

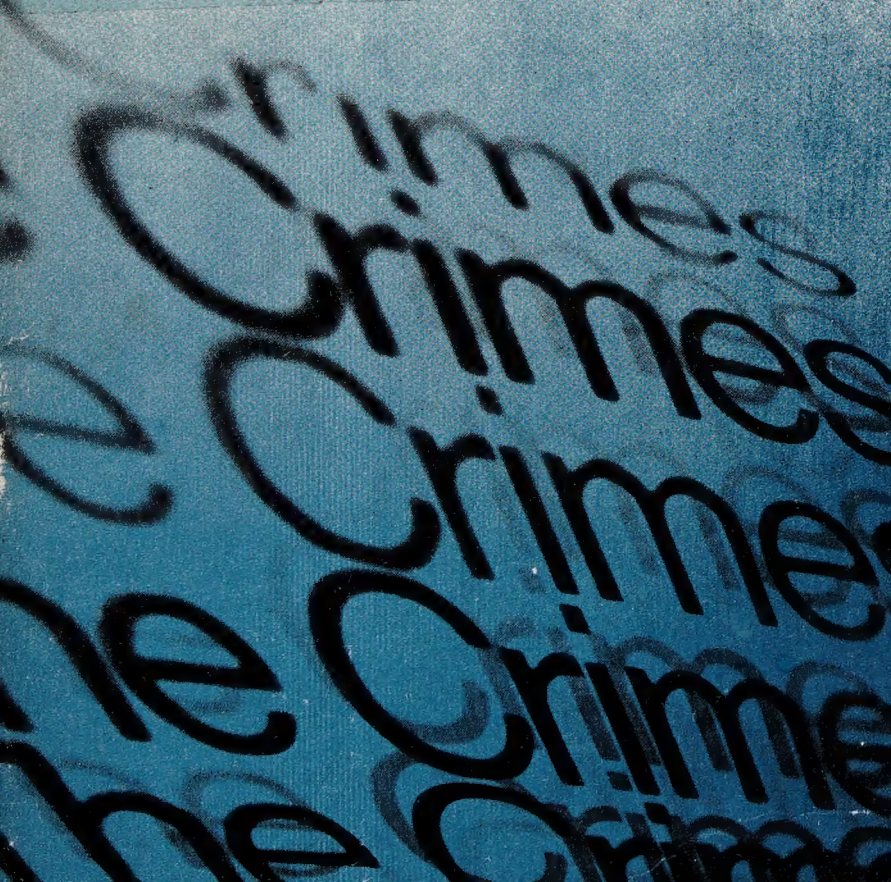
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The Crimes

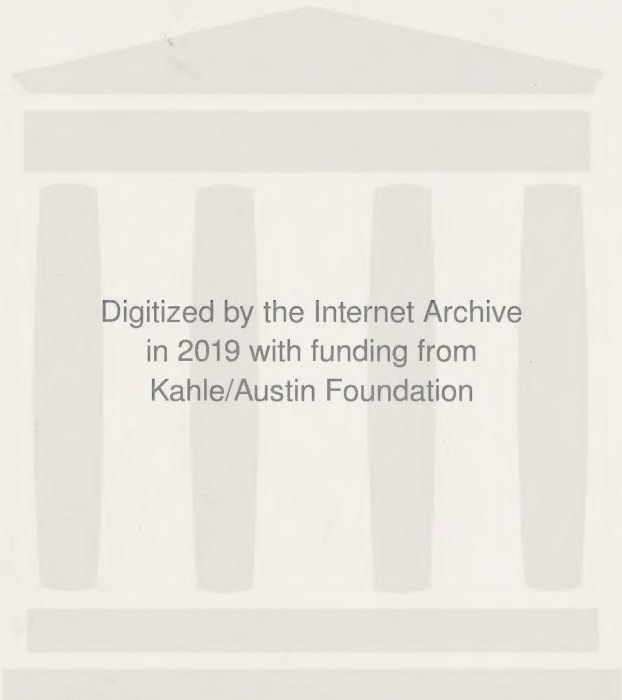
of the Pol Pot

Regime

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The Crimes of the Pol Pot Regime

A Historical Sketch

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Introduction

Phnom-Penh wakes up early. The black tropical night just begins to turn grey when the city comes alive with the sounds of windows bursting open and the hooting of the first cyclists in the streets announcing the start of a new day.

When the first rays of the sun hit the roofs of houses, the 400 or so streets and alleys of the city, wedged in between the great Mekong and a marshy lowland in the west, begin to fill with crowds of pedestrians, carts and cyclists, through which hooting cars and trucks make their slow progress.

In Phnom-Penh it is just another working day. State enterprises and institutions open their doors, thousands of youngsters are on their way to schools and colleges, and the markets overflowing with all the gifts of the land are already full of customers.

When I arrived in Phnom-Penh in January 1984, it was hard for me to believe that only five years before this was a ghost-city with empty streets and deserted houses, paneless windows gaping in the walls and unlocked doors creaking in the dead silence.

That was Phnom-Penh in the aftermath of the monstrous "experiment" the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary regime carried out between 1975 and 1978. After nearly four years of Pol Pot's government the country was in ruins and the Khmer nation was on the verge of extinction.

According to a report recently published by the special Kampuchean commission of inquiry into the crimes of the Pol Pot clique, more than 3,300 thousand people, including nearly two million peasants, were killed by the regime. More than 300 thousand workers and government employees were tortured

to death in prisons; national minorities, students and professional people were almost totally annihilated.

Incalculable damage was done to the national economy. In all, 634,552 buildings were destroyed, and 1,968 pagodas, 108 mosques, 5,857 schools and 796 hospitals and medical stations were looted and reduced to heaps of rubble; agriculture, the basis of the country's economy, was on the decline.

The popular uprising of January 1979 drove the Pol Pot criminal clique out of the country. The executioners and murderers were sentenced to death,* but they have found protectors among the forces of international reaction and hegemonism. At present these circles have launched a propaganda campaign aimed at whitewashing the criminal regime and concealing the truth about the atrocities it committed from the world public.

According to the British newspaper *The Observer*, "In the Cold War the Khmer Rouge are on the side of the angels. They are fighting against the Vietnamese, who are supported by the Soviet Union. The West has never condoned the Khmer Rouge genocide, but it does not suit Western interests to take any action against the murderers. *Realpolitik* takes precedence over questions of morality." ¹

And the aim of the Western policies is to bring to a halt the process of normalization of the situation in the People's Republic of Kampuchea and to prevent the people's government from building a new life in the country. That is why the Pol Pot regime—the main striking force in the struggle

* On August 19, 1979, the People's Revolutionary Tribunal in Phnom-Penh passed death sentences on Pol Pot and Ieng Sary, who were then hiding abroad.

against the Kampuchean revolution—has retained its seats at the United Nations and other international organizations; that is why Pol Pot's men have been admitted to the so-called "coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea", which also includes representatives of two emigrant puppet groups headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Son Sann.

When people in the West write about the heinous crimes of the Pol Pot clique they describe the criminals as "Communists", thus deliberately discrediting the Communist parties of other countries and their policies. But the truth is that Pol Pot and his followers have never been Communists.

When Pol Pot, Ieng Sary and other future leaders of "Democratic Kampuchea" studied in Paris in the 1950s they were members of a Khmer students' association in France which was notorious for its ultra-left leanings. Ieng Sary was the chairman of the organization and Khieu Samphan its general secretary. Subsequently they reorganized their association into a union of Khmer students to bring together all Khmer leftists studying in Europe. The organization took an active part in meetings, gatherings and debates sponsored by various anarchistic groups and studied ultra-left literature.

It was in those days that the future butchers began to work on the ideas about "their Kampuchea". As the years passed, their ideas were translated into detailed practical schemes, and the object of their sinister "social experiment" was defined: to build a new society with a "clean slate", with complete disregard of the objective laws of social development. Such was the "ideological" basis of the monstrous programme, a programme for destroying Kampuchean cities and their population,

eliminating the economic structures, doing away with money, trade and transport, and eradicating all traditional forms of communication among people. A militarized society was to be built, a society whose members would live in isolated agricultural cooperatives, wear identical clothes and live in identical dwellings, who would work much and consume little, and whose personal belongings would consist of not more than one spoon.

Pol Pot stopped at nothing to win power. By liquidating true Communists, staging intrigues and deceiving his fellow-countrymen, he wormed his way into the leadership of the national liberation movement of Kampuchea. For a long time he managed to conceal his true intentions and posed as an internationalist. Back in March 1974 he wrote to the leadership in Vietnam: "I assure you in all sincerity and with all my heart that whatever the circumstances I will remain true to the policy of great friendship and great fraternal revolutionary solidarity between Kampuchea and Vietnam, that I will uphold it whatever the difficulties and obstacles."² Pol Pot showed his real face only when the people of Kampuchea won a complete victory in their five-year war of national liberation against Washington-backed Lon Nol regime.

On April 17, 1975, the patriotic forces liberated Phnom-Penh, the capital of the country. Bright prospects of independent development opened up before Kampuchea. But the dream of millions of Khmers of a happy life was not to come true. The black night of the Pol Pot regime descended on their homeland.

This is a story about the tragedy of the Kampuchean people, about how the monstrous scheme of a "Pol Pot state" was implemented, how the ruling clique systematically conducted a policy of ge-

nocide against its own people, how Kampuchea became a torture-chamber, a land of sorrow and untold human suffering. It is based on authentic documents, eye-witness accounts and the author's personal impressions and interviews.

Victims of a Policy of Genocide

The residents of Phnom-Penh who came out into the streets on April 17, 1975 to greet their liberators never suspected what tragic lot awaited them. They did not know that a plan to destroy their own and other Kampuchean towns and cities had been worked out and was about to be put into effect and that in just a few hours they would be rushing home to collect their few belongings before being herded at gunpoint to other places where their "re-education" would begin.

Two American journalists, John Barron and Anthony Paul, who were among the foreigners remaining in Phnom-Penh whom the Pol Pot men had driven into the French embassy, have described some blood-curdling scenes in their book *Murder of a Gentle Land*:

"Near the French embassy a French schoolteacher observed a . . . [Pol Pot] patrol march from an alley through a line of refugees and by happenstance part a mother and father from their children. The frantic parents protested and sought to reclaim their children, now on the other side of the . . . column. The patrol leader thereupon fired a volley of rifle shots, killing both father and mother.

"Although not everybody personally witnessed such summary executions, virtually everybody saw the consequences of them in the form of the cor-

pses of men, women and children rapidly bloating and rotting in the hot sun. There was nobody to bury them.”³

On the morning of April 18, more than 400 thousand families were moving in endless streams along all the four highways leading out of the Kampuchean capital. On each of the highways special posts had been set up to “classify” the population chased out of their city: the names of former servicemen of the Lon Nol armed forces were entered in special lists; the men themselves were separated from the bulk of the city residents and killed by special Pot Pot detachments; government officials, intellectuals and others were directed to new assembly centres and from there they were taken to different parts of the country.

The People’s Revolutionary Tribunal which tried the Pol Pot criminals in absentia established that already by the end of 1975 tens of thousands of officers, soldiers and government employees of the Lon Nol administration had been killed together with their wives, children and grandchildren. People who had worked for the old regime were massacred also in the provinces of Kompong Chhnang, Pursat, Svay Rieng, Battambang and Kompong Speu.

Sam Ok, a teacher at the Phnom-Penh art school, who had miraculously escaped during one such massacre, told me:

“All the condemned people were divided into groups of about 300. Each group had to dig a pit. Then all were driven into a kind of camp fenced off with barbed wire. One by one they were ordered out of the camp and forced to walk towards the pit. The minute a victim came to the edge of the pit a Pol Pot soldier shot him in the back of his head. . . That went on all day. There were thou-

sands of people at the camp servicemen, peasants, workers, women, old people, children..."

Thus began Pol Pot's sinister "social experiment".

In April 1975 the new regime issued a decree under which the country's entire population was divided into three categories.

The first category, the "basic population", included leading officials of the Pol Pot administration and people hailing from the "old liberated zones". These zones were in the remote hilly and wooded provinces in the north and northeast of the country: Preah Vihear, Stung Treng, Mondulhiri and Ratanakiri, and also some areas in the provinces of Kompong Thom, Kratie and Kompong Cham. Those were sparsely populated areas where apart from the Khmers there lived various mountain tribes that were at a most primitive level of development. During the war against the US aggressors and Lon Nol forces the bulk of the Pol Pot army and party personnel were drawn from these areas.

The second category consisted of the inhabitants of some central provinces, including Kompong Speu, Kampot, Pursat, Siem Reap and Koh Kong liberated before April 17, 1975. People in this category were trusted far less than those in the first, but the repressions against them were not too harsh, at least, in the beginning.

Compared to the rest of the population those belonging to the first two categories were in a privileged position. They could move freely in the country and could hold various posts in the administration and the army. A measure of freedom was preserved in the agricultural cooperatives of the first and second categories; there were no overseers watching their every step as was the case with people in the third category.

The third category included all the residents of Phnom-Penh and of all the cities liberated after Phnom-Penh, numbering nearly three million. They were declared prisoners of war and were to be educated through physical labour in rural areas. The Pol Pot gang's idea was that the resettlement of these three million people in villages would ensure a fast growth of agricultural production.

This artificial division of the population, in Pol Pot's opinion, was to achieve two objectives. First, there would be an elite section which would form the social basis of the new regime. Second, there would be an abject, mobile army of labourers which the government could use and ruthlessly exploit in any economic experiment.

The new social structure obviously had no room for either the working class or the intelligentsia—the object of savage repressions from the very first days of the new government.

The “revolutionary” programme of the Pol Pot clique regarded the proletariat as an “exploiter” class, as “henchmen of the capitalists” and an alien element as opposed to the traditional peasantry. The workers were included in the third category and banished to rural areas to be “re-educated”. Only a handful of factories mostly concerned with providing the Pol Pot army with weapons remained open. But the people employed at these factories were no better off in terms of working and living conditions than those undergoing “re-education”. They had no days of rest and worked from dawn till dusk. Besides performing their main tasks, they had to work on plots of land attached to their factory: vegetable plots on the territory of the factory or coconut tree plantations or rice fields situated far away from it.

The chairman of a workers' self-government committee of a tyre factory in the suburbs of Phnom-Penh, Sam Bou, a survivor of the Pol Pot terror, had this to say about those days:

"We were turned into slaves working from sunrise to sunset for a bowl of rice soup. We were not allowed to talk to one another or to ask any questions. We were to listen to harangues and abuse with our heads bent low as a sign of submission. Cruel punishment awaited us for the slightest violation of the regulations laid down by the Pol Pot administration."

Every experienced worker was to teach his trade to an "apprentice" assigned to him. When the training had been completed, the worker was killed or sent back to a rural district.

The "apprentices" left at the plants and factories were youngsters aged 14 or 15 or former soldiers of the Pol Pot army, all of them quite ignorant, with only a few of them being able to read and write and to handle simple machinery with difficulty. They were the people who were to make up the working class of the kind conceived by the Pol Pot administration: unthinking, mute executors of its will.

The Khmer intelligentsia was almost completely exterminated. Radio Phnom-Penh announced: "There is absolutely no use for intellectuals", "Diplomas cannot feed anyone!" and "Today one must work with a hoe and not with a pen". A government decree said: "We must increase revolutionary vigilance with regard to those who had worked under the old administration, and this concerns primarily technical specialists, teachers, doctors and engineers. Our Party has decided to exclude them completely from national construction. If, guided by strictly business interests, we should begin to use

them, the enemy would penetrate our state apparatus deeper and deeper with every year.”⁴

The genocide against the intelligentsia assumed truly monstrous proportions. Put in special concentration camps members of the intelligentsia were savagely tortured and nearly all of them were executed, and they were usually killed together with their families. The rulers fully realized that well-educated intelligent people presented a special danger to them. They were an obstacle to the destruction of the Khmer national culture and to turning the Khmer people into a nation of slaves.

The reign of terror unleashed by Pol Pot and Ieng Sary brought death to four-fifths of the country's school and college teachers and nine-tenths of doctors and pharmacists. The number of university students was reduced from 11,000 to 400. The special commission of inquiry established that nearly 200 well-known writers and publicists—the best representatives of Khmer literature, and more than a thousand actors, film directors and musicians died as a result of torture and harassment.

In liquidating the intelligentsia the Pol Pot killers did everything to prevent a new intelligentsia from emerging. The educational system was reduced to primary schooling alone, and classes lasted for half an hour a day. The pupils chanted “revolutionary” slogans and learned to read and write. That was all the education they got. The rest of the time children had to work in the fields. Khieu Samphan, the head of the Pol Pot state, declared: “Our children play when building dams and digging ditches and canals.”⁵

Having done away with qualified doctors, the authorities announced that there was no need to train new ones, because their work could be done by people who practised folk medicine. As a result

tens of thousands of people died at the hands of ignorant village quacks who enjoyed the government's complete backing.

No technical specialists or engineers were trained either. Their place had been filled by Chinese advisers, the number of whom grew steadily and reached 20,000 by the end of 1978. Most of them were assigned to the army where officers and men were trained to handle Chinese arms, while others controlled the main sectors of the Kampuchean economy. Apart from exercising general supervision, Chinese specialists also worked at industrial enterprises. The tyre factory mentioned earlier was employing 21 Chinese engineers in the middle of 1978.

"The radical social revolution in all spheres" and the "purification of society" carried out by the regime envisaged the complete elimination of all traditional ties between people. To this end the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique destroyed families, separated husbands and wives, took away their children, forbade contacts between neighbours, got rid of communications systems, including post, telegraph and telephone services, and so on.

Families were wrecked by various means. Married couples were forced to live apart, to work in places separated by great distances, and they were not allowed to see or help each other or to show any affection for each other. A person mourning the death of someone dear to him could be killed if found out. It was forbidden to have meals at home and people were obliged to have "social meals" at the newly created "communes".

Children were taken away from their parents. Fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds were forcibly put in "mobile production teams" or sent to the army to be educated in the spirit of utter submission to the

regime. The Pol Pot theorists thought that at this age children were unspoiled and submissive and could make good soldiers who could unquestioningly do the biddings of the leadership.

Marriages for love were prohibited and people married under orders of the local administration. Witnesses at the People's Revolutionary Tribunal said that a young man could be executed just for having an intimate conversation with a girl and the girl could be punished by having an M-79 bullet inserted into her. Young people who married without permission were savagely persecuted.

The following is taken from a Circular Letter to Regional Committees of People's Service, Military Units, All Institutions and Revolutionary Organizations of the 23rd District:

"We have been informed by the Committee of People's Service of Kompong Lae region that two citizens have fled from the village of Koup Noug at 7 p.m. on August 2.

"They are: Ke Chan, aged 30, widower; distinguishing features: dark-skinned, thin, with a lean face, 1.6 metres in height.

"Chen Sagnen, aged 23, widow; distinguishing features: stout, light-skinned, with short hair-cut, 1.6 metres in height.

"Having got married, these two committed a moral crime which calls for punishment. Chen is in her third month of pregnancy. They have fled out of fear of punishment. All the Committees of People's Service at all levels, military units and observation posts, particularly in border areas, are asked to help us find them.

"If they are caught they should be turned over to the authorities and we would be informed of the measures taken in respect of them." ⁶

Widows and unmarried young girls were forced to marry invalids who became crippled while in the service of the ruling clique. Those who refused were thrown into prison or shot dead.

Religion was also to be "eradicated". Eighty-five per cent of the population of Kampuchea are Buddhists. There were strong ties between Buddhist monks, called *pikhoks*, and the peasantry, and the pagodas used to be something like community centres, especially in the villages. Anyone could go there, even believers of other faiths and atheists. People came on holidays or in the evenings not so much to perform religious rites as to meet the *pikhok* and discuss their affairs with him or seek his advice on various matters. So for the bulk of the population, and especially for peasants, Buddhism was part of their national culture. The elimination of religion was therefore of special importance to the Pol Pot clique.

The authorities forbade the *pikhoks* to wear their traditional dress and forced them to raise poultry for food. If a *pikhok* refused because his religion considered the killing of any living thing to be a mortal sin, he was put to death.

The Pol Pot criminals destroyed pagodas, temples and statues of Buddha, and burned Buddhist scriptures. They used pagodas as warehouses to store grain and fertilizers or as concentration camps and prisons where people were tortured and killed.

All these facts were confirmed in a report prepared by the monks of the San Sam Kosal pagoda in Phnom-Penh, as well as by many witnesses who testified before the People's Revolutionary Tribunal. The minister of culture and education in the Pol Pot government, Yoeun Yat, once interviewed by Yugoslav correspondents said that the question of Buddhism in Kampuchea was no longer on the

agenda.⁷ Now we know what lay behind those words.

Thus the Pol Pot social policy, if the atrocities committed by the clique can be called that, was aimed at creating a "homogeneous society" in Kampuchea at any cost. Any sign of dissatisfaction, insubordination or resistance was severely punished. The so-called "members of the opposition" were dealt with especially cruelly.

The "opponents" were exterminated in concentration camps set up specially for the purpose not far from Phnom-Penh and run by the Pol Pot "security service". The biggest of them, Tuol Sleng, was referred to in secret documents as "security centre S-21".

Here, in a former lyceum building fenced off from the rest of the world by a two-metre-high wall made of steel slabs and barbed wire, thousands of innocent people were killed. Schoolrooms had been turned into solitary confinement cells, one metre by one and a half in size. There, chained to the floor, the victims of the blood-stained regime were brutally tortured day after day. One of such cells has been preserved exactly as it was in those days, and there one can see chains, manacles, pliers—everything the executioners used to torture their victims.

No one left the prison alive: the inmates were tortured and then finished off. Tuol Sleng was for the more "dangerous" enemies of the regime. There the prisoners were divided into three groups. The first included high-ranking party and government officials; the second, senior and middle personnel of the armed forces; and the third, the biggest, consisted of soldiers, workers and peasants suspected of "subversive" activities. People in the third group were usually killed after two months of in-

carceration and those in the first and second groups, after six months.

The number of prisoners in Tuol Sleng constantly increased. According to documents published by the People's Revolutionary Tribunal, it was about 100 in 1975 and 1976; in 1977, it increased to 1,200, and in 1978, up to 1,500. The number of those killed also increased: in 1975-1976 some five or six people were killed in one day, in 1977-1978, the figure rose to 100 to 150.

As has already been mentioned, people belonging to the first and second categories in the Pol Pot social system were the dominant section of the population. In the years 1975-1976 they formed the social basis of the regime and enjoyed special economic, legal and political rights.

But in 1977 their position changed. With the power struggle among the leadership becoming more acute, the mass purges that were going on throughout the country began to affect even the privileged sections, which included practically the whole ruling hierarchy, down to the lowest-ranking officials. A resolution of that period regarding the eastern military zone * said:

“When a regional committee comes under suspicion, the commune committee also comes under suspicion. These committees at different levels are bound by diverse ties. Taken as a whole they make up a single system. When a region turns reactionary, the same happens to the commune. When a commune is reactionary, the village becomes reactionary as well. This is perfectly natural.”⁸

* Under the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary regime the country was divided into six military zones, and each of these zones was divided into regions. Phnom-Penh was designated as a special region.

The events of 1978 show how the system of purges, devised by the Pol Pot regime, was carried out in practice. After putting down a popular uprising in the country's eastern zone near the border with Vietnam, the Pol Pot men massacred 40,000 people from that zone who by the time of the uprising had moved to the western provinces of Pursat and Battambang. They were suspected of having contacts with the rebels and were therefore regarded as potential enemies of the regime. But the increased repressions failed to produce the desired results. Public indignation mounted and the struggle against the criminal dictatorship was gaining momentum. The attempt to create a social structure without the working class and the intelligentsia, a society without towns or trade, the attempt to destroy all social institutions and replace them with a repressed society artificially divided into various categories had failed.

The Failure of the "Economic Experiment"

When the Pol Pot clique seized power it began to implement an economic programme based on the idea of a great leap, a single outburst of effort of millions of people, which supposedly would immediately lift the country out of its state of poverty and devastation and turn it into an advanced power and a land of plenty. A resolution of the People's Representatives Assembly (the highest body of state authority under the Pol Pot Constitution of 1976) spoke of the need "to launch an offensive in agriculture for the sake of achieving maximum food production and rapidly improving our people's living standards, and at the same time to give a more powerful impetus to the great leap in national

construction.”⁹ Instead of gradually rehabilitating the country's economy and building up industry and an infrastructure, Pol Pot's "economists" laid emphasis on a vast increase in the production of rice alone and on the development of rice processing industries.

Kampuchea was divided into several agricultural zones, depending on climatic and soil conditions.

The first zone included the main farming provinces: Kandal, Kompong Chhang, Kompong Cham, some areas in Svay Rieng and Prey Veng and in the western province of Battambang. There rice was grown on floodlands near the Mekong and its tributaries and Lake Tonle Sap. The rice sown there was the traditional Kampuchean "floating" rice which needs practically no fertilizers: the silt deposited during the flooding is enough for the farmers to take in one harvest a year. To intensify rice-growing in these areas and take in two or three harvests a year would require large-scale irrigation work: the construction of dams and reservoirs to collect water during the rainy seasons and deliver it to the fields in the dry seasons and the digging of canals and irrigation ditches.

The second zone included the provinces of Siem Reap, Pursat, Kampot and Kompong Thom, where climatic and soil conditions were less favourable. Although there were some fairly large rice-growing areas, this zone was on the whole less prosperous than the first one, with a lower density of population and a smaller economic potential.

The third zone included the northern and north-eastern provinces of Mondulhiri, Ratanakiri, Kratie, Stung Treng and Preah Vihear and the southwestern province of Koh Kong. For the most part this is jungle country and there are only small areas suitable for farming.

And yet according to plans of the Pol Pot clique, a considerable increase in farming area was to be achieved by cultivating land in the uninhabited third zone and in some parts of the second zone.

This is what a survivor from Ampil Pram Daum, one of the "new villages" in a jungle region, 70 kilometres northwest of Battambang, told the American journalists John Barron and Anthony Paul about the life of people there: "Ngy and the people of Ampil Pram Daum suffered almost as fearfully. By September they had denuded the nearby jungles of crabs, snails; bamboo shoots, bindweed and all else edible... People looked like skeletons draped with a thin, sickly cover of skin. Roughly 15 per cent of Ngy's group had died, and of the original 215, now only 10 were strong enough to work."¹⁰

According to the authors, the situation was no less desperate in the other "new villages". Out of a population of 1,000 in the village of Ta Orang, 200 died of diseases. In the Sambok Ork "commune" people were dying at the rate of five or six a day in July and August 1975. In Phum Svay Sar village 150 people out of a population of 800 died in one month.¹¹

The lot of those sent from the cities to the first zone was no better. Witnesses described how canals were built there. Production team members were lined up in rows, one behind another, along the section of the canal being dug in the dry and hard ground. The first row removed the top layer of the soil, the second, the one underneath, and so on. They were guarded by soldiers with machine guns stationed along the edges of the canal. Thousands of people died there from physical exhaustion, hunger and diseases.

The Pol Pot regime hoped to achieve a considerable growth in rice production within the short-

est possible period of time at the cost of thousands upon thousands of human lives. It was planned, in particular, to produce an average of 12 tons of rice per hectare, while taking in two harvests a year in the first zone. Four tons per hectare was considered enough for the second and third zones. In all, 4,600 thousand tons of rice were to be produced annually, of which 1,300 thousand tons were to be exported and 3,300 thousand consumed at home. With the lack of the necessary machinery and mineral fertilizers, and with primitive planning and forced labour, it is not surprising that the targets were not fulfilled.

The so-called "samohapheap" cooperatives were especially notorious for the harsh exploitation of their members. Those cooperatives were set up in the uninhabited areas of the second and third zones where people evicted from towns were sent. Everything was made public property there, even personal belongings. It was forbidden to have personal soup bowls, to cook and eat separately. Life in such cooperatives was strictly regimented. No one could leave without the permission of the management. Special permission was needed even to move from one such settlement to another. Working hours and the type of work to be done were determined for each worker by the cooperative management.

Witnesses who testified before the People's Revolutionary Tribunal told about the daily routine in the cooperatives. "Everybody laboured from 5:30 or 6:00 a.m. to... 2 to 5 p.m. ... In some settlements work resumed for three hours at night if the moon was out. Men, women and children were segregated into separate work parties and kept apart in the fields... Guards allowed neither rest nor conversation during work."¹² There were no days

of rest, people worked even on holidays, including April 17, which had been declared a national holiday.

These cooperatives were the main form of organization of mass forced labour. Living in barrack-type conditions, the cooperative members were in fact slaves working for a bowl of watery soup.

A survivor of the "samohapheap" cooperative not far from Battambang, testified:

"For our backbreaking work we were given a bowl of soup with a few grains of rice in it. The ration was one kilogramme of rice per one hundred people. We had to eat mice, grasshoppers, earthworms and some edible leaves. In Ta Amp, three thousand out of four thousand people had died. Those who survived were dragging out a miserable existence. In our group of six I was the only survivor, the rest had died from hunger and exhaustion." 13

Officially the rice grown in the cooperatives belonged to all the members and was to be shared out in accordance with the amount of work put in by each of them. But that worked only in the initial period after April 17, 1975, and only in the cooperatives of the first and second zones, which had "social warehouses" where they kept rice, textiles and farm implements.

Cooperatives of the "samohapheap" type also had such warehouses but they could not use them: all the grain stored there was taken away by the Pol Pot administration.

An indispensable part of the government's domestic policy was to create an atmosphere of fear and suspicion to paralyze people's will to resist and to isolate them from each other. An extensive surveillance system was introduced in the "samohapheap" cooperatives, with "security service" agents

watching people's every step. Wide use was made of informers.

"At night spies eavesdropped on families. During the day they mingled with peasants. If they heard anyone complain they immediately informed the administration," a former cooperative member told the People's Revolutionary Tribunal.¹⁴

Penalties included both "harsh" and "mild" measures. "Mild" measures meant sending the culprit to do especially hard work and further reducing his meagre food ration. But in most cases "harsh" measures were taken, which meant only one thing—execution.

The Pol Pot gangs slaughtered whole families for not being sufficiently "industrious". Any misdemeanour was punished by death. In one of the cooperatives, for instance, a former resident of Phnom-Penh was shot dead on the spot when he, driven by hunger, stole a few corn-cobs in the field.

Nearly the entire population of the "samohap-heap" cooperatives was dying out as a result of the backbreaking work and hunger. Thus, out of a population of 28,000 in the Prey Lovea "village commune" in Takeo province only 5,000 were left in January 1979 when the country was liberated. The Pol Pot administration had been compelled on three occasions to resettle 10,000 people in the Kgnom Bot "village commune" in Pursat province from other regions in order to replace those dying from hunger or sentenced to death.

Some of the new cooperatives were fairly large, consisting of up to 1,000 families, while others were small with 100 families or so. The large ones were usually set up in the first zone and in some parts of the second zone. The smaller cooperatives were usually to be found in areas where new land was

being developed, that is, in the second and third zones.

Each cooperative consisted of several groups of 10 to 15 families, with group leaders who had two assistants. Their job was to supervise the work of cooperative members and carry out various economic and "political" functions. The latter meant spying or picking out people to be liquidated.

A former assistant chief of a commune in Prey Veng province, Hem Yoeum, who gave evidence at the August 1979 Tribunal, said: "When I worked under the Pol Pot regime my chiefs, in particular, the district authorities, ordered me to draw up lists of people who were to be liquidated, six thousand people in all. I compiled those lists every week, ostensibly to establish the exact number of people who were in need of food and clothing. But actually the lists were used to determine the number of people to be killed. The six thousand were divided into several groups... Twenty or thirty Pol Pot soldiers would come to the village and take away a group to be executed. I know that all of them were eventually executed." ¹⁵

Thus the Pol Pot system of mass extermination worked throughout the country, at all levels, down to the lowest level of a small cooperative.

The system was the same in the big cooperatives, the only difference being that there the cooperative chief was always appointed from above. He collected information from group leaders and organized production and "political" work among the cooperative members. Anyone wishing to go to a neighbouring region had to have his written permission. He also had two assistants, doing the same work as the assistants of a group leader.

The Pol Pot regime had attached foremost importance to the creation of new farming coopera-

tives. But it made the mistake in thinking that a universal system of forced labour could be an effective one. Productivity in the "communes" was extremely low and thousands of their members were dying from starvation, disease, exhaustion and brutal repressions.

The Pol Pot clique allotted for rice-growing thousands of hectares of farmland that had previously been sown with maize, Indian corn and manioc, which until 1975 made up a large part of the Khmer peasants' diet. There were only meagre returns from the huge sums of money spent on irrigation, for as often as not the irrigation projects were planned by incompetent "specialists". The development of virgin lands also proved a failure because of low soil fertility and the lack of fertilizers. In a broadcast in 1976 Radio Phnom-Penh said that many areas that had been developed earlier had to be abandoned because of low productivity.

Agricultural "experts" of the Pol Pot administration planned to use approximately four kilogrammes of mineral fertilizers and not more than 300 kilogrammes of organic fertilizers for every hectare of arable land in order to obtain 2.5 to 3 tons of rice per hectare. In the most developed Southeast Asian countries farmers use from 100 to 150 kilogrammes of mineral fertilizers and from 10 to 12 tons of organic fertilizers for every hectare in order to harvest this amount. These figures alone indicate that the plans of the Pol Pot "economists" were utterly unrealistic.

The policy of socializing personal property to the maximum was also unfeasible. People working under the lash were not interested in the results of their labour. Cooperatives set up in 1974 during the national liberation war were to a certain extent

economically viable. However, their productivity dropped in peacetime after 1975. For one thing, the most primitive implements were used in the fields. Even spades were in short supply, and for lack of the necessary tools the land was cultivated by bamboo sticks. Trees were uprooted by hand, and people were used to pull carts instead of draught animals. There were cases where irrigation canals were dug by bare hands.

To sum it up, the economic policy of the Pol Pot state in the main sector, agriculture, was doomed to failure. Yet the sterile scheme, which disregarded real conditions and the country's economic possibilities, was put into practice with fanatical zeal. The regime's "economic experiment", accompanied by the massacre of hundreds of thousands of people, brought the country to the gravest social and economic crisis in its history.

Destruction of Ethnic Minorities

The Pol Pot regime's nationalities policy had nothing to do with scientific communism either. Instead of proclaiming the equality of all the ethnic groups in Kampuchea and granting them autonomy, the Pol Pot clique preached and pursued quite a different course the main objective of which was to create an ethnically "homogeneous" state at all costs and within the shortest possible space of time.

Significantly, the "Constitution of Democratic Kampuchea" failed to mention the country's ethnic minorities at all. Just like entire groups of the population which failed to fit in with the scheme of the "new society" and were therefore doomed to extermination, the ethnic minorities retaining

their specific features were to be either forcibly assimilated or destroyed.

Hundreds of documents were found in the Phnom-Penh archives after the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime confirming its plans to exterminate Kampuchea's small ethnic groups. For instance, one of the directives of the Pol Pot leadership addressed to the provincial authorities read in part: "The Kampuchean revolution is an integral whole and so is the Kampuchean nation. The Khmer language is the only language. There are no ethnic groups in Kampuchea from now on. Therefore people must change their names to those typical of the Khmer race. The languages, ethnic features, clothes, customs and religion of the former nationalities must be resolutely eradicated. Those failing to obey this order will bear full responsibility for that." ¹⁶

A reign of terror was unleashed against all the ethnic minorities. The Chinese community was nearly completely eliminated already in 1975. Chinese residents who engaged in small-scale trade and usury and controlled many companies and industrial enterprises before 1975 were regarded as "class enemies" by the Pol Pot clique. A member of the Chinese community who managed to escape to Vietnam told me the following about what happened to the thousands of Chinese residents in the coastal city of Kompong Som where he lived:

"Kompong Som is in the western part of Kampuchea. Most of the people in our district were Chinese. One night Pol Pot bandits came to our district and said they were looking for weapons, but in fact they beat up all whom they could lay their hands on. And not only that. They hurled a woman out of a window. I saw it with my own eyes. And a neighbour of mine, a schoolgirl, was

raped. When her father rushed to her help, he was shot dead by soldiers.

"In the morning we were driven out of our homes and were told to form columns. We were not allowed to take our belongings, which we were told belonged to the state from now on. In the mountains we were divided into several groups. Those who had worked in government offices or served in the army were taken aside and stoned. The same was done to doctors, students and engineers. Those who had businesses of their own and were engaged in trade formed the third group. They were stripped and searched. If any gold or money was found on anyone, the whole family was killed. A friend of mine, Tet Souk, and his children were killed: Pol Pot men dove nails into the backs of their heads."

The Vietnamese community was also persecuted. The Pol Pot rulers regarded its members as Vietnam's "fifth column" in Kampuchea and took a whole series of measures to solve "the Vietnamese problem". Ethnic Vietnamese were to be either exterminated or forcibly deported to Vietnam. No more Vietnamese were allowed to settle in Kampuchea. To create an atmosphere of hostility and hatred between the Khmers and the Vietnamese, the Pol Pot clique systematically provoked armed clashes on the border with Vietnam. It is now known that this policy was worked out by Khieu Samphan personally as far back as during the national liberation struggle in 1973.

Thousands of Vietnamese were killed within a short space of time as a result of the implementation of a "pacification" programme for the Vietnamese community. Others were driven out of Kampuchea. A well-known Australian scholar and journalist, Wilfred Burchett, noted that nearly 270,000

Vietnamese left Kampuchea and poured into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from April 17, 1975 to October 20, 1978. Most of them were utterly emaciated and suffering from severe malnutrition.¹⁷

The Pol Pot clique also considered Khmers of South Vietnamese origin, the so-called Khmae Kraom (the lower Khmers, that is, those living in the Mekong delta), "agents" of Vietnam in Kampuchea. Back in the 1960s thousands of Khmae Kraom moved to Kampuchea to escape the horrors of the war in South Vietnam. According to the Pol Pot clique, the mass extermination of those unfortunate people was necessary because they had "Khmer bodies and Vietnamese souls", because they had lived in Vietnam and spoke the Vietnamese language.

But it was the Chams and Thais who were subjected to particularly cruel persecution. The Chams, who had lived in Kampuchea since the 17th century and had always retained their specific national and religious traditions, were made to change their names to Khmer ones and were forbidden to wear their traditional dress and speak their native language even when they were at home. The Chams were also forbidden to profess Islam. Their mosques were converted either to fertilizer storehouses or pigsties. All Muslim clergymen were killed. The spiritual leader of the Kampuchean Chams, Hary Roslos, his deputy El Had Souleysman Sokri and thousands of other religious figures were brutally murdered back in 1975.

During my tour of the country Mat Sofi told me about the destruction of the small Cham village of Prey Kadam not far from Phnom-Penh.

"In early 1976," she said, "our village was surrounded by Pol Pot guardsmen. People felt that

something horrible was going to happen, but it was impossible to leave the village. Late at night I heard loud cries. The Pol Pot men, all dressed in black, armed with knives and truncheons, broke into the village. They attacked unarmed and defenceless people, killing all — women, children and old people. Everything was finished in about an hour: the village was a heap of smouldering ruins. My mother, father and four brothers were all killed in that massacre. Out of the 800 inhabitants of Prey Kadam I was the only one who survived.”

The Chams' numerous protest actions and uprisings were cruelly suppressed. The residents of entire districts were slaughtered. For instance, in November 1975, when the Chams in the village of Trea (north of Kompong Cham) rebelled against the Pol Pot regime, its troops razed the whole village. Those who survived were killed by soldiers who smashed their heads with hoes. The massacre of the villagers was followed by slaughter in neighbouring settlements and communities. Massacres of Chams also occurred in the provinces of Kratie, Kompong Cham, Kompong Chhang and Pursat, to mention just a few. About 20,000 were killed in a ditch at Chrous Stung Treng (Kompong Cham province). Out of the 1,200 families that lived in Chroy Changva, the Cham district in Phnom-Penh, in 1975, only 60 returned after liberation. The scale of the genocide against the Chams was truly terrifying. While the Chams numbered about half a million prior to 1975, nearly all of them perished by January 1979 as a result of systematic killings and persecution.

The same tragic lot befell the Thais living in Kampuchea. Most of them lived in Koh Kong province and they were all killed. Only a few Thais managed to escape to Thailand.

The ethnic minorities actively resisted the regime's savage policy towards them. Continuous unrest among the small nationalities undermined the regime. Thousands of their members took part in the armed struggle that overthrew the Pol Pot dictatorship.

External Expansion

In the field of foreign policy the Pol Pot regime took a course that led to the isolation of the country from the international community and kindled hostility towards neighbouring states.

In those days Pol Pot army units continually violated the Thai border, attacking civilians and resorting to looting and violence.

Provocations on the Laotian border were no less frequent. For instance, Pol Pot army units occupied ten islands in the Mekong river that had belonged to Laos from time immemorial.

But the key element in Pol Pot's foreign policy was whipping up anti-Vietnam hysteria inside the country and staging armed provocations along the Kampuchean-Vietnamese border. Pol Pot and his men hoped that bellicose nationalism and chauvinism would help them to rally broad sections of Kampuchean society around them.

The Foreign Ministry of the Pol Pot government officially laid claims to 65,000 square kilometres of Vietnam's territory in the Mekong delta. The claims were totally absurd. The first clashes between the two countries occurred in May 1975 when Kampuchean troops invaded some of the Vietnamese border areas in the delta and made a landing on Tho Chu and Phu Quoc islands. And the border clashes had continued despite repeated

suggestions on the part of the Vietnamese leaders that the border disputes be discussed and settled by both countries through negotiations.

However, a peaceful settlement of disputes did not suit the schemes of the Pol Pot clique, and in 1977 border clashes developed into a full-scale war. A report on the combat operations carried out by Pol Pot troops from April 1977 to April 1978, broadcast by Radio Phnom-Penh on May 10, 1978, said in part: "On January 6, 1978 we cleared all of our territory of Vietnamese troops. We continued the fighting till late January 1978. We again launched offensive operations in February and those attacks were more powerful, at division level. After smashing the enemy forces we carried combat operations over to their territory."¹⁸

The Pol Pot soldiers committed horrible atrocities on Vietnamese soil. They burned down villages, destroyed crops and killed defenceless civilians including women, children and old people. But they did not remain in the captured villages. After killing all the inhabitants they swiftly rolled back as soon as regular Vietnamese troops approached the area.

The Pol Pot leadership used those incursions to whip up fear of the Vietnamese and hatred for them among the Khmers. The former commander of the 280th Division of the Pol Pot army, who voluntarily went over to Vietnam's side, had this to say at a news conference: "My units were pulled back from the border after several incursions into Vietnamese territory. The political leadership sent soldiers to production teams in Prey Veng province where they described the killings and acts of destruction they had committed on Vietnamese territory. This propaganda campaign lasted four days. I think it was done to sow fear among

the Khmers, for every Khmer was convinced that the Vietnamese would take revenge on any Kampuchean for the atrocities committed by the Kampuchean soldiers. The Pol Pot clique hoped that by so doing they would frighten the population and prevent Kampucheans from fleeing to Vietnam en masse.”¹⁹

There were constant clashes all along the 1,100 kilometre border between Kampuchea and Vietnam. Many Vietnamese border villages were either destroyed or abandoned by their inhabitants who were evacuated to the hinterland by the decision of the Vietnamese authorities. The incursions engineered by the Pol Pot clique inflicted particularly heavy damage on the Vietnamese provinces of An Giang and Tay Ninh. For instance, 27 people were killed and more than 40 wounded during just one raid by Pol Pot troops on the border village of Angka. Three and a half thousand hectares of rice fields were ruined, and all houses were burned down. In Tay Ninh province 1,180 people had been killed and as many wounded since September 1977. “We have to evacuate people from areas coming under bombing strikes and air raids by Pol Pot troops,” said a member of the provincial people’s committee in an interview with a correspondent of the French magazine *Afrique-Asie*. “So we had abandoned 15,000 hectares of land and resettled 71,000 people. The total area of land abandoned near the Kampuchean-Vietnamese border came to 200,000 hectares. One and a quarter million people had been evacuated.”²⁰

Besides stepping up combat operations on the Kampuchean-Vietnamese border, the leaders of “Democratic Kampuchea” put forward the idea that the “world” revolution was to be preceded

by a "regional" revolution in Southeast Asia. They considered the victory they had scored in Kampuchea to be the first stage of that "regional" revolution and regarded themselves as the main centre and a source of inspiration of that revolution. Their experience in building "socialism and communism" in "Democratic Kampuchea", they declared, was of worldwide historic importance. "Kampuchea will prove to the whole world that it is possible to achieve full communism at one stroke," Khieu Samphan had claimed on more than one occasion. "Thanks to this our country will write its name in gold in world history as the first country that has succeeded in carrying out communization without any unnecessary intermediate stages." ²¹

Actually the Pol Pot leadership were not the only ones to have drawn up schemes of turning Southeast Asia into the centre of a "world" revolution. Many ultra-leftist political figures in other Southeast Asian countries had also advanced this idea. The Pol Pot clique, however, was the first to put this idea into practice.

Intoxicated with its adventuristic and extremist designs, the Pol Pot clique tried to spread its own type of "social revolution" in the region and to establish contacts with various leftist parties and groups in Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Pol Pot more and more often spoke about the "possibility of a revolution" in Southeast Asia. For instance, in 1977 Pol Pot made this "interesting" admission: "If the revolution in Southeast Asia seizes the opportunity to launch an offensive, the situation will improve and we shall be able to solve our problems. We have exchanged views with our Burmese, Malayan, Indonesian and Thai friends, and found that our

views coincide. This is a major political success. Of course, if one looks into details, the situation still remains very complex. But unity achieved in Southeast Asia is a strategic gain which is a great encouragement to us.”²²

However, the Pol Pot clique's ambitious plans to engineer first a “regional” and then a “world” revolution according to its pattern failed to materialize. These plans were frustrated by the determined struggle of the Kampuchean people against the bloody regime, a regime of genocide.

The Countrywide Uprising

Since the time the Pol Pot clique began to pursue its savage, anti-popular policy the protest movement had been gaining momentum all over the country. Gradually, this movement assumed a mass scale involving more and more sections of the Kampuchean population. One of the first uprisings was in September 1975. Its participants were citizens of the “third category” sent to do irrigation work in Siem Reap province. In 1976-1977, anti-Pol Pot actions spread to Battambang, Koh Kong, Siem Reap, Mondulhiri, Kratie and Stung Treng provinces. The actions were doomed to failure from the very outset because all the third-category citizens were guarded by troops loyal to the regime. The cause of the uprisings was the same everywhere: people would rather die fighting the hated regime than submit to it.

Since early 1978 the country's economic situation further deteriorated while reprisals have engulfed all the sections of the population. At that time even many peasants took part in anti-government actions, although under the Pol Pot scheme

they belonged to the privileged categories of Kampuchean society. For instance, in August 1978 there were uprisings staged by first-category peasants in the provinces of Prey Veng, Kompong Cham, Svay Rieng, Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri.

The uprising in the Kran Huon commune in Prey Veng province took a particularly tragic turn. The local inhabitants, having learned that a massacre was in store for them, attacked the armed guards. They managed to capture 16 rifles. Taking with them the rice that had been stored and was to have been appropriated by the Pol Pot men, 2,000 people began to move to an area close to the Vietnamese border. The first column of 800 people fought its way through the jungle for 23 days. Only 610 of them survived that "death march". The second column of 1,200 failed to break through, and all of them were killed by the punitive units.

Opponents of the Pol Pot clique in the army tried to stage a coup in February 1977. The uprising started among units of the Phnom-Penh garrison. However, it was suppressed after several hours of street fighting. The garrison commander Cha Krey was shot by a firing squad, and three other leaders of the uprising were captured and burned alive. Unrest spread to several other army units, and on the night of March 31, 1977 more than 200 army commanders and political officers were shot by a firing squad and several regiments were disarmed.

Documents submitted to the People's Revolutionary Tribunal show that a total of 242 high-ranking officials of the Pol Pot administration were liquidated from 1976 to April 9, 1978, including two members of the Party Central Committee, four

Party zonal secretaries, 24 secretaries and members of Party district committees, four ministers, 5 deputy ministers and 8 divisional political commissars.

A landmark in the development of the rebel movement was the May 1978 uprising in the provinces of Kompong Chhang, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri, which involved both army units and the local population. Eleven divisions and four regiments of the special forces of the eastern zone stationed not far from the Kampuchean-Vietnamese border were to make up the backbone of the rebel force. Shortly before the start of the revolt the Pol Pot secret service managed to uncover the plans of the opponents of the regime and to arrest many of its organizers. The actions that began on May 26 were scattered, and no united front was formed. Fighting took on an organized form only in the 21st Military District where the 290th and 280th Divisions were stationed. However, the odds were against them. On May 28, the rebels, having run out of ammunition, began to retreat in small groups into the jungle in the country's northeast in order to continue the armed struggle against the regime there.

In 1978, three years after the Pol Pot clique came to power and started to carry out its "experiment", Kampuchea found itself in a deep crisis. Every aspect of Pol Pot's policy had proved a failure. The anti-Marxist "programme", which formed the basis of the clique's political, social and economic actions, had brought the country to the verge of collapse, and the savage methods used in implementing the programme, the liquidation of millions of Kampuchean turned the entire population against the regime.

Leaflets urging the people to unite and overthrow the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique began to appear in all parts of the country in November 1978. One such appeal was signed by Heng Samrin, former commander of the 4th Division, a member of the zonal committee of the Communist Party of Kampuchea in the eastern zone, who took an active part in the anti-Pol Pot rebellion in May 1978. The appeal said: "The traitors Pol Pot and Ieng Sary are dictators and militarists; the Central Committee of their Party consists of their relatives and henchmen. They killed all who were not with them. In the face of a national disaster we appeal to all of you who are still serving in the clique's army:

1. Think twice, don't let anyone mislead you, don't use weapons against your brothers and sisters who come out against the clique.

2. Young men and women, resist the traitors whose aim is to destroy our people and to wage a war against Vietnam! Point your guns at the clique, join the guerrillas, the genuine revolutionary and patriotic movement!

3. Mothers and sisters, encourage your sons, brothers and husbands to join the guerrillas in order to escape death at the hands of the executioners and to fight for the overthrow of the clique's reactionary regime for the sake of the country's liberation, for the sake of building another social system. Our slogan is 'Struggle or death!' " ²³

At the same time Heng Samrin's appeal was issued, another leaflet calling for an uprising appeared in many parts of Kampuchea. It was signed by Chea Sim, the former leader of the 20th district. The appeal said:

"The Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique is destroying our nation, the people of our country. It is carry-

ing out unprecedented genocide. It liquidated all who were not with it, even members of its own Central Committee and of its own government... The clique is killing civilians, men and women, young and old, both the sick and the healthy, without any consideration for the services which its victims had rendered to the country... Never before in its history has Kampuchea known such cruel executioners. The clique has betrayed the nation, the people, the revolution... The time has come!

"Fellow-countrymen and friends! You should hesitate no longer. The forces of justice and progress are on your side."²⁴ The Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation (KNUFNS) was formed in a border area in the east of Kampuchea on December 1, 1978. It brought together all who fought to overthrow the bloodthirsty regime.

The statement on the formation of the Front said: "The KNUFNS, founded in keeping with the spirit of genuine independence of the Kampuchean people, unites all the ethnic groups in the country, all patriotic forces regardless of their political views and religious convictions, including workers, peasants, members of the petty bourgeoisie, Buddhist monks, patriots still in the ranks of the ruling clique, and fellow-countrymen now living abroad, in order to carry out the vital task of the Kampuchean which is to rally the entire people for staging an uprising and overthrowing the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary reactionary clique."²⁵ The programme adopted by the Front clearly defined the main objectives of the Kampuchean revolution. Its 11 points stressed the need to destroy the anti-popular, reactionary Pol Pot regime, to restore the people's revolutionary and democratic gains, to pursue a

policy of peace, friendship, peaceful coexistence, good-neighbourly relations and cooperation with all countries.

The Front's Central Committee was headed by Heng Samrin. Among its members were many veterans of the anti-Pol Pot struggle, representatives of all the groups and strata of Kampuchean society. Members of the Front included representatives of the Union of Peasants for the Salvation of the Country, Buddhist clergymen, the intelligentsia, ethnic minorities, women's and youth organizations. The Front became the main organizer and leader of the countrywide anti-Pol Pot struggle. Armed uprisings took place in 16 out of the country's 19 provinces. Several areas were liberated from the Pol Pot regime. Those were remote areas in the country's northeast. Local inhabitants attacked Pol Pot guards and left the "communes", which were virtually prisons for them, to join rebel units in the jungle. From mid-1978 many veterans of the national liberation struggle who had fled abroad to escape Pol Pot's terror began to return; they established contact with the rebel forces and took part in the fight against the Pol Pot regime. By late 1978 more and more areas had been freed from Pol Pot's regime. The rebels had occupied such provincial centres as Kratie and Stung Treng.

By that time Pol Pot's army had sustained heavy losses during massive assaults on Vietnam's border areas. This factor was of no small importance for the patriots' success. The borders of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam were reliably protected and the Vietnamese army responded with vigorous strikes to every provocation by the Pol Pot clique. It was in the battles on the approaches to the South Vietnamese provinces of Tay Ninh,

Long An and Dong Thap that many elite units of the Pol Pot army were smashed. Vietnamese army units played a key role in the success of the popular uprising in Kampuchea. They fought against the Pol Pot regime shoulder to shoulder with the Kampuchean patriots, giving them all-round aid and support.

The uprising that began under the leadership of the United Front for National Salvation came to a victorious end with the capture of Phnom-Penh and the liberation of the country from the Pol Pot regime. The People's Republic of Kampuchea was proclaimed on January 11, 1979. Pol Pot's blood-stained regime was overthrown. Kampuchea entered a new phase of development—the construction of the basis of a socialist society.

Conclusion

When peace at last came to the devastated and scarred land of Kampuchea, many Western observers said that it would take decades before the country could rise from the ruins. But they were wrong: they had underestimated the resilience and optimism of the Kampuchean people who started to build a new life with enthusiasm.

Keo Chanda, a veteran of the Kampuchean revolution, Chairman of the People's Revolutionary Committee of Phnom-Penh, told me: "Our people now understand perfectly well that they have become true masters of their country for the first time in their centuries-old history. This gives us added strength in rebuilding the nation and helps us to heal the grave wounds left by the Pol Pot regime within a short space of time."

Indeed, the young republic's achievements are impressive. More than 650,000 people now live in Phnom-Penh and its outskirts. Life has also returned to normal in other Kampuchean cities. Good progress has been made in agriculture, the main sector of the Kampuchean economy. For instance, in 1983 the country harvested more than two million tons of rice in spite of bad weather. More and more fields were brought under cultivation. The mutual aid groups of peasants formed on a voluntary basis have also become more prosperous in recent years. Currently they unite more than 1,350,000 peasant families.

Industrial output is growing at a rapid pace. More than 60 factories have been restored and are turning out products the country needs. New construction projects are going up all over the country. A diesel electric power plant being built in Phnom-Penh with Soviet assistance will soon be commissioned. Similar power stations are being built in Kompong Som, the country's main port, as well as in Battambang, Siem Reap and Kompong Cham. Rubber plantations in Ratanakiri and Kompong Cham provinces, once famous throughout Indo-China, are now being rehabilitated. They had been heavily damaged both as a result of US bombing strikes and of Pol Pot's economic "experiment". Irrigation systems in Battambang and many other areas are also being restored. Schools and the public health service have been set up anew. The ancient traditions and customs of the Khmers are being revived; illiteracy is being eliminated; and living standards are being improved.

Kampuchea's progress could be even more impressive if the country had not been turned into an object of unceasing intrigues by the forces of

imperialism, hegemonism and international reaction. Something incomprehensible has happened: the criminals sentenced to death by the people's court, the masterminds and perpetrators of bloody genocide whose atrocities aroused anger and indignation around the world have found patrons and protectors abroad.

The enemies of the Kampuchean people are now pinning their hopes on the above-mentioned "coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea". Even a casual observer can see that in that "government" the Pol Pot clique practically keeps all the reins and that such a tripartite "coalition" is a sheer farce, a cover-up for the subversive activities of the surviving Pol Pot gangs. And those butchers, who receive arms, food and money from abroad, continue to carry out their criminal deeds. They rob peasants, kill civilians in the border areas and then pull back to their bases in Thailand.

The forces that back the surviving Pol Pot units and give them all-round aid and support are at the same time conducting an anti-Kampuchean and anti-Vietnamese propaganda campaign and pointing an accusing finger at the presence of Vietnamese volunteer units in the People's Republic of Kampuchea. But, as the Kampuchean government has said on many occasions, the Vietnamese forces are stationed in Kampuchea at its request. As was pointed out in a joint statement issued by the leaders of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Laotian People's Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of Kampuchea on February 23, 1983, from the very outset, that is, from January 1979 the participation of Vietnamese forces in liberating Kampuchea from the Pol Pot clique "was an act in response to a sit-

uation that called for a display of solidarity and mutual assistance”.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea signed a treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation on February 18, 1979. Its Article 2 provides for “all-round mutual aid and support in every field and in every form necessary for strengthening the capacity to defend the independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and peaceful labour of each country from any intrigues and acts of subversion by the forces of imperialism and international reaction”. And it is in keeping with this treaty that Vietnamese army units are stationed in Kampuchea. The governments of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea have repeatedly declared that at present Vietnamese forces are stationed in Kampuchea because of an external threat. Kampuchea has not yet healed its wounds and so far cannot effectively protect its borders from the enraged Pol Pot gangs that are armed to the teeth and enjoy superpower support.

... It was evening when I boarded a plane in Phnom-Penh. Before heading for Ho Chi Minh City it made a broad circle over the sprawling city. Dusk was gathering and the first faint lights began to appear in the city below. Gradually, there were more and more of them and in the distance they merged to form one bright star—a symbol of the rebirth of the ancient Kampuchean state.

Notes

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7. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
8. Document of the People's Revolutionary Tribunal ... 3.0.2.
9. *Ibid.*, 3.0.1.
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11. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
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15. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
16. Document of the People's Revolutionary Tribunal ... 3.0.2.
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18. Facts and documents concerning serious violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam by Democratic Kampuchea. Hanoi, 1978, p. 1.
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22. Document of the People's Revolutionary Tribunal ... 3.0.1., p. 37.
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25. Declaration of the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation, Phnom-Penh, 1979, p. 3.



Дмитрий Мосяков
ПРЕСТУПЛЕНИЕ ПОЛПОТОВСКОГО РЕЖИМА
(Исторический очерк)
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The Crimes of the Pol Pot Regime



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