation in war-torn countries. Forgiveness education enriches mutual understanding and inhibiting vengeful behavior between individuals, as well as groups.

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## READING HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

*DC-Cam's publication History of Democratic Kampuchea written by Dy Kamboly and teacher guidebooks can be downloaded with free of charge at [http://dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/Genocide\\_Education.htm](http://dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/Genocide_Education.htm)*

# MY FATHER IN KHMER ROUGE REGIME

*Saut Sok Heng*

The Khmer Rouge took power on April 17, 1975. Just after they gained full victory all over the country, they evacuated people to the countryside. The period of three years, eight months and twenty days of the Khmer Rouge often sadden my parents whenever they talks about it. My father was one of the survivors.

My father, Saut Yon, was born in 1945. Nowadays, he is a farmer at Prek Liv village, Rokar Ar commune, Kang Meas district and kampong Cham province.

My father usually tells the expereinces of what happened to him during the Khmer Rouge regime to

his children. He told me several times about his life. I remembered that he told me that his family led a simple life before the Khmer Rouge regime. At the age of 14, he ordained as a monk. He had been a monk for ten years before he left the monkhood.

Later, he married my mother. Before 1975, my parents had two children. The first child was Saut Vuthy, who died at the age of ten of disease. The second child was Saut Yim, who is now forty year old.

Before Khmer Rouge took power, my father was the village committee member and was responsible for informing all villagers to join the meeting in the village.

When Khmer Rouge took over my village, they did not persecute my father becuase my father did not have important position in the government. My parents were not forced to leave home, but continued to stay in their house. My fathe joined Khmer Rouge revolution and later, he was promoted to hold a position in the village.

My father said that he did not have enough food to eat during the Khmer Rouge regime. Also, he was separated from his family members. Because he was Base People, he was allowed to meet his family when he asked.

My father was assigned by the Khmer Rouge to harvest rice. He added that whenever there was moonlight, he sometimes worked until late at night. He added that his village had ten eating halls and that food ration was different from one hall to another. One evening, when my father raised about equality issue in the cooperative, he was accused of making mistakes and my father was forced to educate himself. The Khmer Rouge cadres told him that "if you continue to say that again, you would have problems." His cousin also



Memorial

asked the Khmer Rouge cadres to forgive my father.

My sister was assigned by Angkar to build dike. She had been working so hard as sometimes she worked days and night. My sister also told me that some people died of exhaustion and they had no medical treatment while others suffered its impact until now.

My father also said that during the Khmer Rouge regime, people rarely dare to talk or complain. If people complain, they would be called "enemy" and they would be killed or sometimes they were asked to go to other places and never returned.

Currently, near my house in Kampong Cham

province, there is a dike that people were forced to build during the Khmer Rouge regime. That dike is called *Kum* "children" dike and is about two kilometers long. My father told me that the dike was built by young people.

After Khmer Rouge regime was overthrown, my parents lived in the same village and had seven children. I am the third child in my family, and nowadays, I am a junior in history at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

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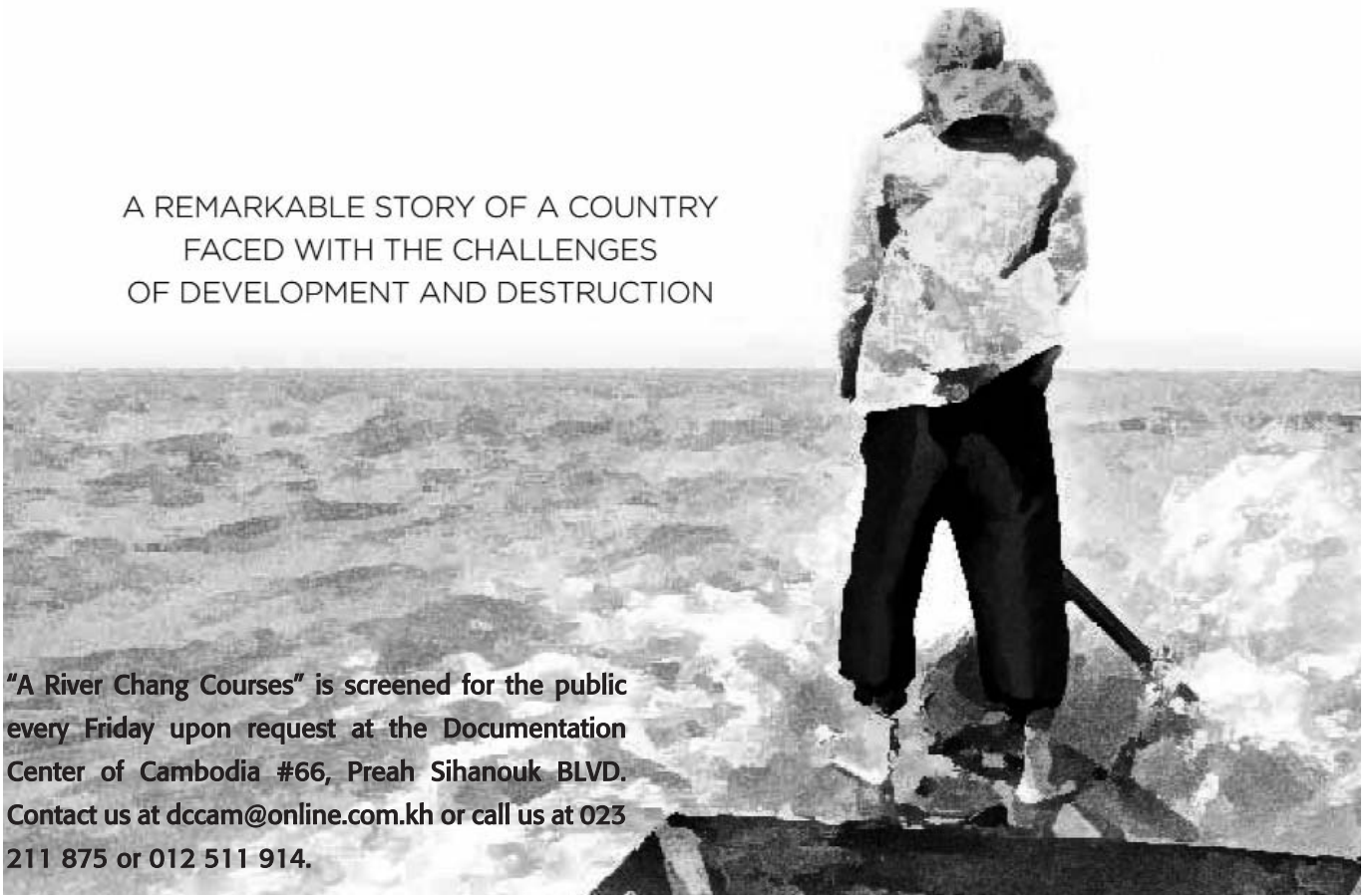
*Saut Sok Heng is a reader of Searching for the Truth Magazine.*

# ក្បែរទីកន្លែង

## A River Changes Course

A REMARKABLE STORY OF A COUNTRY  
FACED WITH THE CHALLENGES  
OF DEVELOPMENT AND DESTRUCTION

"A River Changes Course" is screened for the public every Friday upon request at the Documentation Center of Cambodia #66, Preah Sihanouk BLVD. Contact us at [dccam@online.com.kh](mailto:dccam@online.com.kh) or call us at 023 211 875 or 012 511 914.



## Searching for Father and Siblings

My name is Khem Theary. I am 56 years old and living at Borei Keila, Sangkat Veal Vong, Khan 7 Makara, Phnom Penh. I am looking for my father and my siblings listed below:

1. My father, Khem Khann, was a former Lon Nol soldier and a deputy commander of Prince Chan Rangsy. In 1973, he was arrested by the Khmer Rouge forces at Chukva military camps and he I did not know where he was taken to.
2. My younger sister, Khem Sopheap, was in grade 4 (present-day grade 9) at Tuol Kork Secondary School in April 1975. When the Khmer Rouge forces entered Phnom Penh, she was 16. In 1977, she was assigned to work in Mobile Unit in District 54 near Chiso Mountain and she disappeared ever since.



3. My older brother, Khem Sanarin, was sixteen when the Khmer Rouge took power. He disappeared in 1977.

4. My cousin, Meas Chamroeun, was a former officer of Cambodian Air Force. He disappeared in 1974 when he travelled to Bangkok to get further military training.

Before the Khmer Rouge took power, my family lived at Kilometer 4 Market, Sangkat 3, Phnom Penh. After April 17, 1975, my father was evacuated to Mohasaing Village, Phnom Sruoch District, Kampong Speu Province. If anyone has known or seen my family members listed above, please kindly contact me directly at 015 882 242 or contact the Documentation Center of Cambodia at 023 211 875 or 016 876 692.

## Looking for Older Sister

My name is Him Thorn. I am 58 years old living at Sanda Village, Cheang Tong Commune, Tramkok District, Takeo Province. My father's name was Bo and my mother's name was Thann. I have six siblings: Him Mom (sister), Him Ley (sister), me (Him Thorn), Him Nhiv (brother), Him Nhay (disappeared) and Him Touch (deceased). I am now searching for my younger brother, Him Nhay, who disappeared after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed in 1979. During the Khmer Rouge regime, Him Nhay was assigned as a messenger to his group's chief named Nhor Heang at Sanda Village. My brother always worked with Nhor Heang. After the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed in 1979, my brother informed us that he was working in Phnom Penh as an electrician. Later, I learned that he moved to Kampot and he disappeared since then. I had never seen him again.

Anyone who had known my brother, please contact the Documentation Center of Cambodia at 023 211 875 or 016 876 692. Many thanks.



## THE BOOK OF MEMORY OF THOSE WHO DIED UNDER THE KHMER ROUGE

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The Documentation Center of Cambodia is writing and compiling a book of records of names of those who died under the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975 to 1979 and those who disappeared during the period, who are still not known by their relatives. It also includes a section for family tracing purposes.



DC-Cam already has in its database up to a million names of those who may have died under the Khmer Rouge. If you would like to have your relatives' names, who died under the Khmer Rouge or disappeared then, appearing in this book.

Please contact Kok-Thay ENG Tel: 012-955-858

Email: [truthkokthay@dccam.org](mailto:truthkokthay@dccam.org)

Website: [www.dccam.org](http://www.dccam.org) or [www.cambodiatribunal.org](http://www.cambodiatribunal.org)

