

III. The destruction of Phnom Penh

The following are excerpts from the Investigation Report on the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary Clique's Crimes Against the Phnom Penh Population. The Report was prepared under the direction of Vandy Kaone, Doctor of Sociology, M.A., and Professor of Philosophy, for submission to the People's Revolutionary Tribunal held in Phnom Penh to try Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, et al., for genocide.

The first days of the arrival of Pol Pot-Ieng Sary army in Phnom Penh

On April 17, 1975, at dawn, the black-clad troops of Pol Pot's revolutionary armed forces entered Phnom Penh. Rudely awakened from their sleep by the shooting and B.40 explosions which destroyed public buildings, the Phnom Penh people came out of their houses to welcome them, applauding, jumping, smiling, so great was their joy. From time to time, these bursts of joy were interrupted by bomb explosions. Soon their jubilation was mixed with astonishment. Armored vehicles flying white pennants and carrying Lon Nol troops side by side with black clad men, passed along streets and avenues of Phnom Penh. They shouted in chorus: "It is peace. The war is over: no more fighting!" Following their example, the Phnom Penh people also waved white flags....

It was then that the order to evacuate the capital rapidly was given out under the pretext of avoiding losses in lives which might result from U.S. air attacks and the wiping out of remnants of the Lon Nol army. The ensuing bewilderment of the population was beyond description.

Furthermore, a few hours later, they discovered that those "black-clad" were cutthroats and looters. To their consternation, the latter opened fire on those who refused or were not prompt enough to comply with their orders. Others, armed with B.40s, began to ransack stores and civilian dwellings. There was no electricity at night. Phnom Penh became a dead city. No radio broadcast. From time to time, in the depth of night, explosions broke the ghastly silence. The following day, black-clad men grew still more numerous in streets littered with bodies of people recently killed. By noon-time, they started driving people out of their homes, threatening to destroy everything if the orders were not obeyed immediately. Volleys of AK.47s fired in the air

punctuated their injunctions.... all citydwellers must become farmers, only those who know how to plant rice have the right to eat and those who do not, have no reason to live. This accounts for the indirect killing of Phnom Penh people whose first trial was this hellish exodus during which more than 500,000 physically unfit met their death.

On the other hand, is not the devastation of libraries—among them, the National Library—and bookshops, and the systematic destruction of books the evidence of a deliberate effort to obliterate creative intelligence, culture, civilization, and the sciences? And this systematic destruction was carried out in accordance with a system, an ideological principle easily recognized by the world.

Right from the first day of the Pol Pot troops' arrival, the major part of the Phnom Penh civilian population saw with their own eyes how they destroyed, by B.40s, hospitals, surgical rooms, the Pasteur Institute. Patients were pushed away from their beds. Those who could not get up, nor walk, nor even move, were hauled together with their beds to the streets. Some of these were being given serum. Most of these patients died a few hours later.

On national highways along which the Phnom Penh people were driven to the countryside and outlying areas plagued with malaria, the living conditions were despairing: no food allowances nor medicines for a population deprived of everything. The sanitary conditions were shocking. Massive, dragged-out caravans of deportees, progressing at a snail's pace—one kilometer a whole morning, even whole day—trekked along aimlessly, from place to place, pressed on by the rhythms of intimidation shootings. Families then started being shattered: children got strayed off, wives lost their husbands. Moreover, they could neither begin nor finish their meals without being disturbed by these terrible rhythms.

Alongside this indescribable disarray, the "purge" of intellectuals began. For this purpose, Pol Pot resorted to a system of detection merely based on appearance. Those who looked like intellectuals, especially those who wore spectacles of myopia or presbyopia, were listed as suspects and could be arrested at once and sent to the security service. A great number of them did not return to their families. The intellectuals were all re-

garded and treated as outlaws and parasites. If a few of them managed to survive, it was because they had not revealed their real identity and had lived under disguise with borrowed names....

The purge of intellectuals practically began even as the Phnom Penh population was driven out of the capital city. It began simultaneously with the purge of the Lon Nol armymen. Pol Pot-Ieng Sary used a very simple yet unqualifiably infamous trick: dispatching vehicles equipped with loudspeakers to diffuse an urgent appeal that they needed intellectuals (professors, technicians, physicians) for the reconstruction of the country and former military men for national defense....

Those who walked along the Mekong during this long march through forests and swamps, were eyewitnesses of other killings: trains of corpses floating on the river, swept away by the current. This ghastly scene lasted several months on end.

The wretched plight of Phnom Penh people and intellectuals in deportation camps.

The population was divided into three categories. The Phnom Penh people belonged to the last one, i.e., "citizens" deprived of all rights, "war prisoners," in other words, the vanquished. They were called "new inhabitants" and treated as parasites.

The coercive system applied to the Phnom Penh population consisted in a kind of automation of men: interdiction from thinking, expressing anything contrary to the principles of the "Revolution," from maintaining inter-human contacts, from criticizing, from showing emotions and feelings, from moving from one village to another, and, from the beginning of 1977, eating and cooking (apart from boiling water) at home was also forbidden. Failure to comply with these orders to the letter amounted to thinking, and this mental activity was considered a guilty act. Any delay in implementing the order amounted to an act of rebellion liable to be investigated severely. If this continued, the suspects would be sent to "reeducation" centers and in a great many cases, it was capital punishment decided by the head of the cooperative. At home, especially at night time, husbands and wives dared not talk, lest spies and informers should denounce them. The husband would fear that his wife should let slip something about his former profession under Lon Nol, for many had lost their lives because of this kind of imprudence. He would fear that she should tell him of the petty larceny she had made the previous day (some fish, rice, salt, cassava, sweet potatoes or a few bananas for their children).

Angkar, the almighty Organization of the Revolution, always omnipresent, had its eyes and ears every-

where. It was The Terror personified. The victims, before being done away with, were usually sent away to fetch something. If in the evening, the husband did not return, his wife could be sure that he would never return. She should keep herself, above all, from crying or showing her sorrow during her working hours, for that would be regarded as an act of mutiny against the political line (Meakea) of the "Revolution," seriously endangering the "Revolution." The punishment varied with the degree of gravity: either being sent to a deportation camp located most likely in a malaria-infested area, or simply a clean disappearance. When there was public accusation, if the head of the cooperative did not mete out any punishment, he himself would disappear. Angkar was ubiquitous, indeed.

How were the sick Phnom Penhese treated? Under the Pol Pot regime, only those whose diseases were evident at eyesight such as wounds, influenza, etc. were considered as ill. Those who suffered from diseases of lungs, heart, liver, kidneys, stomach, in brief, from what was invisible, were regarded as fakes, lazybones, rebels and subject to a very close inquiry. Many of them disappeared. Those held to be hopelessly unfit were finished off and thrown into wells. Pol Pot's hangmen told their families there were so many such wells that Korean and Chinese advisers in Phnom Penh dared not drink Khmer water: they only drank coconut milk.

To the daily working hours were added extra-work called "socialist labor." Right after the midday lunch, everybody was harnessed to other jobs: planting vegetables, weeding, etc. At 1 p.m., as the bell rang, the ordinary work called "fundamental work" ("Kar Snaul") resumed. At 5 p.m., the "fundamental work" being suspended, they were shifted to "socialist work" till dusk. After a quick bath, they were allowed to dine. When there was too much to do, especially in the transplanting season, some had to work till 10 p.m., sometimes 11 p.m. Those women who had unweaned babies to nurse suckled them before going to bed, utterly exhausted. At 4:30 a.m., the dreadful bell resounded all over the village. All the Phnom Penh survivors, even now, still shudder when they happen to hear something resembling that sinister bell.

There were practically no days off. The so-called holidays were devoted to indoctrination, to brainwashing, if not to other work even harder than in week days. So, holidays were undesirable and even abhorred....

All this had its origin in Maoism and the political principles preached by the Peking leaders who wanted to turn Khmers into rice-producing machines which consume no fuel and not too much rice.

Spying organization and system based on the principle of "Angkar's omnipresence"

Judging from his coercive system, Pol Pot was firmly resolved to systematically wreck the former feudal and

capitalist society as well as the ancient Khmer family. The new society will be one peopled by automatons which he can handle at will. The division of the population into three categories was designed to sow dissension between Khmer citydwellers and other citizens. All relations between these three categories of "citizens" were forbidden, gatherings were absolutely banned, talks between two or more people closely spied on. Denunciation was encouraged with rewards. Children were taught to spy on and denounce their parents. In other words, Angkar made everyone distrust everyone else so that they entertain adverse feelings for each other. This famous Organization of Revolution of Pol Pot sowed panic and spread division among the population. The slightest manifestation of unity to oppose this policy was savagely repressed. In Koh Phâl, Kompong Cham, a general uprising started by Malyans ended up in a bloodbath: the whole village was massacred by Pol Pot.

Repression against old people, women and children

(a) Pol Pot did not want women to be with child, because they constituted the main pillar in agricultural production. Any request for a childbirth leave deemed

too early was very ill taken and the requester would see her daily ration severely reduced. Tormented by hunger, the expecting mothers would make up their mind to go to work again. If such indispositions as vomitings, fatigue ... became too frequent, they would be sent to the hospital. They would implore their team leaders then to allow them not to go there. Their husbands would be authorized to see them only two or three times a month.... Very few men were given the favor to work in a village within reach of their wives. For this, they must work as servants to mighty people in the village. Those poor pregnant women lacked everything: no special diet indispensable for the on-coming baby's health, nor affection, nor comfort. Some of the husbands were driven to commit illicit acts in order to alleviate their wives' plight... In many cases, the culprit simply disappeared: the penalty depended on the local authorities.

One month after delivery, the baby's mother must resume work. Any delay would get her frowned upon for lack of determination in her role as 'revolutionary.' It goes without saying that under such conditions, the newborn was far from having a good health. According to a study of Doctor Nuth Savocun on the matter, the intellectual future of Phnom Penh children born under

The Chinese connection

Among other items, the "Indictment of the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary Clique" for crimes of genocide for the August tribunal documented the role that China played in encouraging the butchery in Kampuchea. Following are excerpts.

... Deprived since the very beginning of all popular support, and faced with growing opposition by the people, they relied on the support of external reactionary forces, first and foremost the reactionaries in Peking in order to build up and maintain their dictatorial rule. At a press conference on October 3, 1975 in Peking, Pol Pot admitted that as early as 1960, he and his clique had relied on "Mao Zedong's works" to oppose the line of genuine revolutionaries and to impose their own reactionary line.

In the nearly four years of their rule (1975-1979) Pol Pot-Ieng Sary advanced their theory of "100 percent high-level Socialist Revolution" "the Revolution with big leaps forward, big progress, big marvels," with a view to "building a country without cities or countryside" which means in fact the abolition of cities, concentration of the population in collective cooperatives,

without markets, money, schools, postal service. All social and familial links and all human feelings were done away with. (Documents on the present situation in Kampuchea No 2.5.01). This line was encouraged and lavishly praised by Mao Zedong: "You comrades have won an amazing victory. You have got rid of all classes at one blow. People's communes in the countryside with poor and lower-middle peasants everywhere in Kampuchea, therein lies our future." (Talks between Pol Pot and Mao Zedong, June 1975. Archives of Angkar Party Central Committee—Excerpts from a pictorial: the People's Republic of Kampuchea.)

The Pol Pot-Ieng Sary policy of mass killings directed against many social strata, the policy of repression carried out in "people's communes," of atrocious internal purges and instigating conflicts with neighbouring countries ran up against the opposition of our people. World opinion also angrily condemned them, but the Peking authorities lauded and encouraged them as best as they could. Hua Guofeng declared: "You, comrades, are skillful not only in eliminating the old world, but also in building a new one and you have

the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary regime has been impaired for good, as well as that of those who are now below 15 years of age.

(b) The old people underwent a slow, piecemeal death: Angkar made them toil hard, disregarding their decaying health and physical force and gave them a starvation diet.

(c) "Children are the pillar of this new society," claimed the Pol Pot clique who, in fact, gave them some privileges over the adults and aged. These privileges, however, must be justified by their effective endurance in labor, the quantity and quality of their work. Angkar made them toil not only as hard as grownups, but even harder: they had to build dikes, cut ditches, open trails under the scorching sun, without flinching. Many succumbed from delirious fever and in their rare moments of lucidity were, nonetheless, aware that they were expertly exploited. Sent to build huge dikes in malaria-infested out of the way corners, every evening, they would cry silently in their huts battered by rain and storm, thinking of their parents, in particular of their mothers to whom they had no time to bid farewell before their hasty departure.... They wanted to send letters to their parents but could not because they did not know how to read nor to write.

Inhuman treatment of intellectuals

Phnom Penh civilians, especially intellectuals, were closely watched during working hours as well as in their daily life. They were considered undesirables, culprits, and so to speak, death convicts on probation. In Pol Pot's eyes, the intellectuals were the incarnation of the exploiting class and, consequently, corrupted beings by nature and evildoers. The authorities of every village, every khum, could dispose of them whenever they felt like. In Prek Krâk (Srok Stung Trâng, Kompong Cham), Mr. Chan, a former teacher, and many other civil servants including a former rummer, and large numbers of students, were, all in one day, killed with axes on boats ferrying them to the middle of the river. This crime followed an urgent order from the superior quarter noticing that intellectuals still infested the country. It acribed to every head of a cooperative a quota of 15 convicts. This formal order must be executed under the eyes of the Organization inspectors.

Physical tortures were commonplace. They were made to draw ploughs and harrows in the fields in the place of buffalos and oxen, which, in the rulers' eyes, were more useful to the Revolution than those city-dwellers who ate much and sought to work the least possible. ...

won important victories in smashing the subversive and sabotage plot of enemies inside and outside the country."

In the course of his visit to China, Pol Pot also declared: "We have creatively and successfully applied Mao Zedong's thoughts to the realities of Kampuchea. ... For Kampuchea, Mao Zedong's thoughts are the most precious aid given by China." (Statement at the reception on September 28, 1977—Document No 2.6.04).

With Chinese aid, Pol Pot-Ieng Sary increased their repression of the people in 1976-1977. Witnesses said Chinese advisors were present at certain places where massacres took place (documents No 2.3.5.01; 2.3.5.02). But the more repressive they became, the more they met with popular opposition and were driven into an impasse. At a session of the Standing Committee in May 1978, they had to admit: "the situation is still bearable, but we have already suffered partial losses, if this continues we are threatened with collapse" (Document No 2.5.26).

Faced with this situation, they had to rely even more on the reactionary authorities in Peking. To help them rapidly increase their troop strength from 70,000 to 130,000, Chinese supply of arms and war materials, by air and by sea was stepped up.

Since 1978, parallel to Chinese open hostility to

Vietnam and with Chinese encouragement, Pol Pot-Ieng Sary intensified their war of aggression against Viet Nam (Talks between Chinese leaders and Son Sen, Pol Pot's Defense Minister, during the latter's visit to China in October 1978). ...

In a talk with Hua Guofeng in their September 1977 meeting, Pol Pot said: "In the present circumstances, if a powerful offensive is made by the revolution in Southeast Asia, this will result in an improvement of the situation and we will be able to resolve our problems. We have exchanged views and reached agreements with our Burmese, Malaysian, Indonesian and Thai friends. This is a very important political line. Although many complexities still exist, since we have Chinese support in the North and have achieved in the South unity, we have a strategic beacon which greatly encourages us. We feel now even more secure than before thanks to our Chinese friends." (Excerpts from Pol Pot's statement in the Kampuchea-China talks on September 29, 1977.)

After he was overthrown on January 7, 1979, Ieng Sary was repeatedly sent to Peking by Pol Pot to discuss with the Chinese reactionary authorities plans to oppose our people.

It was absolutely forbidden to keep and moreover to read books of the ancient regime.

On the other hand, if by inadvertence, an intellectual used some French or English term, he was jeopardized seriously. His parents and friends were then on tenterhooks, expecting the worst, till the Khmer authorities sent for the culprit to dispatch him to an unknown destination from where he never returned.

Crimes perpetrated in Phnom Penh under the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary regime

The annual gross production of paddy in the 1975-1976 rice planting campaign is estimated at 3.36 million tons and the diet of porridge plus three months of cooked rice accorded to the less than 6 million inhabitants, gradually reduced to 5 million, is far below 1.2 million tons, for 1.2 million tons for 6 million inhabitants would amply cover the consumption at home with a yearly quota of 1 ton for every five inhabitants. Where did the remaining 2.4 million or at least 2 million tons of Khmer rice go every year? What kind of trade with China is this, with, as importation, two Chinese bicycles per village, even per district... The part allotted to the Khmer population in 1975-1976 is estimated at only 600,000 tons, i.e., 1 ton for 10 inhabitants per year; 500,000 tons in 1976-1977, and 400,000 tons in 1977-1978. And the Khmer population was steadily reduced from 6 to 4 million in a four-year period. The birth rate under the Pol Pot regime was insignificant, since often children were born only to die a few days later.

In 1976-1977 and 1977-1978, the exportable volumes varied from 2.14 million to 1.76 million tons, while according to documents discovered by us, China demanded at least 480,000 tons and at most 625,000 tons for 1977. Unquestionably, the difference constituted an important reserve to prepare for the big-scale offensive against Vietnam and Laos. Unfortunately, on his departure, Pol Pot brought along with him part of these stocks and destroyed the remaining part together with almost all the economic infrastructure. Phnom Penh people who came back home could see huge stores of rice burning for weeks. According to their estimate, those stocks of rice destroyed would suffice amply for the consumption of 4 or 5 million inhabitants at home for two years...

Accustomed to their despotic rule, the Pol Pot clique could not quell that smoldering rebellion of the population... A dangerous disorder impelled them to take other parallel measures: eliminate the "rough heads." These measures were far from being politically efficient but boomeranged instead: the orders were not carried out... By the end of 1978, the superior authorities, exasperated by their own powerlessness, ordered their cutthroats to massacre all the population. Realizing that more than 90 percent of the population were

waiting for the propitious moment to coordinate their actions with the Front for National Salvation, Pol Pot ordered to dig immense common graves all over the country and conduct mass-killings in every village. (In Prek Kâk, Kompong Cham, only seven families, deemed unconditionally faithful to the regime, were spared.) It was widespread terror. In every village, there were talks about a secret decision of Pol Pot: "They are going to replace the Khmer population by millions of Chinese." This was confirmed more and more with every passing day. In fact, those ditches dug everywhere began to be filled up with corpses. Most terrifying was that one dug in the Stung Trâng pagoda (Kompong Cham): over 5,000 bodies were buried there... In "DawnMoine" (Prêk Kâk village, Srok Stung Trâng), the instruments were discovered before the crime was committed and Chim, chairman of the Srok Committee, suspected organizer of crimes of this kind, was arrested by the local people already enjoying the protection of the Front of National Salvation. However, in other villages, those crimes were carried on at an accelerated tempo. The order was explicit: wipe out in time those people who were going to overthrow the regime with the moral support of the Front of National Salvation...

Prey Veng province is now almost empty: not a living soul. In the sewers of the market, skulls and bones were discovered: as a matter of fact, this market had been turned into a torture center under the Pol Pot regime.

Conclusion

... After more than three years, Phnom Penh has changed beyond recognition: heaps of garbage and rubble, rampant vegetation, destroyed public buildings, wrecked religious monuments. Water lacking, carcasses of vehicles littered the streets or lay abandoned in halls. Countless cars and trucks still usable disappeared. One wonders where they are gone. In libraries, books were scattered everywhere: more than half of them were lost or rotted in the gardens...

With a superhuman effort, the Government of the Front of National Union for the Salvation of Kampuchea has been gradually reactivating the public services: hospitals, ministries, and different public offices. Several thousands people are authorized to live in the city to take part in this task of reorganization. technicians and former functionaries called in, in urgency, for the purpose. Hospitals are still lacking in adequate equipment and medicines, especially antibiotics. Only a few factories have begun to hum... Almost all the means of transports and telecommunication are unusable, in brief, all the economic infrastructure is destroyed by the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique.