Cambodia from 1945

General background

As pointed out by Chandler (1973: 106) brutality and insecurity had been a common feature of nineteenth century Cambodia. Vickery (1984: 7-8) stressed that “Sudden arbitrary violence was still part of the experience of many rural Cambodians in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. A woman acquaintance told me how her father... used to keep his prisoners chained up beneath the house without food or water and then execute them on his own firing range a few hundred yards beyond the back yard. He was not a pathological sadist either, but a good family man remembered fondly by his widow and children... Probably few Cambodians entertained doubts that traitors or even enemies should be killed...” If these traits do not explain the various phenomena of mass violence in Cambodia, it is nevertheless important to keep them in mind, not to fall prey to other myths attached to the country such as ‘an essential gentleness, quietness and apathy of all Cambodians,’ or Cambodia as a peaceful and “gentle land” Vickery (1984).

March 1945 – October 1945: A Japanese-Sponsored Independence

Background: In 1945, notably to cover their retreat, the Japanese, gave their independence to some of the colonies and protectorates of Southeast Asia, including the Protectorate/Kingdom of Cambodia. Yet, the lack of preparation, the suddenness of the event, and the obstacles the Japanese put on the path of the Cambodian state in its endeavour to assert the legitimate monopoly of the means of violence greatly contributed to weaken the Cambodian state-authority (Lavoix, 2005: 181-192).

Nota: The word “Annamite” used below was employed, at the time, to designate people from Dai Namese descent. Dai Nam, “Great State of the South,” had become the two French protectorates of Ton Kin and An Nam (Chinese term for Dai Nam meaning “Pacified South” (Brocheux and Hémery, 2001: 371, fn4). People from Dai Namese descent could also come from the South-eastern part of the geographical Indochinese Peninsula (around the Mekong delta), frontier zone still in dispute during the nineteenth century between Kampuchea thepatai and Dai Nam, which had become the French colony of Cochinchina. The word that would be used today is “Vietnamese.”

Chronology: 1945 (May to October): A difficult situation might have developed with the “Annamites” in Cambodia, probably with significant regional differences. Cambodians feared an “Annamite coup” and the “Annamites” feared Cambodians. Violent acts against “Annamites” might have happened, as some Cambodian governmental reports mention that “frightened Annamites” wished to leave Kampuchea because they feared Cambodians. **(National Archives of Cambodia hereinafter NAC, files 23707, 23709)

1945 (August to 23 October): In its endeavour to show the nationalism of Cambodian people, the government, headed by Son Ngoc Thanh as Prime Minister, gave to Pro-French Cambodians “special attention.” An unknown number of the latter was incarcerated in the camp of Pech Nill. At least two of them died in suspect conditions in October 1945. Cambodian women involved with French men were incarcerated at the Kompong Speu jail. ***(NAC, 23707, 34190; Centre des Archives d’Outre Mer, hereinafter CAOM, HCC 11)

October 1945 - November 1953: A War for Independence

Background: A series of factors, including the Allied victory, the assertion of communism in nearby Vietnam, and the definition of a new French colonial policy, the “Union Française”, led to a French
return in Cambodia. For the Kampuchean nation and polity, this meant that the next period would demand to achieve the independence of the Nation-State, to reassert a functioning authority while respecting, in the same time, the historically constructed national beliefs and the international norms of democracy and modernisation. Until 9 November 1953, with the first Indochina war, Cambodia fought to achieve these aims. Then interacted four groups of Kampuchean actors (the state-authority, the new political parties, the Khmer Issarak (Independent Khmer), and the Communist movement), France, Thailand and the Viet-Minh.

For the Communist and the Issarak (Cambodian Nationalist) independence was dated from the Geneva agreement (8 May 1954 - 20 July 1954). For France, legally, the Kampuchean independence began on 8 November 1949. For the Kampuchean authority headed by Sihanouk, Independence occurred on 9 November 1953, with the final transfer of the remaining powers from the French to the Kampucheans, while Cambodia left the French Union.

More research regarding phenomena of mass violence has to be done for this period.


**Chronology:**

**1946:** Issarak raid on Siem Reap. Several civilians were killed ***

**1949 (May-June):** In the countryside, the Viet-Minh terror strategy during the war meant that they kidnapped or killed village elite and authorities, threatened civilians, pillaged and burnt material properties. Vietnamese communities then still composed the Viet-Minh’s main supporters (willing or forced) and the Viet-Minh used women and children as fighters or terrorists in their reprisals against non-compliant villages. Kampuchean villagers suffered at the hands of the Vietnamese, and knew that the Viet-Minh penetration network was through Vietnamese villages. ***(CAOM, HCI Conseiller Politique 28)

Meanwhile, the dislocating forces at work in the Kampuchean polity added to the existence of nationalism worked against the Viet-Minh effort at establishing a competing authority. French intelligence began to trace dissension over unknown motives between the Viet-Minh and affiliated Issarak bands in November 1948. Some Issarak bands left the Viet-Minh and attacked their former sponsors, promoting themselves as the Kampuchean population’s defenders against a Viet-Minh violence they had first favoured and supporting an anti Viet-Minh nationalism. ***(Kiernan, 1985: 73-76; CAOM, HCI Conseiller Politique 28)

These Issarak bands headed by Puth Chhay, unable to defeat Viet-Minh troops yet having to uphold their image as defenders, and helped by Kampuchean villagers massacred “Annamite” villages, killing indiscriminately. The killings started in May and reached a paroxysm in the first days of June, especially in Catholic villages (in Cambodia, Catholicism had mainly penetrated the Vietnamese communities). Geographically, they took place between Neak Luong and the « Quatre Bras » (South-eastern Cambodia). Once the killings done, the national guards left their postings to join or finish the pillaging, arguing that these villages were Viet-Minh accomplices. Savang Vong and Huu Thinh, Issarak leaders who had joined Puth Chhay, left him because they were disgusted by such atrocities. ***(CAOM, HCI, Conseiller Politique 28)


**Background:** The 1954 Geneva agreement brought relief to the polity by obtaining peace on the Peninsula, yet failed to solve existing problems: mainly a ground and weakened state-authority, a despotic and unstable democratic system and remaining Communist and Issarak rebellions.

However, a stabilisation started, but it lasted only until 1959. The authority attempted to bring back the situation towards peace and almost succeeded in seeing the Communist movement change from insurgency to opposition. On the contrary, nationalist leader Son Ngoc Thanh started a new rebellion
in 1956, the Khmer Serei (Free Khmer), soon manipulated by the US. Meanwhile, Sihanouk and part of the elite wanting to avoid the kind of democracy that had endangered Kampuchea created a political system called the Sangkum Reastr Niyum (people’s socialist community).

Between 1959 and 1963, the combination of internal and external conditions stopped the furthering of stabilisation and progressively inverted, from 1963 onwards, the trend towards conditions favourable to renewed escalation towards violence.

Between 1964 and 1966, the building up of tension and violence within was accompanied by a violence that hit Cambodia from without, involving the North Vietnamese on the one hand, the US and their Thai and South Vietnamese allies on the other, while the Cold War gathered speed on the Indochinese Peninsula. From 1967 to the end of 1969, this strain finally exploded in multiple but not yet generalised eruptions of violence within. The regime and Sihanouk who personified it were increasingly questioned, while the external aggressions increased from all sides in an officially unacknowledged way, thus preparing the ground for the next period.


Chronology:

1954 August (7 to 8, during the night): A Vietminh soldier, or more probably unit, might have attacked Kimti, a rallied village on the border between Tay-Ninh, Vietnam, and Cambodia. He would have massacred with an edged weapon forty five women and children. According to an informant, this action would have been initiated by Vietminh troops rebelling against the cease fire conditions included in the Geneva agreement. Those troops would refuse disarmament and intend to go on fighting, despite orders from the highest Vietminh commanding officers. **(CAOM - French Intelligence (SPCE))

1955 (February to September): State repression took place against the not-so-peaceful ex contending actors over state-power ***(Chandler, 1992: 81-84; Kiernan, 1985: 153-171). For example, Son Ngoc Thanh’s main lieutenant Kao Tak died as a consequence ***(Service historique de l’armée de terre, hereinafter SHAT, 10H5588). The communist underground network could have been then largely destroyed, especially in the East ***(Heder, 2004: 41-43), yet the Krom Pracheachun (or People’s Group, created by mid-1955 by the Communists) officially recorded 30000 votes at the September 1955 elections (Chandler, 1992: 83).

1959: Unsuccessful plots (the allegedly US/Thai-backed Bangkok plot in January followed by the Dap Chhuon plot in April) were followed by the August explosion of a bomb in the royal palace, aimed at Sihanouk and the royal family and brought by a Vietnamese. Prince Vakravan (director of protocol) was killed ***(Chandler, 1992: 99-107). A violent repression, notably of communists, ensued ***(Heder, 2004: 60), leading to a fear psychosis ***(ministère des Affaires Etrangères, hereinafter MAE, CLV, C13).


1964 (20 October) to 1970: Borders’ incidents with the US backed Thai and South Vietnamese started. Between January 1965 and February 1970, 1640 incidents took place that killed 450 people and wounded 1051 people. Incidents were bombings, attacks by helicopters and by troops ***( MAE, Asie, Cambodge, 123 to 131).

1964 (23 December): The Khmer Serei attacked a village in the province of Siem Reap **(MAE,
1965 (?): According to a witness, “The Sihanouk regime killed over one hundred suspect revolutionaries in Koh Kong [on Cambodia’s border with Thailand]…, mostly by throwing them into the sea” *(Kiernan, 1996: 69).

1966 (August & September, to December?): The Khmer Serei posed landmines on the Thai border implying the multiplication of civilians’ death and thus the depopulation of villages in the area. In August and September, 35 incidents were reported that killed 11 people and wounded 22, most of the time civilians ***( MAE, Asie, C119). This Khmer Serei strategy would have continued at least until December ***( MAE, Asie, C119).


Late 1966 or early 1967: “In Kompong Cham, tensions had been rising for some time. In late 1966 or early 1967, Bos village, So Phim [3]'s [a communist] former home in Krek district, was subjected to particularly brutal repression.” According to a villager, “Sihanouk’s soldiers came here and killed twenty-six revolutionaries in the village.” “Another source claimed that the victims were beheaded and their livers extracted by the soldiers” ***(Kiernan, 1985: 253).


By late January or February 1967, a few isolated attacks occurred on military units collecting rice ***(Kiernan, 1982, 169)

On the morning of 2 April, villagers in the Samlaut area murdered two soldiers ***(Kiernan, 1982: 171). Then, “two hundred local inhabitants bearing antigovernment banners and armed with knives and homemade weapons” attacked a JSRK *(Jeunesse Socialiste Royale Khmère* - Royal Khmer Socialist Youth) camp at Stung Krakhung [near Samlaut] ***(Chandler 1992: 164; Kiernan, 1982: 171). The camp was burnt, four army posts (two according to Chandler) stormed, and two soldiers killed” ***(Kiernan, 1985: 250; Chandler, 1992: 164-165). Unrest continued for two **(Chandler, 1992: 165) to four days ***(Kiernan, 1982:171). Two bridges were burnt, five more guards and village officials from Ta Sanh were ambushed, one official being killed. Several houses in the new agricultural settlements at Beng Khtum and Chamlang Kuoy were burnt. A platoon of paratroopers discovered a rebel hide out in Kompong Kou, killed one of them and captured 73 in all ***(Kiernan, 1982:171). In the meantime, “some two thousand men, women and children had fled or been herded into the forest” ***(Chandler, 1992: 165).


Responsibility was projected solely upon the Communists ***(Chandler, 1992:165).

The Sihanouk-led exception government created to face the rebellion started a repression that hit hard on the Communists. “Prisoners taken by the army were usually shot.” In Kompong Cham and Takeo a number of arrests and executions took place, while “the worst violence was taking place in Battambang. In the first three weeks of April, two hundred rebels were captured there and nineteen killed” ***(Kiernan, 1985: 254, 251, 255). More leftists took refuge into CPK secrecy, including the
two deputies Khieu Samphan [4] and Hou Yuon [5], but people tended to believe they had been killed by the government ***(Kiernan, 1982:167, 172; Chandler, 1992: 166; Heder, 2004: 117-118). By mid-May, in Battambang, to the regular soldiers were added newly recruited "militia units of enthusiastic vigilantes..., armed with staves, and told to go into the region to 'hunt the Reds' – including the people who had fled from their villages for their lives" ***(Chandler, 1992: 165). The aviation also took part in the repression ***(MAE, Asie, C125).

Sihanouk decreed the end of the dissidence on 20 June 1967, which was followed by a heavy shelling of the previously rebel villages, some "such as Beng Khtum, Thvak and Russey Preas were burnt to the ground" ***(Kiernan, 1982: 173; Osborne, 1979). "Hamlets were surrounded, their inhabitants machine gunned, houses pillaged and burnt... Hundreds of peasants, with their wives and children and led by their Buddhist monks, fled back into the forest" (Meyer, 1971: 192). Bounties were paid for the heads of rebels ***(Kiernan, 1982: 173). Details were given of “trucks filled with severed heads sent from Battambang to Phnom-Penh so that Lon Nol [6]would be assured that his program was followed” ***(Osborne, 1979).

1967 (or 1965?): Over four hundred bodies of peasants were discovered in a forest cave in Kompong Speu province. Although the source dates this discovery to 1965, Kiernan believes this “may be a misdating of a 1967 massacre.” **(Kiernan and Boua, 1982: 5)

Late 1967: The CPK was taking the decision to start a “combined armed and political struggle,” ***(Heder, 2004: 116-119 & 128-132) and was reinforced in its decision by renewed tension in October, in Battambang, and in November, in Ratanakiri, by highland groups ***(Heder, 2004: 116-119 & 128-132; MAE, Asie, C125), while its potential support in terms of material, the Communist Chinese and Vietnamese governments, which needed Sihanouk, withdrew ***(Heder, 2004: 129-132).

1968 (17 January onwards): The CPK switched to People's war on 17/01/1968 ***(Heder, 2004: 133). Actions followed throughout the year and were countered by government’s forces, taking back the weapons initially seized and in some areas dispersing the guerrillas destroying its support network and stored supplies ***(Heder, 2004: 135-141; Kiernan, 1982: 188-189). The year 1968 would see at least 133 incidents spread on most of the territory, feeding on the unabated peasant discontent. In the government forces fighting against the insurgency, 105 men could have been killed and 90 wounded. In the CPK ranks, 255 men could have been killed, 33 wounded, and 128 taken as prisoners **(SHAT, 10T848d2; MAE, Asie, C129 & C130).

1969: In part of the Northwest, during the second semester, Lon Nol estimated the guerrilla strength to 150 men, yet noted “a resumption of ‘harassment, ambushes, terrorism and plunder’." The North was considered as a zone without guerrilla activity or potential in 1969. In the East, guerrillas’ actions and counter insurgency measures occurred; the strength of the guerrilla was estimated to 500 men, based in Vietnam from which they undertook their actions on Cambodian territory. At the end of the year killings of government informers were started, anti-government propaganda was launched, yet limited to areas near the border. In the Southwest, “small guerrillas groups were deployed into the lowlands of Kompong Chhnang and Kompong Speu to do propaganda work and were able successfully to attack government outposts.” Benefiting from popular support, some villagers enrolled in the guerrillas. At the end of the year, guerrillas forces may be estimated to 1000, “up from 100 in 1968,” but were estimated to 755 by Lon Nol, yet ready to link up with the Northwest.” Some of the main bases were attacked by Lon Nol at the end of the year but others remained untouched. In the Northeast, the guerrilla strength went from 70 men with 10 guns in 1968 to 150 men with 45-60 guns in 1970. Ill treatment at the end of the FARK as well as Communist terror strategy (notably killing local officials) helped precipitating the population on the Communist side***(Heder, 2004: 138-143).

1969 (first semester): Le Monde reported that over 130 rebels had been killed, 100 wounded and 60 captured ***(Kiernan, 1985: 283).

1969 (February and March): CPK-led guerrillas actions occurred in the provinces of Ratanakiri, Kompong Speu and Kampot, to which were added in March Pursat, Kompong Cham, and Svay Rieng ***( MAE, Asie, C128).


1969 (24 May onwards): Ratanakiri and Stung Treng were considered as lost to the rebellion ***(MAE, Asie, C128).


1969 (September): Fighting against the rebellion occurred in Battambang, Ratanakiri, Kompong Speu, Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Thmar Keo ***(MAE, Asie, C128).

1969 (October): Actions multiplied along the border with Vietnam; fighting took place in Kampot. The guerrillas were properly armed and refused to fight the Forces Armées Royales Khmères (FARK) ***(MAE, Asie, C128).

1969 (November): The guerrillas enrolled the population throughout the province of Kompong Cham, in the North of Svay Rieng and in the Northeast of the province of Prey Veng. They tried to establish bases West of the Mekong, notably in the Elephant mountains area. Guerrillas actions were multiplying in Battambang and Pursat provinces ***(MAE, Asie, C128).

1969 (December): Fighting was reported between the FARK and the guerrilla in Ratanakiri, Takeo and Kampot ***(MAE, Asie, C130). The FARK operations in Ratanikiri had failed ***(Heder, 2004: 142).

1969 (18 March) to 1970 (26 May) “Operation Menu”: On 18 March, the US started their “secret bombing” of Cambodia. B-52 bombers carried out 3.825 sorties, dropping 103.921 tonnes of bombs on six areas alongside the border with Vietnam, in Cambodian territory. The aim was to try destroying the Vietnamese Communist headquarters located there. The Cambodian population living in these areas was known, estimated to 3.111, and collateral damages on them were accepted ***(Chandler, 1992: 184; Shawcross, 1979: 20-28, 91-95). The exact number of Cambodian casualties is unknown.

1969 (May) to 1970: Vexations against Vietnamese and the multiplication of temporary forced gathering of hundreds of Vietnamese for a few days before release, started in May 1969 and was generalised in 1970 ***(Pomonti and Thion, 1971: 185).

18 March 1970-17 April 1975: The Five Year Civil War

Background: At the start of 1970, diplomatic relations, despite episodic denunciations of all sides’ disrespect for the borders, were rather good with the National Liberation Front (NLF) government Cambodia had recognised, the People’s republic of China (PRC), the democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the US, even if the press increasingly denounced the Vietnamese encroachment. Thus, each side, Vietnam and the Communists, on the one hand, the US and their allies, on the other, could equally be perceived as enemy.

To this situation were added the CPK warfare and terrorist and political actions, a deepening economic crisis and a worsening antagonism between Sihanouk on the one hand and the government and the National Assembly on the other.

Kampuchean society, which had lived at a high level of tension and violence, whatever their origin, i.e. domestic or international, for twenty-five years without hardly any respite, save for the years between 1955 and 1963, faced an extremely tense situation. It had begun to split under the weight of the tension, yet no straightforward way forward seemed to appear for any side. On the contrary, Kampuchea seemed taken in a deadlock, because the authority had been unable, despite repeated
and diverse attempts, to bring back society within a stable and peaceful situation. This led some members of the elite, such as Lon Nol, his brother Lon Non and Prince Sirik Matak, to an ultimate attempt to find a working solution, which meant staging a coup instigating the deposition of Sihanouk as head of state by the National Assembly on 18 March 1970, a Republic being proclaimed on 9 October 1970.

Yet, unabated difficulties, including notably a peasants’ demonstration showing their allegiance to Sihanouk, difficulties at obtaining international legitimacy despite American support and the creation of a National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK), gathering the Communists, various rebellious forces, and Sihanouk and its supporters, implied that no improvement was felt.

Meanwhile, the new contending state-power, the FUNK, bolstered by Chinese and Vietnamese help, by use of kingship, by the bloody actions of the new regime and its US and South-Vietnamese allies, saw itself as invested of the sacred mission to save Kampuchea.

The stage was set for the 1970-1975 full blown civil war with foreign involvement on both sides.

The FUNK’s initial difficult mobilisation and military efforts were correlated with the use of an escalating language and with a categorisation of the Khmer population, thought in terms of good versus evil.

The Lon Nol regime side, with its US and South Vietnamese allies, with its increasing inefficiency, military inadequacy, strategic mistakes, corruption and fall into an absurd understanding of the world, lost the war to its contender which, with North Vietnamese help, despite difficulties, succeeded in creating a better army and state-organisation in the increasingly larger areas under its control. On 17 April 1975, the FUNK took over Phnom-Penh which meant final military victory.


Chronology:


The press supported these demonstrations by stressing that “the individual who support the Vietnamese aggressor is traitor to the Khmer motherland” ***(MAE, Asie, C130). However, demonstrators also reasserted their support to Sihanouk ***(Chantrabot, 1993: 20). The Kampuchean government denounced the North Vietnamese and NLF presence and demanded their withdrawal for the 15 March 1970 with a 13 March ultimatum ***(Chandler, 1992: 195).

17 March 1970: Sihanouk, from abroad, refused to approve the government’s position, vigorously denounced officially those who tried to bring war to Cambodia and unofficially threatened the elite ***(Chandler, 1992: 192-196; Chantrabot, 1993:17-20; Corfield, 1994: 60-77).

18 March 1970: Lon Nol, head of government, denounced the “Vietnamese and their valets, traitors to the motherland,” their “evident goal to pit the Khmers against the Khmers” and stressed that “any negligence from you [his compatriots] could bring the death of the nation.” A few hours later, Lon Nol received full power from the National Assembly and the Kingdom Council ***( MAE, Asie, C131).

Any direct foreign involvement in the coup has yet to be found, yet some high-level foreign support is documented ***(Corfield, 1994: 57-58, 70; MAE, Asie, C134).

1970 (from 20 March to April): South Vietnamese military intervention involving the airforce started in the Cambodian area nicknamed the “duck beak” (on the border with Vietnam) ***(Pomonti and Thion, 1971: 231).
At the end of March, probably on 27 March, South Vietnamese troops in the South of Cambodia and the US first division of cavalry in the North crossed the border to pursue the Vietcong. The Vietcong moves in reply were rather defensive ***(MAE, Asie, C131).

Other interventions took place on 5 April, between 12 and 16 April, on 14 April (this time involving combined operation between Cambodian and South Vietnamese Army), on 20 and 21 April ***(Pomonti and Thion, 1971: 231-232).

The Phnom Penh government denied having given South Vietnam and the US the right to intervene, yet it had no more power than Sihanouk had enjoyed with the Vietnamese Communists to resist South-Vietnamese and American will ***(MAE, Asie, C131).

1970 (23 March): Sihanouk, assured of support by the PRC, which furthermore probably relayed the backing of the DRV and of the CPK, called from Beijing “all Khmer patriots” to “crush the traitors” thus creating the “Union of Khmers from abroad and inside with the ideals of Independence, democracy, neutrality, progressism, socialism, Buddhism, nationalism, attachment to territorial integrity within the current borders, anti-imperialism and anti neo-colonialism in a FUNK.” He stressed the “rape of the constitution” and labelled the new Kampuchean regime as “the new fascist power that serves the US imperialism”***(Cold War International History Project, hereinafter CWIHP; Vietnam, Indochinese wars; MAE, Asie, C153).

1970 (25 March): On 25 March, 1.500 people from Kompong Reap (Kompong Cham province) demonstrated to ask for Sihanouk’s return and for the dissolution of the National Assembly. The governor listened to them, promised to send their wishes to Phnom Penh and demonstrators went back home peacefully ***(Summers, 1972, 261; Kiernan, 1982: 206).

1970 (26-27 March): A pro-Sihanouk demonstration involving peasants and some monks occurred in Kompong Cham. According to the provincial governor, 25.000 demonstrators were involved, including women and children **(Kiernan, 1982: 206). Villagers came from nearby areas. According to one witness, a meeting organized by associates of Hou Yuon “travelled in five large buses from Peam Chikang towards Kompong Cham, but seven kilometres west of the town they were fired on by troops and forced to disperse” **(Kiernan, 1982: 207).

In Kompong Cham, the demonstrators transformed the sign of the court of justice in “injustice,” burned tax registers, and pillaged the villa of the Province governor. They were carrying banderols and wearing images with Sihanouk effigy. The Army did not intervene ***(Thion and Pomonti, 1971: 178; Kiernan, 1982, 207; Chandler, 1992: 202; Corfield, 1994: 91).

Two deputies from Phnom Penh, Sos Saoun and Kim Phon, arrived at the end of the afternoon. The demonstrators killed them and ate their liver ***(Meyer, 1971: 38; Corfield, 1994: 91). In Tonle Bet (Kompong Cham Province), a crowd from the Chup plantation killed a brother of Lon Nol***(Summers, 1972: 261; Kiernan, 1982: 207, 213); his body was beaten and his liver eaten **(Corfield, 1994: 91). Elsewhere, demonstrators took over an administrative post, and killed a supporter of the Lon Nol regime trying to speak out ***(Summers, 1972: 261; Kiernan, 1982: 207, 213).

Part of the demonstrators then left for Phnom-Penh, some of the inhabitants of the villages crossed joining in. Some officials of those villages fled while others were killed ***( Pomonti and Thion, 1971: 178). “Between 20 and 50 trucks set out followed by about 10000 marchers...two columns of trucks, one apparently from Siem Reap... and the one from Kompong Cham, met up north of Phnom Penh, but were halted not far from the capital at the Chruai Changwar bridge on the morning of 27 March” *(Kiernan, 1982: 207). One truck driver was killed, several people wounded and according to military sources “more than one thousand demonstrators arrested” **(Kiernan, 1982: 207). Another source dates the arrival in Phnom Penh at the end of the evening and mention as provisory figures four dead and five wounded *(MAE, Asie, C131).

Other less important meetings were also reported in Kompong Cham province, where one head of village was killed, and in Baray in Kompong Thom Province. In Snuol, in Kratie province, clashes between demonstrators and state forces would have implied the injury of an unknown number of
**1970 (27 March):** In Kompong Cham, the same scenario was replayed **(MAE, Asie, C131). The government was prompt in attributing responsibility for demonstrations to the Vietnamese **(Corfield, 1994: 91, Kiernan, 1982: 214; MAE, Asie, C131). The demonstrators entered the city coming from near-by villages. The army, having this time received the order to repress all agitation, killed and wounded demonstrators. Figures given then stated that twenty seven people had been killed and sixty three wounded. Demonstrators then tried to reach Phnom-Penh by the South-east. When they reached Prey Veng, new clashes occurred with state forces, four dead and eighteen wounded were reported **(MAE, Asie, C131).

At Skoun (Kompong Cham province), on the road between Kompong Cham and Phnom-Penh, demonstrators took over the government offices and burnt records. “The air force and Khmer Krom troops opened fire, and between 40 and 60 people were killed or wounded” **(Pomonti and Thion, 1971: 178; Ponchaud, 1977: 187).

Meanwhile, according to the government, agitation spread to other areas, such as Kompong Thom, Kandal and Takeo provinces, yet without serious incidents. The Lon Nol government reported that the Vietcong tried to mobilise the population by broadcasting Sihanouk’s 23 March call on radio and by distributing tracts. In districts close to the border with Vietnam, demonstrators would have beaten a few officials and threatened others, if they went on applying government's instructions. Peasants demanded to the owners of rice husking units to give them their stocks **(MAE, Asie, C131).

As answer, the government reinforced security in Phnom-Penh, organised some defence groups, especially in schools and universities, and invited veterans and reservists to contact the military authorities. To struggle against this perceived threat to its legitimacy, it mixed in its messages to the population, or through the committees sent in some provinces to explain the situation, enticement to calm and threats in case of collaboration with the “traitor Sihanouk.” Meanwhile, willingly or not, it exaggerated, according to posterior military intelligence, the concomitant threat of Communist Vietnamese military moves and increase in troops **(MAE, Asie, C131).

**1970 (27-30 March):** From 27 March, the Kampuchean police began arresting Vietnamese accusing them to have participated in the demonstrations as Vietcong. By 30 March, it had arrested more officials faithful to Sihanouk, including the ex governors of Phnom-Penh and Kompong Cham, and 150 people among Vietnamese communists in Phnom Penh. The arrests confirmed, for the government, the Communist Vietnamese subversive and aggressive activity **(MAE, Asie, C131).

**1970 (28 March):** At Ang Tasom near Takeo, 300 peasants burnt records in a government office and overturned “two cars belonging to the local Buddhist hierarchy, without any police intervention” **(Kiernan, 1982: 214).

**1970 (29 March):** 2000 demonstrators, again at Ang Tasom, set fire to official records, pillaged furniture in government offices. “About 50 police and soldiers opened fire, leaving 66 dead and 78 wounded. That same afternoon, 500 peasants massed at Kong Pisei, 15 kilometres to the north, and began to march on Takeo” but were stopped by tanks. Meanwhile, at Kompong Trabek in Prey Veng, according to the Associated Press, hundreds of peasants “armed with machetes and sharpened bamboo poles, surged through the streets... urging the Prince’s return” **(Kiernan, 1982: 214).

**1970 (30 March):** The Kompong Trabek peasants tried to move to Phnom Penh, barricades set up by the Army stopped them **(Kiernan, 1982: 216).

In Prey Sandek (Takeo), the army fired on 200 people, “armed with machetes, clubs and axes” when they started to build barricades after having forced people to shout in favour of Sihanouk and hang pictures of the Prince outside their houses. 48 people were killed and 33 wounded **(Kiernan, 1982: 214).

According to a Sihanouk broadcast on 4 April, “urging his supporters to join the guerrilla instead of attempting further demonstrations,” “300 lives had been lost” **(Kiernan, 1982: 219).
1970 (from end of March onwards?): Anti-Vietnamese vexations intensified. Vietnamese were expelled from their houses and regrouped. Every night, the army and the police took men, women, and children by bus and parked them in camps around Phnom Penh. Four such camps located around Phnom Penh were said to exist *** (MAE, Asie, C131).

In the meantime, the US bombing continued and wounded and killed civilians as the Vietcong units were close to villages when they were targeted. The bombing thus reinforced the Communist mobilising efforts that stressed the need to defend Cambodia against the imperialist US-South Vietnamese aggressions and justified the Communist Vietnamese presence as a help given to Sihanouk against imperialist aggression. Consequently, the South Vietnamese intervened deeper within Cambodia, and the Communist Vietnamese fought against the South Vietnamese and the Cambodian army (now renamed FANK, Forces Armées Nationales Khmères) *** (MAE, Asie, C131 & C133).

1970 (31 March): The FUNK announced that a government of national union would be constituted once the leaders of the “resistance who are already fighting the fascist government of Lon Nol and his imperialist US master” had reached Beijing *** (MAE, Asie, C153).

1970 (2 April): 486 people having been imprisoned as political prisoners under Sihanouk were released *** (Corfield: 1994, 93). One of them was Duch [7], later the head of S-21 (Tuol Sleng) [8] *** (Chandler communication).

1970 (5 April): The main avenues in Phnom Penh were decorated with propaganda stating, “The Vietcong is worse than cholera,” while tracts in Khmer and French with similar messages were distributed *** (MAE, Asie, C131). The radio participated in the anti-Communist Vietnamese campaign *** (Pomonti and Thion, 1971: 181; Corfield, 1994: 96).

The propaganda means of the Ministry of Information newly headed by Trinh Hoanh were increased to participate in the galvanisation of the population against the Vietcong *** (MAE, Asie, C131).

1970 (9 April): In Prasaut (Svay Rieng Province), hundreds of civilian Vietnamese including women and children were regrouped in an open space, near an army post. The army opened fire on them, using artillery. An early estimate by the French Embassy suggests that eighty-five civilian Vietnamese were killed, but does not account for the wounded. The government alleged it happened in crossfire, as the post was attacked by Vietcong forces. No foreign correspondent was present, however Pomonti went to enquire on 10 April. One Vietnamese survivor told him that some gunfire had been heard on 9 April at 10 PM and that the prisoners had been told to run. At that moment, the Cambodian army started killing them. A Cambodian policeman interviewed used the term of “ratonade” to describe the event. In Phnom Penh, a curfew was imposed to Vietnamese after 6 PM.

Some members of the elite were worried and reproved the anti-Vietnamese campaign *** (MAE, Asie, C131).


1970 (12 April): The FUNK, through Sihanouk, denounced the Prasaut massacre by comparing it with “the defunct nazi regime of Hitler” and “asked for the condemnation of the fascist and nazi regime of Lon Nol – Sirik Matak” *** (MAE, Asie, C131).

1970 (12 to 13 April): In Chrui Changvar on the Tonle Sap bank in front of Phnom-Penh, lived 3000 catholic Vietnamese. The Khmer navy guarded them since February. “During the night, members of the Navy disembark at Chrui Changvar, change the guards, and arrest men between 16 and 65 years old, i.e. between 600 to 800 people, according to witnesses. They are embarked on boats towards an island down the Mekong River,” Banam. “A few days later their body were found floating on the river, sometimes tied up by groups of ten, sometimes beheaded, most of the time shot. One of the perpetrator told that ‘at the end, we slit their throats to spare bullets’” *** (Pomonti and Thion, 1971: 183-184; MAE, Asie, C131).
1970 (15 April): Sihanouk condemned the persecutions of the Vietnamese in Cambodia and underlined that the Lon Nol government had “a character incomparably savage, barbarous, fascist and Nazi”. He asked other governments to sever all relations with it ***( MAE, Asie, C131).

Lon Nol called to the “mobilisation of the nation...to defend...each parcel of our territory”*** ( MAE, Asie, C133). Enthusiasm led to a massive enrolment in the FANK to defend the motherland against the Vietnamese aggressors. Yet, it was insufficient to bring military victory against the experienced and well-equipped Vietcong. Many died in the early fighting ***(Chandler, 1992: 203; Chantrabot, 1993: 71-76).

1970 (17 April): South Vietnam offered to create a commission to study the repatriation of the Vietnamese residents of Cambodia to South Vietnam ***( MAE, Asie, C133).

1970 (17 to 18 April): In Takeo, people in a detention camp were massacred. Survivors, including children, were left without care nor food, when they were not killed with edged weapons. In other places, army exactions happened along pillages and rape ***(Pomonti and Thion, 1971: 184 ; MAE, Asie, C133).

The army’s spokesperson said that the Vietnamese, who disappeared, were the victim of the spontaneous reaction of the Khmer people ***(MAE, Asie, C133).

1970 (21 April): An unknown number of Vietnamese civilians were killed and wounded in Saang, 35 kilometres south of Phnom-Penh. Approximately sixty Vietnamese including women and children were grouped in a textile factory. They were taken to the entry of the village and forced to march carrying a white flag. The Vietcong would have fired and the Cambodian army too. A Vietnamese attack had started the previous day and Saang fell in the morning ***(MAE, Asie, C133).

No massacre was reported after this date. The concentration camps, allegedly to protect the Vietnamese, remained ***(Poole, 1974: 329-330). An estimated 3.500 civilian Vietnamese were killed between 5 and 21 April **(Corfield, 1994: 96).

The Vietnamese returnees fleeing the Lon Nol regime were estimated to 200.000 by the end of 1970 **(Poole, 1974: 329) and 250.000 by March 1971 by the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Action **(Pouvatchy, 1976: 345). Many repatriated with South Vietnamese help, while others fled individually **(Pouvatchy, 1976: 345; Poole, 1974: 329).

Some members of the elite, such as Sirik Matak, had tried “privately to stop them [the massacres]” ***(Corfield, 1994: 96).

1970 (24 April 1970): The second Indochinese People Conference (IPC) sealed the alliance between the Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian struggles to obtain the “unconditional, total and immediate retreat” of the US aggressor. Regarding Cambodia, the goal was to remove “the sanguinary traitors” guilty of “atrocious crimes,” “accomplices of the US” ***(MAE, Asie, C153).

1970 (25 April - 30 June): On 29 April, answering the multiple previous calls for external support made by the Lon Nol regime and the military degradation of the situation, the US government made official pre-existing South-Vietnamese operations in Cambodia by asking South Vietnam to support the FANK logistically and tactically in the Southeast part of Cambodia ***( MAE, Asie, C132). US intervention had begun on 25 April, start of the systematic bombing of North-east Cambodia. On 26 April the first US operation using helicopter took place **(Pomonti and Thion 1971: 232). Duiker dates the first US operation on 28 April **(Duiker, 1981: 312). It was only on 1 May that the US announced its decision to help “Cambodia defend its neutrality,” without warning the Lon Nol government **(Duiker, 1981: 312; MAE, Asie, C132). American support consisted in military and economic aid, military operations until 30 June 1970 besides the South-Vietnamese army, but within a limit of 30 miles, and in widespread and unlimited use of the aviation to struggle against the Communist enemy, through B-52 massive bombing, napalming and F-111 strikes ***(Kiernan, 1985: 349-357; Shawcross, 1979: 128-160).
Between 18 March 1969 and 15 August 1973, Cambodia received from US B52s and fighter bombers 539.129 tons of bombs, i.e. more than thrice as many bombs as Japan during the second World War *(Shawcross, 1979, 297). Furthermore, the Khmer Air force with its T-28 fleet participated in the bombing throughout the whole war *(Kiernan, 1985: 349-350).

If the American and South-Vietnamese support was crucial and saved the FANK *(Chandler, 1992: 204-206), the ways in which this support was delivered was controversial. South-Vietnamese troops committed atrocities *(Chandler, 1992: 204-206; MAE, Asie, C134; Pomonti and Thion, 1971: 231). Strategically, it drove the North Vietnamese forces further in Cambodian territory *(Chandler, 1992: 204; Kiernan, 1985: 304-308), the massive swelling of the Cambodian cities, notably by people hoping to escape US bombing *(Kiernan, 1985, 349-357), removed people from a potential Communist control but also unbalanced the ‘Lon Nol zone,’ creating supply problems because of the shrinkage of the cultivated land and because of the refugees influx. Furthermore, the refugee phenomenon prevented the possible creation of auto-defence villages that could have been an efficient strategy, on the contrary emptying the territory thus facilitating the Communist manoeuvres *(Lavoix, 2005: 275-276).

The population in Phnom-Penh can be estimated to have increased from 600.000 inhabitants before the war to 1.200.000 on 31 October 1970 and to 1.500.000 on 10 April 1973 *( MAE, Asie, C136, C143, C158).

War excess deaths are difficult to estimate. They range, for the whole period, from 300.000 (Heuveline) and 310.000 (SIliwinski) to 800.000 (DK), when the estimated total population before the war ranged from 6.800.000 inhabitants (Prud’homme) to 7.363.000 (Migozzi) or 7.562.000 (Heuveline) *(Kiernan, 2003).


1970 (4 and 5 May): Proclamation of the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea (GRUNK), of its composition and army (the Forces Armées Populaires de Libération Nationale du Kampuchea, FAPLNK) and of the FUNK Politburo. As such was institutionally finalised the emergence of a state-authority located partly in Beijing partly in Kampuchea, that could now fully compete with the Lon Nol government over territory, population and international legitimacy *( MAE, Asie, C133, 153; SHAT, 14S371, 14S372). Meanwhile, a “liberated zone” had been created in Cambodia in mid-April 1970 *(Corfield, 1994: 99).

1970 to 1972: The Communist Vietnamese and the CPK, although CPK documents tend to ignore Vietnamese help, unified and regrouped, however loosely, various rebellions that were and were not communist *(Chandler 1992: 207-210; 1999: 96; Kiernan, 1985: 313-337; SHAT 14S371). They set up a politico-administrative organisation within the “liberated zones” that relied first on pro-Sihanouk local elite and then progressively replaced them, probably through purges, by Communist trained Cambodians, such as those who had left with the Viet-Minh for Hanoi in 1954 *(Chandler 1992: 357; Heder, 2004: 160-167; MAE, Asie, C157; SHAT 14S371). The communist ideology was most of the time concealed and the people knew only the angkar (organisation) and its violence *(Chandler, 1992: 207; SHAT, 10T851, 10T855; MAE, Asie, C158). The communist side created the FAPLNK, gradually training men, setting up units of militia that became, with time, operational fighting battalions *(Heder, 2004: 160-168; SHAT, 14S371, 14S372).

Both in the administration and in the army, Cambodians incrementally replaced the Vietnamese, once they were ready to hold higher positions. This organisational phase relied on violence, terror, and persuasion. However, efforts were made to struggle against crime and corruption, and contraveners were severely punished *(SHAT, 10T851, 10T855, 14S371; for two early published accounts of life in Khmer Rouge zone, see Ith Sarin, 1973; Thion, 1982; for a detailed account showing differences between geographical zones, Kiernan, 1985: 297-417).

During this organisational period, numerous clashes and violence between different factions and groups occurred, for a host of reasons, sometimes involving the population. Intelligence sources
reported forty one such cases between June 1970 and August 1971 **(SHAT, 10T855), scholars have also sometimes accounted for such occurrences, for example Chandler ***(1992, 216-217) and Kiernan ***(1985).

These organisational and struggling efforts on the ground were paralleled by efforts at mobilisation by the GRUNK through speeches that were listened to in Cambodia via Radio-Beijing or Radio-FUNK (MAE, Asie, C157; SHAT 10T851). The mobilisation was built around the categories outlined in the FUNK programme (MAE, Asie, C153), which prefigured post-1975 ones. One had first the “heroic members of the two armed forces” (Cambodian and Vietnamese), then the category to mobilise. There, one found the “good Khmers”, who would join the FUNK, those too frighten to fight, who should live in peaceful citizens, and finally those who would stay with the traitors and thus were warned, as soon as 24 May 1970, of their coming severe punishment (MAE, Asie, C153, C158). Throughout the war, an escalation in the violence of discourse occurred regarding these categorisations, including a demonisation of the “enemy” inversely correlated with a sanctification of the struggling Cambodian people ***(Lavoix, 2005: 280-287).


1973 (18 March): Pech Kim Luon, a “disaffected air force captain,” stole a plane and dropped bombs on Lon Nol’s compound. 43 military dependents were killed, mainly children ***(Chandler: 1992, 224).

A teacher’s strike in Phnom-Penh was broken up by a grenade attack, probably ordered by Lon Non, Lon Nol’s Brother ***(Chandler, 1992: 224).

1973 (8 February to 15 August): The heaviest bombing of Cambodia by US air force took place ***(Chandler, 1992: 225; Kiernan, 1985: 349-350; Shawcross, 1979: 262-267, 297). From February to 15 August 1973, B52s and fighter bombers dropped 257.465 tons of bombs (almost half of the total of bombs dropped during the whole war, 1.6 times more bombs than the quantity dropped on Japan during World War II) on heavily populated rural areas of the country, as shown by Shawcross’s maps ***(Shawcross, 1979: 266-267, 297). Casualties and death resulting from this bombing cannot be estimated ***(Chandler, 1992: 225). Kiernan gives many examples of them ***(Kiernan, 1985: 351-357) and the 7 August 1973 allegedly accidental bombing of Neak Luong where “the hospital was destroyed, 137 people had been killed and 268 wounded” may be recalled ***(Shawcross, 1979: 294, quoting Schanberg).

Late 1973: According to Heng Samrin, then commanding officer “of the Eastern zone’s 126th Regiment” [FAPLNK], while attacking the Lon Nol army, his forces “came into conflict with Mok [9]'s” (the secretary of the Southwest zone). He recalls “My troops went to climb Chisor mountain to look for traditional medicine to cure soldiers with malaria. The Southwesterners arrested twelve of my troops and took them away and killed them.” Despite efforts, including by So Phim [3], leader of the Eastern zone, these men were never released nor apologies made ***(Kiernan, 1996: 65-66).

Other incidents, of Khmer communists killing members of the “moderate, pro Sihanouk, pro Vietnamese Khmer Rumdos” (all belonging to the FAPLNK) were reported by US State department officer Kenneth Quinn in 1974 **(Kiernan, 1996: 66).

1973 (December) – 1974 (January and following months): Hundreds of civilians in Phnom-Penh were killed and wounded by Communist rockets and shells ***(Chandler, 1992: 229).

1974 onwards: Kirk ***(1975: 221-227), using refugees’ interviews, underlines a change in the organisation of the liberated zones towards a more systematic use of killings. People were targeted and killed because of the incapacity to follow up orders, translated as refusal to obey and betrayal, or because they eventually tried to speak up, again translated as betrayal. Only the “culprit” could be killed, or her whole family.

The following account by Kiernan might be one among many examples of the increase in killings happening throughout the country, although geographical and temporal
Late 1973 - mid-1974: At the end of 1973, according to Tea Banh, “in Region 37 [in the Southwest zone] they [the Khmer Rouge] were killing people on a large scale.” Region 11 accepted refugees from region 37, which led the rulers of Region 37 to fear “that Koh Kong had joined hands with the enemy,” and inform the Centre [of the CPK]. The deputy secretary of Region 11 disappeared in January 1974, while summoned by the Central Committee. Three weeks later, the whole provincial committee (7 people and their 10 bodyguards) was summoned similarly and disappeared. Centre troops moved in the region and tried to kill Region 11 troops and cadres, who rebelled. Common people were killed by the centre troops, fighting between centre troops and rebels ensued. “Centre forces took over the countryside, executed local officials, evacuated villages and transferred population out of Koh Kong.” In April 1974, 600 people were killed according to Sae Phuthang, “all cadres of the Thai minority group and their wives and children.” According to Tan Hao, “The Khmer Rouge began killing people; those who did anything wrong were taken away and shot. In 1974 they recruited every youth of sixteen years old or more into the army. If you did not go they asked you why you didn’t love your country and fight for it. Some who didn’t go were killed. They were hard.” The last cadres of Region 11 committee were killed in May 1974. A company of female troops and a contingent of female medics were “marched to Prey Nup in Kampot province, where they were massacred.” An entire village was asked to leave their home, then tied up together and shot. 500 people were killed by one hundred troops. Around mid-1974, many people were killed, while trying to run away.***[Kiernan, 1996: 68-78).

1974 (March): When the FAPLNK overran Oudong, “20.000 people were led off the countryside,” the “class enemies” killed and the others put to work” ***[Chandler, 1992: 231; Kiernan, 1985: 384-385; Kirk, 1975: 216]. Kirk ***[(1975: 216)] specifies that 200 schoolteachers and government officials were then killed.

1974 (?): The FAPLNK “brutally murdered sixty people, including women and children, in a small village called Sar Sarsdam, in Siem Reap Province. A similar incident was reported at Ang Snuol, a town west of the capital.” *(Library of Congress Country Studies)

17 April 1975 – 7 January 1979: The CPK-Ruled Kampuchea

Background: On 17 April 1975, the FAPLNK entered Phnom Penh after a two and a half months long siege. The CPK had won the war. It used the year 1975 to assert its authority inside the country with the state-apparatus developed during the war through the FUNK and the GRUNK, while looking for international recognition thus legitimacy.

During the remaining part of 1975, the GRUNK was still the legitimate government, while the main political lines had been ‘democratically’ established through the April 1975 Special National Congress. The CPK-prompted ‘inner’ GRUNK, once the country had been deemed “cleaned” by mid-August, had allowed Sihanouk and the non-Communist members of the FUNK and GRUNK to come back to Cambodia, so as to show the world the ‘reality’ of both FUNK and GRUNK.

Regarding international legitimacy, the GRUNK obtained several diplomatic recognitions from the day of its victory, necessary, for example, for trade, as shown by the 1975 exchange that took place with Thailand on such a vital commodity as salt.

Yet, the CPK needed a new regime that could inherit the FUNK victory, discard the FUNK and its non-communist members and leaders, and still keep the appearance of legitimacy for reasons of inner mobilisation and outer international recognition.

The CPK proceeded in two steps. It first hid its Communist credentials, only emphasising Revolution, stressed the continuity with major legitimating nationalist components and set up the institutions of the new regime. In December 1975, a National Congress approved the new constitution prepared by the Special National Congress appointed committee. The Cambodian People Representative Assembly, elected on 20 March 1976, represented the legislative power. It elected the members of the State Praesidium (Chairman Khieu Samphan [4]) and government (Prime Minister Pol Pot [2]).
who replaced Sihanouk as Head of state and the GRUNK as government. This was the birth of Democratic Kampuchea (DK).

Socialism remained nonetheless the ideology of the party. A new phase was starting. As stressed in April 1976, Kampuchea was going from “staging the National Democratic Revolution to building Socialist Revolution in the future” (Revolutionary Youth, 1976).

Between February 1976 and July 1978 escalating perceptions of aggression were attributed to the Thai and American side, to which were added, from April 1977 onwards, heightened and escalating tension then war with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) (Chandler, 1999a; 1999b; Kiernan, 1996; Heder, 1979).

The CPK took the second step on September 1977 and fully acknowledged for the first time the existence of the CPK, its leadership and thus DK communist credentials (Chandler, 1999b: 133-136).

If the importance of Marxist contradictions probably existed from the start of the Communist movement, initially it may have been overshadowed by the necessity to win the war. Furthermore, the secrecy surrounding Communist credentials limited its spread through radio propaganda and thus, perhaps, the sensitivity of some of the CPK cadre to it. From 1976 and more particularly September 1977, an emphasis on contradictions spread and grew. The world was thus perceived as composed of antagonistic opposites, e.g. revolution implied counter-revolution.

For Marx, building upon Hegel, the resolution of contradictions led to a higher stage of synthesis that would transmute the previous opposites by incorporating them into the created new condition. However, for the CPK leaders, contradictions were solved by the destruction of one of the pole, while their perpetual existence meant insecurity (Lavoix, 2005: 297-298). In concrete terms, this meant, for example, that to be selected as enemy and killed “all one had to do was be a source of ‘contradictions,’ that is, some kind of problem” (Heder, 2005: 390).

(For a review of the major works and scholarly debates on the years 1975-1979, see Research and Debate [10])

A few witnesses’ life stories have been published. They are a must to understand what it meant to live within the CPK-ruled Kampuchea (Picq, 1984; May, 1986; Ngor, 1988, Yathay, 1990; Yi Tan Kim & Simon-Barouh, 1990; Moeung & Locard, 1993; Hoeung, 2003).

Chronology:

1975-1979 Estimated overall death toll: The latest evaluation, thoroughly reviewing previous works and estimations, was made by Kiernan: “the 1975-79 death toll was between 1.671 and 1.871 million people, 21 to 24 percent of Cambodia's 1975 population” **(Kiernan, 2003: 587).

1975 (April): Emptying the cities (for detailed accounts published, see, for example, Chandler, 1992: 246-255; Kiernan, 1996: 31-64)

The cities and towns, populated with those who had not joined the FUNK, were emptied, as the CPK had secretly decided at the end of 1974 ***(Heder, 2002a: 1), although this decision was not unanimously welcomed within the party ***(Heder, 2002b: 2-3; Kiernan, 1996: 59-61). As a consequence, between 2 and 3 million people left their home, hospitals or refugees' camps for the countryside ***(Chandler, 1992: 247; Kiernan, 1996: 48).

Kiernan suggests a death rate of 0.53% for the evacuation of Phnom Penh, i.e. around 10.600 deaths for a 2 million people city **(Kiernan, 1996: 48). An unknown death toll related to the evacuation of other cities and towns should be added.

1975 (April- May): “Cleaning away the rotten Republican regime:” Simultaneously, the CPK started the “cleaning up” of those who had not joined the FUNK on time, and, thus, who were not “good Khmer” (see categorisations above). Those, too corrupted because the “US imperialists most unpardonably introduced its rotten culture to poison our people and youth over the past few years...
our people living in the cities under the traitors,” thus “by the “filth in the town,” who were not redeemable, were “cleaned up.” Within the new Kampuchean authority’s mental framework, “cleaning up” meant killing. ***(Summary of World Broadcast, hereinafter SWB, Phnom Penh radio 2/05/1975, 5/05/1975, 10/05/1975)

This first sub-category comprised, in the beginning, only the higher-ranking officials within the Republican regime state-apparatus, be they civilian, military or belonging to the police. Yet, from the start, the killings were sometimes widened by those perpetrating them ***(Heder, 2005: 382-384). According to Heder, “some 800 senior-most officers and civilian officials, including cabinet ministers, were dumped in mass graves just outside the capital” **(Heder, 2002a: 6). “In the Southwest Zone, military cadre acting under the supervision of Zone Party Committee Secretary Ta Mok executed all civil servants and soldiers, regardless of rank” ***(Heder, 2005, fn42; Locard, 1996: 136). Similarly, in Siem Reap province, “the Republican provincial governor and regional military commander,” then all army officers “down to the level of corporal... ‘big and medium civil servants’ were executed” **(Heder, 2005: fn42).

As sporadic combats continued in the provinces and in Phnom Penh ***(Heder, 2002a: 7), the leaders widened secretly from 20 April 1975, the sub-category of the people to be eliminated to all army and police officers as well as ranked civil servants, the bandasak ***(Heder, 2005: 388-389). The highest ranking members of the Sangha (Buddhist clergy) were treated as bandasak and killed ***(Heder, 2005: 396). As the Cham community had been largely associated with the Republic through a representation in Parliament ***(Corfield, 1994, 173), its higher ranking members were similarly killed as higher official of the regime, while lower ranking members were killed as lower ranking bandasak ***(Heder, 2005: 399; Ysa, 2002: 3-6; Kiernan, 1996: 21, 282, 287).

Re-educating “new people:” Other civil servants, urban monks and the ‘normal’ people, urban dwellers and refugees constituted the second sub-category labelled “new people” or “depositee” ***(Kiernan, 1996:168, Heder, 2005: 384-398; Chhang Song, 1996: 20-21, 25-26, 36-37, 42; Ponchaud, 1977: 148). 95% of them were considered as “good people,” who had been corrupted too, but to a lesser degree. The CPK thought they could be reformed through re-education. They were thus sent to the countryside where they could learn and become ‘better Khmer’ to the contact and with the example of the Khmer, who had joined the revolution earlier, thus classified as base or old or veteran people, furthermore enjoying “full-right” or “candidate” status ***(Heder, 2005: 384-396); i.e. the “poor people,” notably the “workers, poor” and “middle-lower farmers and other labourers,” who had allowed for the victory with their “heroic” work in the cooperatives ***( SWB, Phnom Penh radio 27/04/1975). “New people” were to be considered as equal to veteran people and to be shown the good of the revolution ***(Heder, 2005: 382-386). Meanwhile, all monks be they urban and classified as “new people” or from the countryside and considered as veterans, were considered as people and no more part of the sangha ***(Heder, 2005: 396).

The welcome the “new people” received from “base villages” varied, notably according to the existence personal links ***(Chandler, 1992: 255) and to local cadres’ character traits and understanding of central policy ***(Heder, 2005).

In some Cham villages where the urban Cham went, they found ongoing processes aimed at removing Cham identity, including giving up religion (Islam) as for the rest of the population with Buddhism. They were either submitted to harsher treatment or, in other areas, instructed to behave as all “new people” ***(Kiernan, 1996: 258-261,273, 277-279; Ysa, 2002; Heder 2005 398-401). Some lower strata Cham had been promoted as cadre ***(Ysa, 2002; Heder, 2005: 398-401).

1975 (early May): Hundred of higher ranking officials of Battambang were executed “near the city...after being told to put on their uniforms and come to ‘welcome Sihanouk’ (who was then still in Beijing). News of the massacre spread rapidly through the north-west...” ***(Chandler, 1992: 252). During the evacuation of Battambang, troops killed “many Chinese and owners of houses built of brick or concrete, on the pretext that the Organization wanted the bourgeois-feudal regime smashed, and this was the only way it could be made to disappear quickly” **(Heder, 2005: fn43).

1975 (12 May): Several incidents of boats taken within Kampuchean territorial waters ***(SWB, Phnom Penh radio 14/05/1975) culminated with the capture of the US ship Mayaguez on 12 May
1975 and with the consequent US bombing on Sihanoukville. “No estimate of Cambodian casualties was ever made” ***(Chandler, 1992: 257). This raised the CPK’s fear and suspicion. For the CPK, the US had refused to acknowledge their defeat, had “planted traitorous forces and used them to continue subversive and sabotage activities against the Kampuchean nation and its people” ***(SWB, Phnom Penh radio 14/05/1975).

1975 (16-29 May): The FAPLNK final offensives were launched against the Koh Kong area and its rebels (Region 11). The richer families were taken away with the first offensive between 16 and 18 May and disappeared. After the last offensive on 25 May, part of the population escaped to Thailand, except for resistance forces, which could have succeeded in infiltrating the new controlling forces, while the remaining inhabitants were evacuated by the CPK. Only a few people remained **(Kiernan, 1996: 77-80).

1975 (especially May to October): Considering the perceived ongoing threats, it was crucial for the authority to stop those they thought were carrying these dangerous activities: the ex-Republic regime unredeemable “rotten” and “traitorous” members must be eliminated.

Yet, one had first to identify those belonging to the sub-category. The “new people” had then left the cities, were marching along the roads or were disseminated in the countryside. The only way to identify the members of the regime, the bandasak among the “new people” was now through questioning, notably regarding professions. Aware of the massacres taking place, people quickly began to hide their profession. Thus, the criteria for selection of the target group became increasingly unclear, thus interpretative ***(Heder: 2002a: 7-8, 20-28).

The kind of people carrying out the “cleaning up,” i.e. mainly the FAPLNK until mid-July 1975 then local cadres at district and cooperative level, further contributed to the widening of the criteria used to define the victims ***(Heder, 2002b: 5-6; Heder, 2005: 390-391). The revolutionary armed forces were mainly composed of uneducated peasant youth having no experience of urban life ***(Heder, 2002b: 5-6). Thus, for them, selecting the “vermin” could have been made through criteria such as being an intellectual, equated to being a despicable civil servant. Then, being an intellectual could have been found out through evidence such as ‘speaking a foreign language,’ ‘having manicured hands’ or ‘wearing glasses.’ The practical criteria for selecting the targets became highly malleable and varying according to those carrying the orders. Meanwhile, with such elastic criteria, the victim target group may only have swelled ***(Heder, 2002a: 20-28).

As Heder ***(2005: 18) puts it “The extermination of all bandasak was the archetype of obligatory killings of a real but finite category of irredeemable victims, who in theory could be positively identified, but in practice identification could be and was arbitrary, therefore being expandable at local cadre discretion.”

Those to be killed were called for meetings and never to be seen again. ***(Etcheson, 1997; Heder, 2005: 391; Kiernan, 1996; Ponchaud, 1977).

The CPK would have made several unsuccessful attempts “to “end or limit the killings between May and October 1975” ***(Kiernan, 1996: 92-93).


1975 (April) - 1978 “Thanking the heroic Cambodian people for his sacrifices;” famine and overwork

Meanwhile, most speeches extolled the “great heroic victory” won “by the great” and “heroic Cambodian people,” “who had totally smashed the most ferocious, barbarous war of aggression of the US imperialists, completely crushed the regime of traitors...” For the CPK/GRUNK leaders, the war had been won because of “the great unity of the nation” and because of “the great sacrifices” of the heroic Cambodian people, composed at 95% of “poor to middle lower farmers,” and of the “FAPLNK, sons and daughters of the poor people...” ***(SWB, Phnom Penh radio 21/04/1975, 27/04/1975).

Having defeated the US, the most powerful super-power, after having begun the war
“empty-handed,” while denying Vietnamese help, the leadership felt that no goal was too ambitious for the Kampuchean nation, as long as “unity,” the “spirit of sacrifice and heroism,” thus the war strategy were kept ***(Chandler, 1992: 242; SWB, Phnom Penh radio 27/04/1975). For the CPK, Kampuchea was not only essentially good and just; it had become all-mighty ***(Chandler, 1992: 239-240; Heder, 2002b:1-2).

Yet, the leaders still felt the country in danger. They thought the US and the overruled regime would counter-attack. Besides eliminating the “vermin,” the task was now to preserve Kampuchea from aggression, thus to make the Nation prosperous ***(Lavoix, 2005: 291-295; 155-160). Thus, the CPK fixed the double goal that would animate the Kampuchean leaders until 1979, “the two mammoth revolutionary tasks: …of defending our nation and people and building up our country and fatherland.” For this, was needed “a community in which all the people live harmoniously in complete national unity and work to increase the production and to build and defend the nation together.” The war recipe would be applied to economy, while Kampuchea needed to “heighten vigilance” and “raise the spirit of absolute struggle” to prevent the expected US counter-attack that strategically included plans “to sabotage economic development” ***(SWB, Phnom Penh radio 26/04/1975, 14/05/1975). Consequently, unachievable rice production targets and works aiming at mastering the water problem were decided ***(Chandler and Kiernan, 1988: xiii-xv; Heder, 2002c: 3).


Erroneous demographic estimation further impeded the possibility to achieve the overall objectives ***(Boua, Chandler and Kiernan, 1988: 52; Kiernan, 2003: 586; SWB, Phnom Penh radio 30/03/1976).

Thus, Kampuchea was transformed in a gigantic forced work camp ***(Locard, 1996). The Kampuchean leaders certainly wanted people to be happy, as stressed in the Constitution and speeches. Yet, the leadership also emphasised on 2 May 1976, “this great victory [the excellent situation in our country] certainly was achieved thanks to the blood shed by the people….under the correct and clear-sighted leadership of our revolutionary Angkar” ***(SWB, Phnom Penh radio 02/05/1976).


Furthermore, the sacrificial economic ambitions, already stemming from a Manichean vision of the people, reinforced this very vision and heightened the consequences of the population’s categorisation. Indeed, for “new people,” “political re-education by the people” should continue until “he or she is totally reformed and purified and becomes a clean, honest citizen, working hard to increase production like everyone else…Our people will punish only those who continue to sabotage our nation and people.” For the Kampuchean leaders this was in line with their expectation of US counter-attacks ***(SWB, Phnom Penh radio 10/05/1975). Thus, any complaints or any failure to achieve the impossible or sometimes absurd objectives could lead the cadres, afraid not to fulfil their goals or just not understanding why achievement did not follow from the “wise and clear-sighted” decisions of the leaders, to single out “new people” as saboteurs and to kill them. The “new people” remained reprieved victims until the abolition of the categorisation in August 1978 ***(SWB, Phnom Penh radio 30/08/1978) as any practical problem such as struggle for scare food or ‘privileges,’ or any complaints in an adverse environment or ideational accusations linked to other unfolding patterns of murder could signify their singling out and killing by local cadres according to elastic criteria ***(Heder, 2002a: 20-28; 2005: 384-396).
As the “good” or “base” people were classified into “candidate” and “full right,” they were not either fully protected from accusation of sabotage *(Heder, 2002a: 20-28; 48-55; 2005: 391-398). Furthermore, from 1977 onwards or earlier, in some districts and in contravention with the Party line, district authorities had told the cooperative cadres that they could kill “new people” without informing anyone *(Heder, 2005: 395).

Heder defines the criteria applied for these killings as “behavioural,” offering “another set of elastic labels and more local discretion for murder” *(Heder, 2005: 382, 389-391).

Moreover, among the evacuees coming from the cities, 5% of them were still considered as unredeemable. The CPK thus demanded local cadres to undertake “an “internal screening” of “new people” and the masses in general to identify these enemies. This led to a further swell in the number of people being killed, this time according to “fantastic criteria” *(Heder, 2005: 382, 388-389).

In practice, all labelling that could motivate killing merged and reinforced each others. *(Heder, 2005: 390)

The risk faced by the entire Kampuchean population would gather strength with the absence of desired results. Indeed, for the leaders and cadres, if a “wise and clear-sighted” decision had been taken, considering the might of the Kampuchean people, if results were not achieved, then it could only be that enemy sabotage had taken place.

For example, a mid-1976 report by a surprised Minister of Social Affairs, stressing people’s under-nourishment, illness and exhaustion led to an explanation in terms of traitors acting from within to sabotage the revolution *(Becker, 1986: 246-247). Traitors were at work, “buried deep within” and had to be found and “smashed.” These traitors being “rotten, vermin” or “viruses, microbes” they could contaminate even pure people, if they remained long enough *(Chandler, 1999: 129-130).

All were at risk. Hence, intensification happened with time.

**1975 (April - June to mid 1976?):** Chanda *(1986: 16) estimates that 150.000 Vietnamese were expelled between April and September 1975. Those remaining, estimated by Kiernan to 10 000, *(Kiernan, 1996: 296), after having worked with Cambodians for three months and been subjected to the same dire conditions as the rest of the population, had been re-grouped with other foreigners in special labour camps *(SWB, reports by a Swedish humanitarian worker on Vietnamese refugees from Cambodia, 08/07/1976). Kiernan *(1996: 296) mentions reports according to which parties of expelled Vietnamese had been massacred on their way to Vietnam.

**1975 (September to December):** A second forced migration from the Southwest and Western zones to the Northwest and Northern zones took place. Kiernan estimates that over half a million but less than one million arrived in the Northwest *(Kiernan, 1996: 97, 216-230).

**1975 (September to October):** A Cham armed uprising occurred against the CPK and their policy of de-islamisation in two villages in Krauch Chhmar. The ensuing repression, led by Cham cadre, was severe. Many rebels and villagers were killed. Others were put in detention centres, the remaining population being sent to other villages and deprived of the veteran status. Other evidences of similar rebellions exist in other areas. As consequence, a central decision to break the community by spreading its members, mixing Cham with Cambodian, was sometimes interpreted by local cadres as a strict anti-Cham policy, which could lead, as elsewhere, to killings *(Heder, 2005- 398-401).

**1975 December - 1979:** The new constitution still mentioned freedom of worship, but compared with the previous Special National Congress, direct reference to Buddhism had been dropped. Persecutions on Buddhists *(Chhang, 1996) and Muslim Cham *(Ysa, 2002) could now be officialised. Indeed, “reactionary religions” were “absolutely forbidden” *(SWB, Phnom Penh radio 05/01/1976). Thus, religious practice could become a direct marker of opposition or of ‘treachery’ and could be lethal *(Heder, 2002c: 11-28), while it was previously only one among many other potential elastic criteria for killing *(Heder, 2005: 396-398).
1976: During most of the year, the Chams were considered as an officially accepted national minority, that should have merged by 1977 within the larger national community ***(Heder, 2005: 398-401).

The overall excess death for the Cham population is estimated by Kiernan, for the 1975-1979 period to 90.000 people, i.e. 36% of the estimated 1975 Cham population **(Kiernan, 2003: 588-590); while Sliwinski’s enquiry obtains the figure of 33.7% (Sliwinski, 1995:145).


1976 (25 February): Explosions occurred in Siem Reap, which the Kampuchean authorities attributed to the US ***( Chandler, 1999a: 46-47; Kiernan, 1996: 316-319). The Thai Communist party through its radiobroadcast confirmed those suspicions, as they repeatedly accused the CIA of promoting subversion within Cambodia, notably by sponsoring a new Khmer Serei movement in Thailand **(SWB, Voice of People of Thailand, 21/01/1977, 11/03/1978). Consequently to the explosions, the regime officially declared 15 dead and 30 wounded but a witness gives an estimate of about 100 deaths ***(Kiernan, 1996: 316).


1976 (mid-April): “China’s Vice-Premier Zhang Chungqiao, one of the ultra-radical ‘Gang of Four’...paid a secret visit to Phnom-Penh.” ***(Short, 2004: 357)

May 1976-1977: The search for enemies, notably CIA agents implanted within the country, took off. “Security centers” such as S-21 in Phnom-Phenh or provincial prisons, came into operation ***(Chandler, 1999a: 4, 38; Locard, 1996). Not only were targeted “new people,” but also, cadres, e.g. the purge of the Eastern zone cadres ***(Kiernan, 1996; Chandler, 1999a; Heder, 2005). Indeed, according to Heder, the criteria to identify these enemies were fantastic, while the arrest and killing was obligatory; both together made the killing of those enemies discretionary. “In transferring their fantasies about spies to their subordinates, the leadership both tasked them to find non-existent enemy agents and gave them carte blanche to do so. These cadre could apply such labels as widely as they liked, to anyone who could not prove he or she was not a spy, which made them almost infinitely expandable” ***(Heder, 2005: 388-389).

Once enemies were identified, if they were not killed immediately by lower level cadres, they were supposed to be deferred to the District Party Committee for interrogation and detention. Information was meant then to be reported to the Sector then to the Zone authorities, where decision about killing was to be taken ***(Heder, 2005: 390-391; 392-394). However, application of these procedures varied. Most suspected people were sent to district interrogation centres, such as S-21 in Phnom Penh (Tuol Sleng) ***(Heder, 2005: 394). One hundred and eighty nine such centres existed throughout the whole country ***(DC Cam, 2005a). Many people were thus killed at district level (Heder, 2005: 394-395).

For the sole S-21, Chandler, using 4.000 confessions, which had been extracted from the prisoners under torture before they were put to death, and various administrative documents, underlines the exponential increase in numbers of people arrested. Out of the approximately 14.000 people that were detained in S-21 between 1975 and 1979, only half a dozen of them survived. In 1975, 200 prisoners were registered. In 1976, 1.622 prisoners were registered, more than three quarter of them being arrested between May and the end of the year. In 1977, over 6.300 prisoners were brought in. Although the files for 1978 are incomplete, it seems that at least 4.352 prisoners were registered that year, and Chandler estimates their total to 5.084 ***(Chandler, 1999b: 123; 1999a: 36).

Under torture, victims at S-21 ended up by ‘revealing’ what they thought their torturers wanted to hear. The treasons they ‘revealed’ were the kinds of treason they had been brainwashed with, through radio, political training, sessions of criticism, etc... ***(Chandler, 1999a: 102). Early confessions, although mentioning tension with Vietnam, did not specify treacherous activities

The tortured victims were made to give the names of all the people they knew ***(Chandler, 1999a: 85, 89).

Those people were then suspected, and in many cases were arrested, tortured and put to death. Their confessions could only tell stories similar to the ‘root confession,’ as they took place in the same ‘ideational period’ regarding enemies and leadership worries, and involved people who had shared similar experiences. DK thus created “networks of traitors” as it purged them. Through these tortures, the leaders were confirmed in their doubts and suspicions regarding “networks of traitors” working for specific foreign enemies they had defined through their speeches. In turn, these confirmations increased the authority’s fear and efforts at arresting traitors, which confirmed again the fear, etc., in an escalating way ***(Lavoix, 2005: 302-303).

1976 (mid-year, some time before July): The Vietnamese and other foreigners regrouped in special camps were asked to leave the country ***(SWB, reports by a Swedish humanitarian worker on Vietnamese refugees from Cambodia, 08/07/1976). On the contrary, posterior recollections suggest that Vietnamese were forbidden to leave the country from mid-1976 onwards and that the killing of some of them started sporadically around this date ***(Kiernan, 1996: 296).


1976 (9 September): Death of Mao Zedong

1976 (10 October): In China, Hua Guofeng, Mao’s successor and new Chairman of the Communist Party has the ‘Gang of Four’ arrested.


1977 (early): Cadres and veteran people were moved from the Southwest to the Northwest, where they replaced cadres of the Northwest zone and started purging them *** (Kiernan, 1996: 217, 236; 246).

1977 (April to December): Tensions with Vietnam escalated into the open with Kampuchean border attacks on the SRV from April 1977. Those resulted from mounting strain related to suspended talks attempting to resolve border issues ***(Heder, 1979), then from Vietnamese diplomatic moves (May 1977 Vietnamese declaration on sovereignty over territorial waters and continental shelf and declaration regarding the improvement of US-Vietnamese relations), which DK felt as threatening, considering its history and ideology ***(Lavoix, 2005: 300).

1977 (September to December): Vietnam defended itself which led to borders’ skirmishes ***(Heder, 1979: 165-167).


1977 (31 December) - 1978: DK severed all relations with the SRV on 31 December, and denounced the Vietnamese military attack on Kampuchea that would have begun in September 1977 ***(Heder, 1979: 172). The SRV counter-attacked by protesting their friendly intentions, denouncing the atrocious Kampuchean attacks on Vietnamese civilians on the border from April 1977 and calling for negotiations. However, DK remained on its position. Furthermore, in DK’s perspective, it obtained military successes over the Vietnamese, which permitted the declaration of a “heroic victory” on the Vietnamese aggressor ***(SWB, Viet Nam News Agency 31/12/1977 and quotes from Phnom-Penh radio 06/01/1978). Thus, war with Vietnam continued ***(Heder, 1979: 172-185). The initial ‘friendly intentions’ displayed by the SRV soon receded. Throughout 1978, the Kampuchean-Vietnamese conflict also developed through discourse, with increasingly violent reciprocal accusations. Vietnam

1977- 1978: In the confessions of the tortured prisoners of the detention centres trying to identify traitors and their networks, the CIA/KGB/Vietnamese connection tends to be found towards the end of 1977 and 1978, when the leaders had officially identified Vietnam as enemy ***(Chandler, 1999a: 93; 102; Heder, 2005: 389). Thus, the CPK rulers were creating potentially imaginary Khmer who were pro-Vietnamese traitors (Heder, 2001: 150). It would seem that it is during this last period that the small remaining Vietnamese community (estimated to 10.000 by Kiernan) in Cambodia was targeted qua Vietnamese for elimination ***(Kiernan, 1996: 296-298).

1978 (February- March?): In the Western zone, dissatisfaction among some party cadres could have led to the planning of a plot, then uncovered. The suspected leaders were arrested **(Kiernan, 1996: 390-392).

1978 (from March onwards): The central power suspected that a pro-Vietnamese rebellion was ongoing in the Eastern zone ***(Kiernan, 1996: 392-405).

1978 (from May onwards): While external and internal perceptions of real or imaginary aggressions increased, the CPK was calling to a generalised “purifying the Army, the Party and the Masses” ***(SWB, Phnom Penh radio 10/05/1978).

Meanwhile killings did not only intensify but also spread to the whole population, all dynamics leading to killings and kinds of possible enemies merging, while labelling of traitors included increasingly more external aggressors ***(Heder, 2005: 389-390; Kiernan, 1996: 386-439).

In the Eastern zone, some of the Eastern troops fought back ***(Chandler, 1992: 271, Kiernan, 1996: 392-405; 440-442), resistance spread until Kratie - region 505 - by mid 1978 *** (Kiernan, 1996: 401-405). Cadres and people started running away to the forest or to nearby Vietnam, while resisting cadres soon made contact with the SRV ***(Kiernan, 1996: 401-405; 440-442).

1978 (From mid-June onwards): An evacuation from the Eastern zone, mainly towards the North-western zone took place. A large but unknown number of the people forced to migrate were killed, either while they were rounded up for evacuation, while travelling or at their arrival ***(Kiernan, 1996: 405-414; Chandler, 1992: 271). Chandler **(1992: 271) estimates the number of people having been evacuated to “tens of thousands” and those having been killed to “perhaps a hundred thousand.” The rationale behind the evacuation and killings would have been that, when Vietnam had invaded the region, taken hundreds of prisoners and then withdrawn, people and cadre had failed to defeat them. People from the Eastern zone were thus accused to have “Cambodian bodies with Vietnamese minds) ***(Chandler, 1992: 271).

1978 (August): The various categories between new and veteran people, candidate and depositee were abolished.

1978 (end of the year): Signs of appeasement were detected; killings and arrest subsided, while life conditions became, in some places, relatively less stringent and absurd ***(Chandler, 1999a: 74-75; Thion, 1993: 171; Hoeung, 2003).

1979 (7 January): The SRV took over Phnom Penh, thus ending the war the Kampuchean leaders thought they would win ***(Chandler, 1992a: 225).

Bibliography

Archival Material and Acronyms

Agence Khmère de Presse (AKP)
Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (MAE)

Archives Nationales du Cambodge – National Archives of Cambodia (NAC)

Centre des Archives d’Outre Mer (CAOM)

Cold War International History Project (CWIHP)

DC-Cam: http://www.dccam.org/Projects/index.htm

Service de Protection du Corps Expéditionnaire (SPCE)

Service Historique de l’Armée de Terre (SHAT)

Summary of World Broadcast (SWB)

Viet Nam News Agency (VNA)


For example:

CAOM - HCI – ConsPol 28 – South Mekong region « Deux ans et demi à la région Sud-Mekong » (Juin 1947 – Octobre 1949);


**Witnesses’ life stories**


**Publications**


Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph series, no.33


Chanda, Nayan, 1986, *Brother Enemy: the war after the war - a History of Indochina since the fall of Saigon*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanoitch)


Corfield, Justin, 1994, *Khmers Stand Up!* (Monash: Monash Papers on Southeast Asia)


Heder, Steve, 2002b, “Within the victorious CPK leadership,” unpublished


Les Cahiers de mai, 1970, n° 20, mai, p. 27.


Poole, Peter A., 1974, “The Vietnamese in Cambodia and Thailand: their role in interstate relations” *Asian Survey*, April XIV; 4


Revolutionary Youth, 1976, April, translation by Steve Heder, DCCam.


Song, Chhang, *Buddhism under Pol Pot* (Phnom-Penh: DCCam, 1996)


Thion, Serge, 1993, “Genocide as Political Commodity,” in Kiernan, Ben, ed. *Genocide and democracy in Cambodia: the Khmer Rouge, the United Nations and the international community* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies,). Monograph series, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, pp. 163-190

