

Victims and Perpetrator?

Testimony of Young Khmer Rouge Comrades

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មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

Searching for the truth.

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for memory and justice.

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Documentation Center of Cambodia Archive

Democratic Kampuchea (DK) Provinces, Zones, Regions and Districts

A Khmer Rouge text describing the DK administrative and political geography, first published by the DK Ministry of Education for Elementary Class 2, 1977, pp. 9-10, Translated by Sour Bunsou and Youk Chhang.

Kampuchea consists of 19 provinces: Stung Treng, Ratanak Kiri, Mondul Kiri, Kratie, Kampong Cham, Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kandal, Takeo, Kampot, Koh Kong, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom, Preah Vihear, Oddar Meanchey, Siem Reap, Pursat and Battambang. These provinces are further divided into 112 districts, 1,160 sub-districts, and many hundreds of villages. During the period of our secret political struggle, and of our internal and revolutionary war more than five years ago, with the aim of creating more favorable conditions for communications, administration, and work implementation to fulfill revolutionary tasks in all sectors, our revolutionary organization divided the country into new zones and regions on top of these former provinces, districts, sub-districts, and villages. In addition, we had established cooperatives since the revolutionary war. Since the great victory on April 17, 1975, our revolutionary organization has found it expedient to retain the new zones and region subdivisions as being highly useful for administrative purposes.

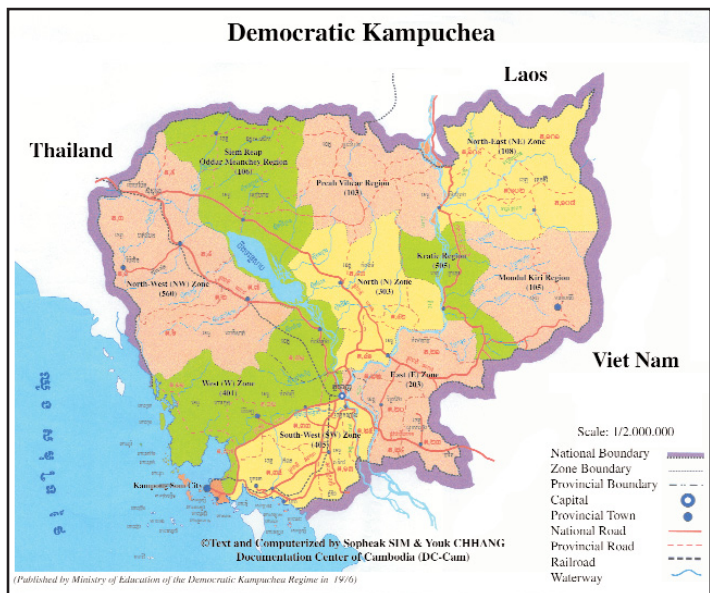
At present, our Democratic Kampuchea has been divided into six zones and some other regions distinctively designated with their own administrations, not under any zone. Kampong Som is a city under a separate administration like the other Regions. The Regions or cities under separate administrations are directly controlled by the State Organization, not via any Zone. At the same time, we have created certain new districts, including Koh Chey (formerly called Preah Sdech district), Krasaing district in the East Zone, Taing Kok and Baray districts in the North Zone, Choam Sangke in the Southwest Zone, Thmar Sar in the West Zone, and Kandieng, Kdat, Thlea Ma-am, and Samlot in the Northwest Zone. Our six zones are the Northeast Zone, East Zone, Southwest Zone, West Zone, North Zone, and Northwest Zone. We do not establish a zone for each province, and thus each of certain zones consists of two or more provinces. For example, we have combined all of Svay Rieng and Prey Veng together with part of Kampong Cham province located on the left bank of the Mekong to form the East zone and one district of Kratie province (Chhlong) as well as a separate territory from Kandal province.

Kampong Chhnang Province (pp. 15-16)

Located in the north-western part of the capital city of Phnom Penh, Kampong Chhnang, with its headquarters in provincial town of “Kampong Chhnang,” is bordered on the north by Kampong Thom Province and Tonle Sap Lake; on the south by Kampong Speu and Kandal Province; on the east by Kampong Cham Province; and on the west by Pursat Province. Five districts subsume Kampong Chhnang Province: 1) Kampong Tralach District, with its headquarters in Sala Lekh 5, is divided into 19 sub-districts; 2) Tuk Phos, with its headquarters in Sdok Ach Romeas, consists of 8 sub-districts; 3) Rolea Phieat District, with its headquarters in Chrey Bakk, comprises 13 sub-districts; 4) Baribo District, with its headquarters in Punley, is divided into 11 sub-districts; and 5) Kampong Leng District, with its headquarters in Kampong Hav, consists of 11 sub-districts.

In the era of political strife and a hybrid concept of both armed and political struggle, such strategic

bases in Kampong Chhnang included Kraing Daung Village; Changva Riel Village; Sre Andaung Village; Ta Keo Village; Kraing Samrong Village; Sre Russey Village; Chrak Thkov Village; Chrak Sdech Village; Phnom Chum Reay (Peam Sub-district) of Kampong Tralach; Prey Chreou Sub-district and Kbal Tik Sub-district of Tik Phos.



*The only way that Cambodians can put their terrible past
behind them and begin to build a new future
is by revealing the truth.*

PREFACE

I was fourteen when the Khmer Rouge came to Phnom Penh in April 1975. At the time, I lived in Toul Kauk, a Phnom Penh suburb. I was home alone when young Khmer Rouge comrades came to chase me out of the house on the morning of 17 April. My mother, who'd been hoping to collect me later, had previously moved with the rest of the family to my uncle's house for greater safety. Now it was too late. The young Khmer Rouge comrades had already forced me at gunpoint to join the crowds on the streets. I was too young to understand what was going on, and too innocent to be afraid of anything. But what I was to experience under the Khmer Rouge regime would teach me that innocence was itself a crime for *Angkar*. I would witness a family murdered by young Khmer Rouge comrades at a public commune meeting in front of a pagoda, Wat Preah Neth Preah in Battambang province. I would watch hundreds of people die of starvation, including my own sister.

It was on a sunny morning that I picked water grass for my pregnant sister, who had had no real food to eat for months. This act was considered criminal under the Khmer Rouge regime, so the young Khmer Rouge comrades hit me with an ax, pushed me to the ground, tied me up with rope, and put me in jail for weeks. My mother was afraid to cry in front of them while they were torturing me. Crying was also a crime under the regime. The young Khmer Rouge comrades who tortured me and perhaps also executed my sister were comrades of the interviewees you will meet in this paper. They reveal another side of the story – their own memories.

In this paper, our researchers have recorded the memories of several young Khmer Rouge comrades in Kampong Chhnang province (called Region 31 under the Khmer Rouge regime). The memories are too valuable to remain untold. They must be preserved for the benefit of the many younger generations to come. This paper is an important contribution to reconciliation study and our horrible, previously unrecorded history. The young Khmer Rouge comrades have shared with us a history that they do not want to be repeated. I am convinced that these messages are purely from their hearts and inner sufferings. They want nothing from any of us, but that we listen to their stories and wishes for justice.

In the meantime, those who were members of the Khmer Rouge leadership claim that

they do not believe that more than one million Cambodians perished under their regime. I wonder, have they ever visited their own secret prison, S-21, now known as the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, where almost 20,000 prisoners were tortured and executed? The dozens of former young Khmer Rouge comrades who present their stories in this paper can certainly testify to what happened at S-21.

For real peace, for real national reconciliation, for real development, and for real stability, Cambodia must confront the truth and find justice. The young Khmer Rouge comrades are ready to testify in court as they have testified here. The only way that Cambodians can put their terrible past behind them and begin to build a new future is by revealing the truth.

Youk Chhang

There are many undiscovered facts in the memories of survivors – both victims and perpetrators – and in the pages of original documents... The data will tell the truth only when obtained with an unbiased perspective. Facts and opinions are differentiated.

A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

In November 1999, Meng-Try came to me with a collection of Khmer Rouge comrade biographies, asking how they were related to a topic he was working on concerning children and whether he might use them.¹ He was writing his first paper for the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), and found himself at an impasse. I suggested he look for some unifying aspect of the biographies, like age or birthplace, and then follow up and tell the stories of young Khmer Rouge comrades who ended up at S-21, known to us as Tuol Sleng prison. Meng-Try had been with DC-Cam for two months, and he had started off by reading and assembling those biographies from some 600,000 pages of documents in the DC-Cam Archive. This two-month reading of the archive materials had followed upon a DC-Cam screening, in which Meng-Try, who possessed the requisite minimum of a bachelor's degree, had passed the full-day test of essay writing in English on Khmer Rouge history.

I am responsible for the research department of DC-Cam and work with Meng-Try and the other researchers daily in order to render assistance on any manner of questions ranging from general to technical, reading, writing, footnoting, citation, bibliography, theme, and field interviews. Researchers can write in whatever language they feel most comfortable, as long as they follow DC-Cam transliteration standards for spelling geographical and biographical names.² I firmly believe in the learning-by-doing method when it comes to writing a research paper. Meng-Try and the other researchers are free to write as their fancy dictates, as long as they faithfully cite all of their sources and produce papers free from plagiarism. I ask the researchers to observe the way scholars on Cambodia have written their books, while a guidebook is also available.³ Many of these scholars are on the DC-Cam Board of The Associate Advisors (TAA), and are available for consultation when questions arise. Dr. Craig Etcheson, Dr. Steve Heder, Ambassador Julio A. Jeldres and Prof. David Chandler have all shared their experiences with us. DC-Cam also provides its researchers with the opportunity to learn from its local and overseas volunteers, Sim Sopheak, Ra Chhayrann, Wynne Cougill, Kalyanee Mam, Rachel Hughes, and Colleen McGinn, and to attend conferences and human rights-related training in Cambodia and abroad.

When Meng-Try was designing interview questionnaires in preparation for his field trip, I suggested that he begin with a very general question, such as “what happened

to you before and during the Khmer Rouge regime?” DC-Cam field research policy is based firmly upon experience, which has demonstrated the importance of avoiding leading questions. Researchers benefit from sharing their experiences and those of DC-Cam execution site mapping teams managed by Kosal Phat at our Friday afternoon staff meetings.⁴ My experience with UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) in human rights training and investigation also adds depth to their understanding of the human rights aspects of their work. A DC-Cam staff member who is a law graduate of the Faculty of Law in Phnom Penh, Vanthan Peou Dara, offers seminars on international criminal law using materials provided by Yale University’s Schell Center for International Human Rights for legal training in Phnom Penh during 1995 and 1996. A Harvard Law graduate, John D. Ciorciari, has also briefed DC-Cam staff on legal aspects of the field research questionnaires. In addition, Thursday luncheon workshops conducted by Eliza Romey of Monash University give researchers the opportunity to express themselves in English, while Friday morning seminars develop their general reading abilities. Therefore, by the time a researcher enters the field, he or she is well equipped for the work at hand.

A broad knowledge of Khmer Rouge history and familiarity with its terminology from the DC-Cam Khmer Rouge Glossary (compiled and edited by Sour Bunsou and DC-Cam Director Youk Chhang) help researchers to understand what survivors describe. The DC-Cam materials on the concepts and cases of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, command responsibility, and individual responsibility enable a researcher to dig into the policy level and chain of command, the first elements of which are revealed in the survivors’ stories. The 5W1H questions (who, what, when, where, why, and how) are intended to help researchers seek out every possible detail that an interviewee can remember. A researcher is discouraged from asking these questions until an interviewee has told all he or she is able to. A researcher is reminded to confirm how an interviewee knows what happened in a way that does not threaten him or her. The way a researcher dresses and talks determines the extent and reliability of the response: “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” A foreign look or talk invites exaggeration, distortion, or even lies.

DC-Cam researchers are not permitted to tip or compensate interviewees in any way. Both a tape player and hand note taking are used to record interviews, and the interviewees are made aware that they are being recorded. The vital task of transcribing is begun overnight during the trip. A small camera is used to take all relevant photos. A researcher is reminded to double check equipment before use. For security, logistic and report purposes, a researcher fills in a research trip checklist and a results form, entries of which include the number of interviewees, time, place, tapes used, photos, negatives, materials obtained, and content brief. Trips during the rainy season are discouraged. DC-Cam possesses a research trip authorization from the Ministry of Interior and a researcher may require a local police escort to travel in remote areas. Village chiefs usually are the best sources for further information and contacts.

When it comes to Khmer Rouge history, DC-Cam believes that there are many undiscovered facts in the memories of survivors – both victims and perpetrators – and in the pages of original documents. By all means and at all cost, DC-Cam avoids the selective culling of possible evidence in its fieldwork. Our aim is to find the truth, whether or not it supports any particular hypothesis. Meng-Try and our other researchers are taught first and foremost that the data will tell the truth only when obtained with an unbiased perspective. Facts and opinions are differentiated. The experiences of young Khmer Rouge comrades at S-21 have been gleaned from personal interviews with them and their relatives, and less directly through a number of sources cited in this paper.

Believing that the truth lies somewhere between the accounts of the victims and perpetrators, but is closer to those of the former, we have tried to use both. Of the 14 prisoners known to have survived S-21, 3 have been interviewed by DC-Cam.⁵

Of the 1,685 comrades at the S-21 prison, 762 biographies are available. The latter show that 169 comrades were drafted from Region 31, Kampong Chhnang province. We went there and interviewed 18 former S-21 young comrades, 22 relatives of 22 deceased S-21 comrades, 2 relatives of living S-21 comrades, as well as 34 general survivors in Region 31.

The DC-Cam Archive is divided into two sections: catalogued items and items in the process of being catalogued. While in preparation for DC-Cam publication, all intellectual products from the interviews and associated manuscripts are confidential. DC-Cam research regulations state that members of the public are permitted to consult any catalogued document held in the DC-Cam Archive, but are not allowed to consult unpublished research studies and materials unless approval is given in advance from the author(s).

The steps we take have shaped a stated research policy that currently facilitates DC-Cam researchers and the public, and that will through experience become a research manual. With the help of this manual, Meng-Try and other researchers will become examples of a new breed of Cambodian researchers, who will in turn produce more researchers and books. This move is particularly important because there is a severe lack of resources and incentives for research and publication. Cambodian schools have yet to possess a culture of learning that respects individual critical thinking and writing. The kind of liberal education and curriculum that routinely encourage academic excellence are still out of reach. I found hardly any books on Cambodia that were written by Cambodians, even at Yale University where I was studying between 1995-1997. I can therefore understand why a Cambodia scholar advises that it will be impossible for me to train DC-Cam researchers to write papers and they should instead start as assistants, while another commented that the researchers are in the best position to write empirical papers that may enhance possibilities for publication. And I accept the challenge.

Since 1997 when I joined DC-Cam, I have wanted to help myself and other Cambodians to be able to write papers (and possibly books) on a par with international standards. Whether or not this goal will be achieved remains to be seen. The DC-Cam research documentation series is a start. Much remains to be done. I thank the British Embassy, especially Ambassador H.M. George Edgar, for giving us support and understanding. This documentation series has taken longer than the deadline and the Embassy has been patient in allowing us a chance to grow up; ReddBarna Norway and The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Bangkok have also given us greatly appreciated support.

The commitment we have is, by DC-Cam mandate, to record and preserve the history of the Khmer Rouge regime for future generations and to compile and organize information that can serve as potential evidence in a future legal accounting for the crimes of the regime. Providing a means by which survivors can learn why and what happened to their lost loved ones is the only way to heal their sense of being held hostage by the past. Discussions are underway to include Khmer Rouge history as a required supplement to Cambodian school textbooks. When the survivors know who did what to their families and that justice is being sought, they will be able to forgive and will then be free to move on with a sense that the nation they are living in is finally governed by law. This research series is for memory and justice, and will assist in building a foundation for the rule of law, genuine national reconciliation, and a robust economy.

Sorya Sim

*These children should be viewed not only as perpetrators
but also as victims of the Khmer Rouge revolution.*

INTRODUCTION

In 1975 the Khmer Rouge overthrew the US-backed Khmer Republic led by Marshall Lon Nol, which had ruled the country since the 1970 coup d'état against the People's Socialist Community (Sangkum Reas Niyum) of Prince Norodom Sihanouk formed in 1955.

The Khmer Rouge pursued a communist policy that resulted in the deaths of at least 1.7 million innocent people and alleged enemies. These included at least 14,000 people who were incarcerated in *Muntí Sa-21* (Security Office 21) in Phnom Penh.⁶ S-21 was the former Tuol Svay Prey school, which the Khmer Rouge had converted as the headquarters of their secret police organization, the *Santebal*, in 1976. This clandestine facility functioned mainly as an interrogation and torture center to wrench "confessions" from those who were thought to oppose or disagree with the party. It housed people from throughout Cambodia and foreign countries.⁷ S-21 also took the lives of nearly 600 of its own 1,700 comrades.⁸

S-21 headquarters also had several annexes. These included the colonial-era Prey Sa prison in Dang Kao district that was used as a reeducation center,⁹ an area called Boeng Tumpun that was used to raise animals,¹⁰ and Cheung Ek, a large execution site 18 kilometers west of Phnom Penh.¹¹

A large amount of scientific research has been carried out on the psychology of genocide survivors, including some work on survivors of the Cambodian genocide.¹² But as trauma expert Dr. Judith Herman noted, "Little is known about the mind of the perpetrator."¹³

Psychiatric studies of Cambodian genocide survivors have shown that symptoms of serious psychological problems - such as recurring nightmares, trouble concentrating or sleeping, and signs of clinical depression - can endure for years after the traumatic experience has ended.¹⁴ Recent studies suggest that a significant proportion of the Cambodian population still suffer from these problems, often diagnosed as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD.¹⁵ Trauma specialists believe that the effects of such traumas can last a lifetime, especially when the trauma involves long periods of confinement in a prison setting. As Judith Herman has written:



The sign reads Tuol Sleng Extermination Camp of Pol Pot - Ieng Sary's Clique. Today (2001) the sign reads Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. It is formed by four former high school buildings. In 1962 the school was called Ponhea Yat High School, named after a Royal ancestor of Prince Norodom Sihanouk. In the first half of the 1970s it was renamed Tuol Svay Prey High School. In the second half of the 1970s, it served as *Munti Santebal*, the central security office known briefly as S-21 or Tuol Sleng prison.



The sign reads Primary School Tuol Sleng. Wooden buildings inside formed the school.



The wooden buildings, which were constructed before 1970, served as Tuol Sleng Primary School. The buildings in the background are more recent and are now the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

Prolonged captivity also produces profound alterations in the victim's identity. All the psychological structures of the self – the image of the body, the internalized images of others, and the values and ideals that lend a person a sense of coherence and purpose – have been invaded and systematically broken down... Even after release from captivity, the victim cannot assume her former identity. Whatever new identity she develops in freedom must include the memory of her enslaved self. Her body image of herself in relation to others must include a body that can be controlled and violated. Her image of herself in relation to others must include a person who can lose and be lost to others. And her moral ideals must coexist with knowledge of the capacity for evil, both within others and within herself.¹⁶

It seems logical that the effects of trauma would also have an impact on the staff of prison camps and others participating in state terror, although there have been few studies that would confirm this possibility. One study found that torturers from the Greek military regime suffered adverse psychological effects similar, in some ways, to those of their victims:

...professional torturers hurt others as a job, but they, too, often find it stressful. In one of the few studies of such professionals, researchers found that after the Greek military regime fell, many former torturers came forward to describe their own problems and sufferings. These resembled posttraumatic stress patterns we have already seen in other groups: nightmares, depression, severe irritability.¹⁷

To date, no studies have been conducted that might confirm whether these effects appear in young Khmer Rouge comrades who were involved in torture. Those interviewed for this study were between the ages of 12 and 18 when they served as Khmer Rouge comrades. Although the present paper is the first research study to focus exclusively on young Khmer Rouge comrades, much previous work has been done on the problem of child soldiers around the world. Some of these studies shed light on young comrades of the Khmer Rouge.

A report on child soldiers prepared for the United Nations found that “Some commanders have even noted the desirability of child soldiers because they are more obedient, do not question orders and are easier to manipulate than adult soldiers.”¹⁸ The report notes, “The lure of ideology is particularly strong in early adolescence, when young people are developing personal identities and searching for a sense of social meaning.” As the case of Rwanda shows, however, the ideological indoctrination of youth can have disastrous consequences.¹⁹ Psychiatrist Richard Mollica, discussing the situations of children in Rwanda said, “Young people are very idealistic and the powers prey on them.”²⁰

James Grant wrote that:

Children as young as seven and eight are often used as soldiers, equipped with fully automatic assault weapons. These children are sometimes forcibly recruited, but more often join warring factions for survival. Many have seen their own parents cruelly murdered. Terrible things have been done to these children, and the children themselves have done terrible things, taking part in the atrocities of war. Reintegrating these children into their communities presents immense problems.²¹

Joanna Santa Barbara also studied children who had been recruited into armies. “For children who suffer this fate, separation from parents is but the first of many appalling abuses.”²² Turning to the question of Cambodian children, Santa Barbara noted, “Cambodian young people who had lived through the Pol Pot regime between the ages of 6 and 12 had suffered catastrophically traumatic events. Their depression declined over time, but post-traumatic stress disorder was diagnosed at high rates.”²³ She pointed out, “The children whose moral development has been most destructively affected are those who have been trained to kill. When fighting is over and the children have to return to society, it is very difficult to place them in schools or families.”²⁴

Roy Baumeister discussed some of the problems experienced by the perpetrators of violent acts:

Many perpetrators regard themselves as victims. In their accounts, in their recollections, and probably even in their most sincere gut feelings, many perpetrators see themselves as people who have been unjustly treated and hence deserve sympathy, support and extra tolerance for any wrongs they may have committed.²⁵

Baumeister argued that perpetrators often deal with their feelings of guilt over the acts they have committed by maintaining a focus on minor matters. He cited the activities carried out by torturers at Tuol Sleng as an example:

The low-level focus is also apparent in the self-criticism notes of the Khmer Rouge torturers at the infamous Tuol Sleng prison... Like Communists everywhere, the torturers were supposed to engage in self-criticism. What did they reproach themselves for? In these records, the interrogators discuss such mundane problems as lying down on the job while questioning prisoners, not sharpening pencils, smudging papers, and the like. These tasks are certainly low level, as well as trivial. Not sharpening pencils is about as unabstract a problem as one can imagine.²⁶

Mental health professionals have found that such trauma-induced psychological problems are particularly difficult to treat in Cambodian patients. Kinzie, who has studied such patients in some detail, noted that there is significant resistance to therapy, "...the patients spoke of unpleasant memories only with great effort. Even then the result was not a catharsis; grief or working through did not resolve their trauma."²⁷ He believes part of the difficulty lies in cultural factors, limiting the options for successful therapy, "The inability of Asians to discuss in groups personal events in general and the concentration camp experience in particular probably precludes any group therapy as treatment."²⁸

Thus, mental health professionals seem to agree that the trauma of captivity in concentration camp-like institutions induces psychological illness, that the ill effects of such trauma can be long-lasting, and that this type of trauma is resistant to standard methods of psychiatric treatment, perhaps especially in Asians in general and Cambodians in particular. Some of the few studies conducted in this area also show that these traumas affect not only the prisoners of concentration camps and victims of torture but also the perpetrators, who in a sense thereby also become victims. Moreover, these ill effects may be particularly severe when the victims are children.

We are then left to consider how common it was for the Khmer Rouge to use children in situations that were likely to produce trauma. The regime's official journal *Tung Padevat* (the Revolutionary Flag) stated, "Children are the best source for revolution in the mass, in the cooperatives, and in the offices because they have learned politics, spirits, organization."²⁹ This policy was also implemented through primary school textbooks.³⁰ Historians and other scholars studying the Khmer Rouge have written extensively about the use and abuse of children to serve the revolution. Henri Locard summarized the Khmer Rouge approach to the use of children by quoting Khmer Rouge rhetoric, "To establish a new society we need new people."³¹

As Ben Kiernan noted, "Children were employed as militia, to spy on their families, and as soldiers and executioners. The Khmer Rouge hoped to use children as the basis of a new society without memory."³² To create this new society, Kiernan explained, the Khmer Rouge took over the role of the family in raising children, "Most families in Cambodia saw their children taken away and sent to live in barracks or at distant work sites."³³

Elizabeth Becker described Lon Nol's military interrogators as having been shocked by the defiance of young female Khmer Rouge combatants captured during battle in 1973, "These were the soldiers who left their families and villages when they were as young as twelve years old and never returned. They were raised and indoctrinated by the party."³⁴ After the Khmer Rouge came to power, some of these young soldiers were put in charge of raising the nation's youth:

The result was tragic. There was no play, no grooming, no growing up for children from six years of age who boarded in the dormitories.

Their lives were Dickensian, political orphans with no proper care or teachers. Some saw and partook in unspeakable cruelty. All were denied affection.³⁵

Craig Etcheson explained why the Khmer Rouge preferred to use children as the basis for their revolution:

Indeed, the party did favor the young, finding in them a very useful tool. With marginally integrated cognitive belief systems and immature development of normative values, the young are ideal instruments of revolution. Mature persons, more set in their ways and more resistant to the internalization of the new revolutionary values, are more problematic. The communists took advantage of this natural fact from the beginning of the early revolutionary period by recruitment.³⁶

May Ebihara reached the same conclusion, arguing that the Khmer Rouge used children to serve the revolution because they were particularly vulnerable to being shaped. “Children past the age of about seven were separated from their families, housed separately in dormitory-like arrangements, and mobilized into youth labor teams working in the community or, in the case of teenagers, often sent elsewhere.”³⁷ This process is illustrated in this paper’s documentation of interviews with young Khmer Rouge comrades. Ebihara has described the reasons behind this process:

Youth were a special target for indoctrination into the revolutionary ideology; they would be, of course, more amenable to socialization (or re-socialization) into new forms of thought and behavior. Such indoctrination, combined with actual organization into distinct work teams and youth associations, as well as physical separation from home, would produce alienation from family ties and development of primary loyalties to other groups such as the association, the army, the party and the revolutionary state in general. As a corollary, children past a certain age were no longer under the authority of their families but rather of various representatives of the government and party...³⁸

As a result, Cambodian children could be trained to carry out Khmer Rouge orders, no matter how brutal or cruel. Even Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen understood the consequences of this process. In an essay titled “The Origin of the Khmer Rouge Regime,” he argued that those who served in the Khmer Rouge revolutionary process were both brutal executioners and victims of the terrorist regime.³⁹

Thus, as mental health professionals and other specialists have argued, children, because of their innocence, are easily trained. The Khmer Rouge knew this and used

it in their attempt to build a new society. Historians have documented this fact. These observations lead to the conclusion that young comrades also became victims of the revolution.

This study examines a group of children who became victims of the Khmer Rouge regime. It is based on interviews with children who had been recruited from Region 31, and ended up working at S-21.

Under the Khmer Rouge regime, Kampong Chhnang province was called Region 31; this region lies in the center of Cambodia, some 90 kilometers north of Phnom Penh.⁴⁰ In this study, the connection between Region 31 and S-21 was verified by a group of children under 18 who were from the region and survived the prison. The study finds these children should be viewed not only as perpetrators, but also as victims of the Khmer Rouge revolution.⁴¹

Since Hon said goodbye to me, he has never returned home.

DRAFTING FOR THE REVOLUTION

In the early days of the Khmer Rouge regime, some children were willing to join the revolution, while others were forced into service. Some joined the militia expecting to have pistols or rifles, and thereby gain the respect of other children and adult villagers.⁴² They took great pride in being able to show off their guns. Villagers always paid them respect, and indeed, were afraid of them. When they became militia or comrades, they would not have to work in the fields or on dam projects like other village boys. The rations for militia were also much better than those for ordinary village children.⁴³ However, when the militia or district chief told young comrades to leave the village to work for the party in other places, these children hesitated to go because they did not want to leave their homes and parents. But in the end, these young comrades were persuaded to cooperate because they were told how good life would be there, and the benefits they would gain from serving the Khmer Rouge. Ta Khchao rejected Soeu's argument, explaining that he was old enough to serve. Soeu recounted the way he was convinced:

When a district chief, Ta Khchao, asked me to leave the village and work elsewhere, I did not want to go. But when Ta Khchao told me that other boys also had to leave and our families would live freely and happily, then I agreed to leave the village. On the way to the Center, comrades in the truck sang and laughed happily. We were glad to leave our villages to work in the Center,⁴⁴ where we had never been before. I also felt happy because I could work with my friends from the same village.⁴⁵

At the Center, everything was different from what he had been told. Soeu was given no freedom to communicate with or visit his family. He was sent from place to place, and he began to cry. He wanted to return home, but it was too late.⁴⁶

Before coming to S-21, Sat was approached by Rin, the Baribo district chief. After he serve for a few months, Sat was told that he had to move nearby rather than to the Center. "We hoped we would be sent to work in the capital of Kampong Chhnang province, but when the trucks arrived in Kampong Chhnang province they did not stop. Afterward, everyone began to doubt and worry about where we were going and what

our tasks would be,” Sat said.⁴⁷ Un joined the revolution and was sent to work at various places and finally was assigned to work as a guard comrade at the S-21 prison in the Center.⁴⁸

Doeun’s parents had died in the civil war.⁴⁹ He lived with his uncle in Ang village, Porpel sub-district, Baribo district. Doeun was later recruited to work in a unit with 100 other boys, and assigned to work on the Damnakk Chambakk, Spean Dek and Oluos dam projects. Doeun and other children in his unit had already spent a year there when they were told to go study, but not where. In his own words, “The chief did not tell us where we were going or what we would be doing. He lied that we had to go study. I am sure that not only I had no idea where we were going or what work we would be doing. Other boys in the trucks did not know either. We all did what our chiefs ordered us to do.”⁵⁰ Doeun finally became an electrician comrade at S-21 without technical or literacy training.

Also told to go to school was Phai, who ended up as an S-21 animal husbandry comrade in 1976. His family and other villagers had been evacuated from Chann Trak village to live on Chi Pit Mountain in Ola Khmeng village,⁵¹ an area controlled by the Khmer Rouge. In the evacuation process, “They would kill anyone who disobeyed their orders,” said Phai. He himself was told from the beginning by a sub-district chief that “It was necessary that every child join the revolutionary armed forces” to fight against Lon Nol, and he joined. “After the liberation in April 1975, I was told to go study. Instead, I was sent to work at the Center. Both Set and Noeun, who left with me to the Center, died.”⁵²

There are instances where young comrades were instructed to leave for the Center during a meeting, or upon being awakened from sleep at night. They followed their chiefs’ orders because they were afraid of the chiefs’ brutality. One such case was La, who had been living in Trapeang Chann village in the Khmer Rouge-controlled area. La was moved from place to place far from his village and parents. In 1973, he worked on the Prek Chik dam project, and later on the Spean Dek dam. He was finally assigned to join the Khmer Rouge armed forces in Kbal Damrei, Porpel sub-district. When he became a sub-district comrade, La worked and lived under the control of Neou, who was tall, thin, and in his early 20s. La described his departure from home to work in the Center:

I had to obey Neou’s orders because Neou was mean and cruel. Neou killed many people in the village, including Mon, his own cousin, in 1974. Everyone was afraid of him, especially sub-district comrades who worked under his control. In 1975, Neou killed a village teacher in front of every young comrade in Kbal Damrei. I left the village for the Center on May 21, 1975, after a meeting. At the midnight meeting, Neou assigned us to leave the village and work elsewhere. The Khmer Rouge in Region 31 tried to recruit young sub-district and district comrades to work for the party in the Center because there was a big demand for armed forces to work for the revolution.⁵³

Khann, another former S-21 animal husbandry comrade, was born in Olympic village, Pospel sub-district, Baribo district. Khann never attended school because of the civil war in which schools were closed and villagers were evacuated to the forests and mountains. Khann became a sub-district comrade in 1975. A few months later, he was assigned by Thy, a sub-district deputy chief, to go to work for the party in the Center. Khann recalled:

One night in 1975, Thy came and woke me up while I was sleeping. He told me to pack and go to the district headquarters. When I finished packing, I thought they were taking me to be killed, because there was nothing, only killing at midnight. From the district I caught the truck, but I did not know where I was going.⁵⁴

In 1974, Pheap was also forced to join the Khmer Rouge armed forces to fight against the Lon Nol regime. Pheap recounted his story:

At that time, I tried my best to escape recruitment, but it was inescapable. I pretended to be ill when the village chief came and asked me to attend a meeting at the district headquarters. But the chief did not care if I was ill. He said it was the party's orders so everyone had to obey. A year later, in 1975, when I had to catch the truck at the district headquarters for the Center, I escaped to my house and pretended to be ill. Unfortunately, a month later, I was assigned once more to join the second march to the Center.⁵⁵

During the civil war, Thim's family lived in the Khmer Rouge controlled area. Thim was assigned by Ta Khchao, chief of Kampong Tralach district, to join the Khmer Rouge armed forces to fight against the Lon Nol regime. Both Thim and his mother did not like working for the Khmer Rouge, but it was inescapable. Although Thim's mother tried her best to get the district chief to allow her son to stay, she failed. Yan recalled, "I did not want my son to join the Khmer Rouge armed forces because I have only one son in the family and he was very young. I knew that he could not bear such a difficult responsibility."⁵⁶ During the civil war, Thim was responsible for transferring water, food and ammunition to the soldiers at the front. After the war ended, he served as a district comrade and was assigned to leave the village for the Center. No one could ask the district chief to allow him to stay in the village. Thim recounted, "My mother did not want me to leave and work far away from her. When she found out, she rushed in tears to see Ta Khchao to ask him to allow me to stay with her. But it was in vain. Ta Khchao would not even listen to her."⁵⁷

Under the Khmer Rouge, parents did not have the right to take care of their own children. The party posed as children's parents and every child was to be grateful and obey orders. As the title of a primary school textbook stated, "Revolutionary children are the children of the Revolutionary Organization of Kampuchea."⁵⁸ Therefore, it was useless for Yan to ask for any exception from the *Angkar*, because decisions were

made at the higher levels of the *Angkar*.⁵⁹ When Yan came to ask Ta Khchao if her son Thim could stay with her in the village, Ta Khchao accused her of wanting to oppose a high-level party order. Before leaving the village, young Sie came to see his father and told him that he had to go to work far from the village. Sie asked his father to be careful, and to try to work hard under the party. The father of the disappeared S-21 comrade was helpless, recalling “It was pointless to know where my son was going or what kind of work he would be doing because there was nothing I could do. There was no other choice for me. I could not even seek the help of the village chief. I knew that my son did not want to leave, but I really did not know how to help him.”⁶⁰

One day Ruon, returning from work, met his son Math *aka* Sok. Math told his father about having to leave and work in another village, far from home. Although Ruon did not want his son to go, there was nothing that he could do to help him. Ruon recalled:

I did not know where my son would be sent to. When I came back from work and passed through the district headquarters, I saw my son and many other village boys there. I also saw a few trucks. The bonnets of the trucks pointed toward the south (The Center). I knew the Khmer Rouge were sending my son to work far away, but I could do nothing. I was afraid to ask the district chief to allow my son to stay in the village.⁶¹

Some parents had died, leaving their children under the care of relatives. Some of these orphans were also assigned to join the revolution and work at the Center. Thach and Hon, for example, were orphans. Thach lived with her older brother, Hon, because their parents died during the civil war. Hon was assigned to join the Khmer Rouge armed forces, requiring him to leave his sister alone. After that, they lived separately. While her brother served in the army, she worked in the girl’s unit (*Kang Neary*).⁶² The sister recalled:

Before going to work elsewhere, far from the village, my brother came to see me and told me about his departure from the village to another place. He asked me to look after myself, because he was no longer going to be living in the village. Since Hon said goodbye to me, he has never returned home.⁶³

*Those studies were not about reading and writing,
but primarily concerned communist ideology...
We believed what they said.
We did what they ordered us to do. We tried
to forget what they told us to forget.*

TRAINING AND INDOCTRINATION

Military Training



Photo 1975-79: Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archive

When young comrades said they were moving from place to place, they were actually referring to the S-21 sub-units of Boeng Tumpun, Prey Sa, and Ta Khmau, in addition to S-21 headquarters. At Boeng Tumpun and Prey Sa, both minutes from the headquarters in downtown Phnom Penh, young comrades farmed, cared for vegetation, performed animal husbandry, built dams, and did nighttime guard duty. Ta Khmau, also minutes from the headquarters, was a military training school offering courses on marksmanship, explosives, battlefields, and martial arts techniques.⁶⁴

None of the former S-21 young comrades interviewed spoke of enjoying their experience. La, a former S-21 animal husbandry comrade originally from Lvea village, Anhchanh Raung sub-district, Baribo district, said, “No one was happy during the military training conducted at Ta Khmau because when we were in training, it was the

most difficult time for us.”⁶⁵ Peou worked in a pig raising group at Boeng Tumpun for a few months. Later, he and 30 other young comrades in the same unit were sent to a military training school at Sting Prek Tnaot, Ta Khmau district, Kandal province. Peou remembered Ho Wan Hoeng as one of his Chinese trainers. Later a catcher comrade at S-21 and today a farmer, Poeu reflected, “During the military training process, the young comrades there worked very hard, day and night.⁶⁶ I spent one year on bayonet drills, marksmanship, demolition and martial arts fighting techniques. Young comrades were trained and worked hard not only in the daytime, but also at night.”⁶⁷ Sam said that he attended the training all day plus guard duty at night.⁶⁸

Phai said he was given only porridge, banana trunks and papaya stalks to eat.⁶⁹ He added that in the training school the rations were bad compared to other workplaces; the comrades were reduced to eating insects they could find. La considered the eating and working conditions in Ta Khmau training school as the worst, “In Ta Khmau, comrades ate even cockroaches to survive.”⁷⁰

Cheam, a former animal husbandry comrade drafted from Thma Eth village,⁷¹ also complained about rations at Ta Khmau, “I became thin and weak. The rations were terrible. We had only porridge and banana trunks to eat. I worked too hard, training, planting vegetables and guarding every night.”⁷² After 45 days at Ta Khmau, the malnourished La became ill and all his hair fell out. He recovered a month later and returned to the training school.⁷³ In the words of the training school chief Tum Than, “I always pushed young comrades at the training school to work on a heavy schedule. I kicked and fought whenever they committed any mistake or did anything wrong. And I provided them only porridge with salt to eat.”⁷⁴ A comrade of Sam’s, ill from overwork and near starvation, was otherwise considered lazy, the kind of situation that usually invited scolding and punishment, rather than medical treatment. Sam said, “My comrade suffered severe punishment and he finally died. I also suffered punishment by my group chief when he came and saw me sleeping during guard duty. I also was about to die of hunger because I was not given rations for a week.”⁷⁵

In short, when young comrades were undergoing training at Ta Khmau, they were already becoming victims of the Khmer Rouge regime. Young comrades were forced to train very hard under harsh conditions, including a lack of adequate food to eat. Moreover, they faced illnesses brought on by malnutrition, as well as harsh punishment leading to disappearance or execution.

Indoctrination

Michael Vickery has written that Khmer Rouge central “policy called for the establishment of primary classes for basic literacy and numeracy in all cooperatives, if not all villages, but that where living conditions were very bad, or where local cadres distorted the policy, such schools may never have been organized.”⁷⁶ The effect, he argued, was that education in the Khmer Rouge regime “was at a virtual standstill, and that whatever central policy may have been, most local cadres considered education as

useless.”⁷⁷

Rom, a former Khmer Rouge teacher, considered education during the Khmer Rouge period to be unacceptable because there were no proper schools or curricula. Many children gathered and learned for a short time, but worked hard for long hours in the fields.⁷⁸ Peou, a former S-21 “catching” comrade, despaired over his childhood. He missed the opportunity to attend school. He also felt that what he did for the Khmer Rouge revolution was useless and unacceptable. Peou did not go to school when he was living in the village because of the civil war. After arriving in Phnom Penh, he was sent to work and study at Boeng Tumpun. Peou stated that the study period lasted only about an hour in the mornings before starting to work. Those studies were not about reading and writing, but primarily concerned communist ideology.⁷⁹

Khe, a former S-21 guard comrade, refused to acknowledge the way the Khmer Rouge taught as education because it was totally against Cambodian tradition.⁸⁰ The way the Khmer Rouge teachers taught, he believed, was only about brainwashing children to trust the party, not parents. It was a way of transferring the party’s ideology to children. For him, it consisted of only half an hour of speaking and listening under a big tree, and then it was back to work. Khe explained how the Khmer Rouge provided education to children, and what he thought the children learned from it:

The Khmer Rouge may have known that children were pure, honest and blank. They were easily indoctrinated or turned into the kind of people the Khmer Rouge wanted them to be. At that time, the Khmer Rouge taught us to hate our parents and not to call them *Puk Me* (father and mother), because our parents did not deserve to be *Puk Me*, only *Angkar* deserved to be *Puk Me*. We believed what they said, and step by step they slowly made us crazy.⁸¹

Soeu did not attend school in his village, due to the civil war. He remains illiterate. He served in the Khmer Rouge revolutionary armed forces, and eventually was appointed to work at S-21. Soeu recalled:

I did not attend school since at the age of schoolboy, instead of going to school, I served in the Khmer Rouge army. After that I was sent from place to place. While I worked in S-21, I was indoctrinated every day about the Khmer Rouge revolutionary ideology through *Tung Padevat*. The purpose of the indoctrination was to make us believe in, love and build the party.⁸²

Sam said, “The Khmer Rouge told me not to think about home and parents there, and at that time I believed what they said.”⁸³

The Khmer Rouge propagandized the young comrades day by day, and with time many young comrades became convinced that the Khmer Rouge revolution was good.

Thim, for example, admitted that:

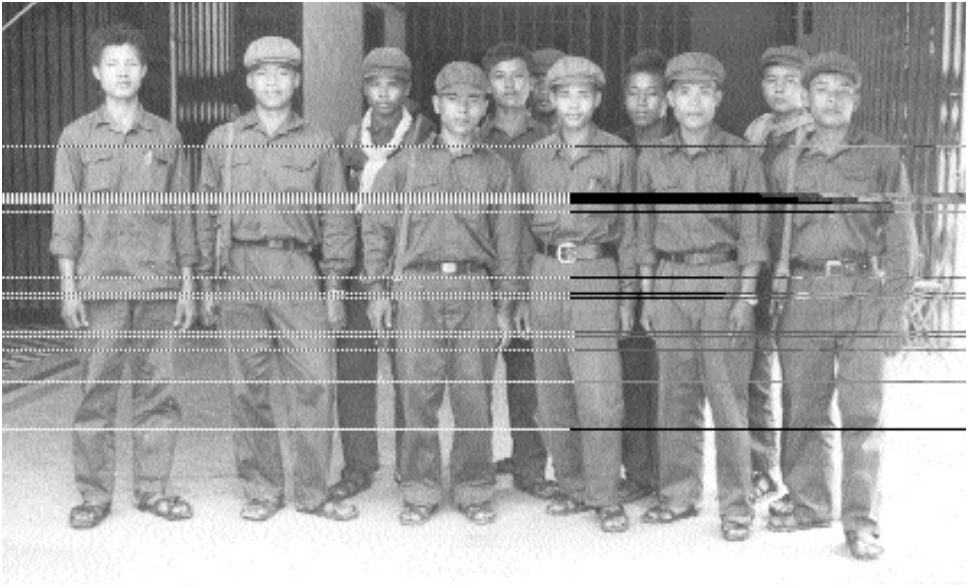
I think we became crazy at that time, because of the Khmer Rouge indoctrination. We believed what they said. We did what they ordered us to do. We tried to forget what they told us to forget. We did not think about our families; instead, we only tried to work hard to serve the Khmer Rouge revolution.⁸⁴

The S-21 photographer Nheim Ein watched communist films from the Soviet Union about Marx and Lenin, and concluded that the S-21 security system was no exception.⁸⁵ Van Nath *aka* Heng Nath, an S-21 survivor, said that radio programs reached every corner of the prison; the examples he gave included the broadcast about a battlefield victory over Vietnamese soldiers and such slogans as “To fight the Vietnamese, break the backbones.”⁸⁶ Soeu was influenced by the radio broadcast:

At that time, we enjoyed our lives working and living there because we believed what the radio said about how happy the base people were. These base people had three meals per day and were taken care of quite well by the revolution. We believed what they said and did not know what was really happening in the base areas.⁸⁷

In 1980 Prak Khan *aka* Khan, a former S-21 interrogator comrade from the Southwest zone, was grieving the loss of his family at his village. “I personally lost nothing but one of my ears. And I realized that my mother, brothers, and sisters had died since 1975-1976. It was too late, I could only cry on the inside of me when I saw other people’s reunions...For several years I had believed that my parents were taken care of, that the cooperative gave them three meals per day, enough clothes.”⁸⁸

Thus, the S-21 young comrades were indoctrinated, manipulated and cheated into becoming the builders of the Khmer Rouge revolution. These young comrades were taught not to think about their families, and to view the party as their real parents. Innocent and malleable, the children gradually fell into the Khmer Rouge indoctrination circle. They believed what the Khmer Rouge told them, and grew to trust them. With time, these young comrades became violent and brutal.



Young Khmer Rouge prison guards at S-21
Comrade Huy is fourth from right

Photo 1977: Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archive

The Khmer Rouge practice of criticisms made the comrades distrust one another... As a result, S-21 comrades lived isolated, desperate lives...

LIVELIHOOD MEETINGS



Photo 1975-79: Documentation Center of Cambodia Archive

The young comrades were required to attend regular meetings, usually called “livelihood meetings.” The meeting was an important device for the Khmer Rouge, who used it to inculcate their ideology into those who attended. From the perspective of the young comrades, however, the meetings could get them into trouble. Young comrades were asked to talk about their own performance during the previous week, confess their shortcomings, and hold forth on their comrades’ mistakes. The process caused them to distrust one other. When a young comrade was found guilty of some infraction, he or she could be imprisoned or killed. The meeting and report were required by S-21 regulations as well as stipulated by the party statute, while the constitution states, “Traitorous or systematic activities against the party...requires... the highest punishment [or] highest measure.”⁸⁹

Thim, a former S-21 nurse comrade, felt desperate and lonely, not only during work but also during the livelihood meetings. Thim’s meetings were under the supervision of Sok, a group leader who had come with him from the village of Ta Sok. Thim recounted:

During the livelihood meeting, Sok always talked about how late I was in getting up and how lazy I was. I was very afraid of everyone, especially Sok. I did not trust anyone. Everyone tried their best to search for one another's faults. I was working and living in fear and horror. I kept trying to work harder and harder, and I kept my mouth shut all the time.⁹⁰

Cheam also disliked the livelihood meetings at S-21. He understood that the critiques during these meetings were dangerous, and could lead one to be killed in no time. Cheam recalled:

The livelihood meeting was also one of the dangerous things because we were found and killed sometimes for only very minor mistakes. One of my fellows was captured and killed after his fault was raised by a comrade during the livelihood meeting.⁹¹



Comrade Hean Chhan *aka* Cheam
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Hean Chhan
Farmer
Photo 1999

La, a former S-21 animal husbandry comrade, recalled that there was nothing interesting during these meetings, only boredom and danger. The meetings always began and ended the same way. La described the process:

After the group chief finished a speech, each member of the group took turns talking about his or her duties and mistakes. After talking about yourself, you had to say now you are finished and you are very glad to put yourself up for every member's comments.⁹²

The protocol of livelihood meetings was confirmed by Sat, a former S-21 guard comrade:

When the group chief finished speaking, the young comrades had to stand up one after another. For example, first I started talking about my weekly activities; next, now I am finished talking about my weekly activities, and what I have done wrong, and now I am very glad to listen to all comrades' comments on my weak points.⁹³

For Kheng, the livelihood meetings were boring because:

It was the same thing to talk during a livelihood meeting. I did not want to attend, because I was so sleepy sitting at the back row and found only frustration. Peng always advised us to be cautious with our enemies. He told us to move around, with no sitting or falling asleep during guard duty.⁹⁴



Comrade Ho Mean *aka* Mean
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Ho Mean
Farmer
Photo 1999

Mean attended a meeting in which “Peng advised our comrades to be attentive to our work, especially while we were on guard duty, because the CIA might come and cut our throats if we fell asleep. Peng told us that enemies were everywhere, but I never saw one.”⁹⁵

The criticisms made Pheap fear others, growing ever more desperate and isolated, always fearing that the discovery of a serious mistake could mean death.⁹⁶

Kheng told of the time he attended an annual meeting at which Duch was present.⁹⁷

During the meeting, Duch educated us about politics, Marxism and Leninism, the results of our work over the last year, and also the plan for the upcoming year. At that time, we were too young to understand what Duch said. We felt frustrated but we had to listen and learned the lesson.⁹⁸

According to Pheap, the annual meeting was sometimes conducted by the Minister of Defense and held at the Olympic stadium. Pheap remembered:

I attended two annual meetings convened by Son Sen at the Olympic stadium. During the meeting Son Sen educated us about the internal and external situation and also about politics. In addition, he also educated us to work hard to make the revolution progressive and prosperous. We learned and believed in them.⁹⁹

Soeu saw the meeting as an avenue to arrest, “A deputy chief in Prey Sa, Kruy disappeared after receiving a letter from Hor, the S-21 deputy chief, asking him to attend a meeting.”¹⁰⁰ Soeu later learned that Kruy was arrested and killed at S-21 in 1978. The Khmer Rouge practice of criticisms made the young comrades distrust one another, always finding fault with one another and then raising it during the meetings. As a result, the young comrades lived isolated, desperate lives, because no one could be trusted, not even their closest comrades. The long meetings also contributed to the chronic exhaustion of the S-21 young comrades, because they had stood guard for long hours and never had enough time to rest.



Comrade Mit Met
(Disappeared)
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Comrade Tang Hakk
(Disappeared)
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Comrade Phann Hong
(Disappeared)
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Comrade Nuon Um
(Disappeared)
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Comrade Touch Khann
(Disappeared)
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Photo 1975-79; Documentation Center of Cambodia - Achine

Comrade Kaing Kek Iev *aka* Duch
and his messenger, Comrade Sok

The first question an interrogator asked was why a prisoner was arrested, and then lectured him or her that Angkar never made a mistake.

DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

After the military training school at Ta Khmau, young comrades would serve as prison guards, interrogators, animal raisers, catchers, or in other support positions for the S-21.¹⁰¹

Guards

The rules for the guard unit were as strict as they were for others at S-21. The printed regulations for S-21 comrades began with an injunction specifying that “all comrades must follow these regulations firmly.” It then laid out 25 “do’s and don’ts.” For example, the guard comrades were not allowed to lean against the wall or write anything, but instead were required to constantly march back and forth. They were not allowed to interact with prisoners in any way; should any problem arise, the guard comrades were required to inform the leadership immediately. Regulation Number 13 ominously stressed that the guard comrades would be held responsible if any prisoner escaped from the holding cells.¹⁰²

These strict regulations kept the S-21 guard comrades focused solely on their work; the comrades did not dare take time to chat with each other. They had to work in silence. If anything happened in a particular work group, then all the members of that group were held collectively responsible. Kheng recalled the division of labor:

There were twelve guard comrades for a particular place, and a head of the group sometimes divided the group members into two or three small teams, with each team responsible for a small place. Every week, the guard comrades moved from place to place, as ordered by the group chief. They took turns guarding around the clock.¹⁰³



Comrade Sous Thy *aka* Thy
Photo: 1975-1979

Suos Thy, a former S-21 clerk comrade, asserted, “People who worked in Tuol Sleng were assigned to work there. We had no choice. Some guard comrades had to guard 24 hours a day, with no sleep. They did not enjoy the work. But they had no choice.”¹⁰⁴ La stated that he was continually falling asleep because of the long hours, but later he became accustomed to it.¹⁰⁵ Khe remembered his work as punishment in itself, because of the long hours and the necessity for constant vigilance. He recalled:

We stood and moved around. We were not allowed to sit or stay in one place. We tried to work hard because we were afraid of any problems that might happen. Even now I can remember the license plate number of the truck used to transport explosives from Pochentong Airport to the Prey Sa warehouse. It was PS 47800 (PS for Prey Sa).¹⁰⁶

Kheng, a former guard comrade from Kraing Ka Koh, recounted the heavy work demands and the toll they took:

Guard comrades worked very hard for very long hours, making it easy for us to become victims of the Khmer Rouge regime, the more so because we worked close to the prison and faced all sorts of problems. Most of the guard comrades were killed because they were too young to stand such long working hours. For every seven prisoners who were killed, there were two prison guard comrades who were also killed.¹⁰⁷

The desperation and horror of S-21 young comrades were exacerbated because they were surrounded by crying and screaming. In his interview with David Chandler, former S-21 guard comrade Kok Sros recalled that guard comrades sometimes felt pity for prisoners when they complained about having been arrested and asked the guard comrades why it had happened. But the guard comrades could do nothing, because they too lived in fear of imprisonment or execution.¹⁰⁸ Some guard comrades incorporated the horrors they saw during the daytime into their subconscious. Sam said that one of his guard comrades always screamed at midnight because the events of the day frightened him.¹⁰⁹ Former S-21 clerk comrade Suos Thy remains terrified, “I dream that my boss, Hor, is screaming at me and accusing me of making mistakes. I am afraid of Hor. I am afraid even to look in his face. I think of Hor as a tiger. Hor was also afraid of Duch.”¹¹⁰



Comrade Him Kheng *aka* Kheng
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Him Kheng
Farmer
Photo 1999

Interrogators



Photo 1975-79: Documentation Center of Cambodia Archive

Interviews with S-21 young comrades, especially the guard comrades, reveal much about the lives and duties of the interrogator comrades at S-21. According to Sam, interrogator comrades were responsible for taking prisoners from their cells, interrogating them, making a report and preparing conclusions for their group chiefs.¹¹¹ The surviving S-21 documents also demonstrate that after interrogator comrades finished working on a prisoner, they had to prepare a summary report for their chief.¹¹² A former S-21 interrogator comrade from the Southwest zone confirmed this procedure.¹¹³ The first question an interrogator comrade asked was why a prisoner was arrested, and then lectured him or her that Angkar never made a mistake.¹¹⁴ The prisoner would thus eventually have to invent a mistake to reduce his or her torture.¹¹⁵

A notebook from an S-21 Santebal study session on political and organizational matters set out nine points describing how the interrogation of prisoners was to be conducted:

1. First, extract information from them.
2. Next, collect as many points as possible, to pin them down and prevent them from not answering questions.
3. Pressure them with political propaganda.
4. Press on with questions and insults.
5. Torture.

6. Review and analyze the answer for additional questions.
7. Review and analyze the answer for documentation.
8. Prevent them from dying, and prevent prisoners from communicating with each other.
9. Keep things confidential.¹¹⁶

S-21 comrades who were arrested were not spared the interrogation process. At one point, Soeu was accused of being allied to some prisoners. He was walked to the interrogation rooms. Soeu recalled the ordeal:

After the Khmer Rouge arrested one of my neighbors from Ta Sok village, they charged me of being an ally of the arrested prisoner. They captured me and sent me to the interrogation room, and then interrogated me, asking many questions about everything, showering me with propaganda and insults, lying that they knew what I had done, and also threatening me with torture.¹¹⁷

Duch ordered that prisoners must be beaten for “national reasons, class reasons, and international reasons.”¹¹⁸ To those responsible for beatings, this was a heavy and unwanted responsibility, as interrogator comrade Nop Nuon could describe “The Organization orders us around like cows or buffaloes.”¹¹⁹ Peou claimed that S-21 young comrades tried to do what their chiefs ordered them to do, but they were doing it for the sake of their own lives.¹²⁰ An interrogator comrade named Neou Kantha was arrested on March 5, 1978, accused of being an ally of the CIA. Kantha was interrogated for two days; in the process he was forced to name 55 supposed co-conspirators, 9 of whom had already been arrested. Another interrogator comrade, Sok Ra, whose name appeared in Neou Kantha’s confession, was arrested the day after Kantha.¹²¹ Kantha’s confession revealed that he and his comrade tried to contact Soam Saloeun, seeking permission for a transfer to Warehouse Number 82. Kantha “confessed” that S-21 comrades had to get out, because if they continued working at S-21, they would not escape eventual imprisonment or death.¹²² Duch followed every case so closely as to note, for example, that the arrested interrogator comrade Vung Sam At was conducting traitorous activities among interrogator and guard comrades.¹²³

Animal Husbandry



Photo 1975-79: Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archive

Former animal husbandry comrades Uy Saret *aka* Ret and Kung Phai *aka* Phai asserted that not as many of them were killed compared to other units. Phai knew of only one death among his unit, which may have been an accident – a comrade named Nom drowned in Boeng Tumpun Lake in 1977.¹²⁴ La also felt that animal husbandry comrades were not punished or killed as often as members of other units. Although this unit belonged to S-21, not many of its young comrades were killed or disappeared.¹²⁵

Ret and Phai complained about the long hours and harsh disciplinary conditions for their group, although the hours Phai described do not sound especially onerous, at least not for adults, “We worked from 7 to 12 and from 1 to 5.”¹²⁶ Three other former animal husbandry comrades, Tha, Cheam and Khann, were assigned heavy work. When asked about his work, Cheam seemed unhappy and succinctly replied, “We worked without Saturday or Sunday.”¹²⁷ Agreeing with Cheam, Tha also described a heavy schedule of work from dawn to dark every day. Tha elaborated on his duties:

Members of the group were divided according to different responsibilities; some were responsible for collecting grass and water grass, while some were responsible for the care and feeding of the animals. I was responsible for finding grass and water grass for the animals every day, so that I had to move around to different places to find grass and water grass.¹²⁸

One of Cheam's comrades worked and lived in fear, so desperate and lonely that he finally decided to commit suicide. Cheam recalled the story:

One comrade in my group committed suicide because he was not happy to work and live under the pressure of the group chief. We were living in fear and terror because no one could be trusted. We were isolated from our parents, our homes and our friends [while] working and living in a very dangerous place. There were restrictions on walking, even on speaking to members in our own group. Moreover, only a small mistake would lead to being killed.¹²⁹

One of Khann's comrades, Thy, was taken from Boeng Tumpun and killed at S-21. Khann recalled:

At that time Thy was only 14 years old. I did not know at all what offense Thy had committed. I could do nothing even though I wanted to help, because I knew that my unit members had been captured for no particular reason. I also was worried about my own life, and when my turn would come.¹³⁰

When Cheam was working in the animal husbandry unit under Peng, he and his comrade were once handcuffed by Peng after being accused of stealing the party's property. Eventually, Cheam was released, but his comrade was taken away. Cheam never saw his comrade again. Another victim in this unit was Ann, who was also arrested by the unit chief. Before his arrest, Ann had told Cheam to be careful because the situation was very tense.¹³¹ When Khann trespassed into the area of another unit to cut grass for rabbits, he was nearly killed. Khann said:

I was about to be killed when I tore the wire fence entering to cut water grass for rabbits. When I was cutting, a guard appeared behind me. Then I tried to escape but the guard chased me. After arriving at my place, I took the gun and pointed it toward him. Then the guard withdrew. I had to do that [fight back] because if I was captured I would have been killed.¹³²

Thim said that comrades in his animal husbandry unit were killed for having caused the death of two sheep.¹³³



Comrade Khieu Ches *aka* Peou
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Khieu Ches
Farmer
Photo 2000

Catchers

Part of a larger messenger unit, catcher comrades were distinguished by their black uniforms with insignias.¹³⁴ This unit was staffed by 42 people who guarded special places, 8 catcher comrades, 10 driver comrades, and 2 nurse comrades.¹³⁵ According to interviews with S-21 comrades, particularly an interview with a member of the “catching group,” Peou, these “catching” comrades were also victims of their workplaces and the regime. These comrades were in a messenger unit under the supervision of Khim Vat *aka* Hor, who was the deputy chief of S-21. Hor developed a reputation among the S-21 comrades as the most brutal and violent chief.¹³⁶

Following orders from the Center, Hor would lead his “catching group” into the countryside to arrest the party’s enemies.¹³⁷ Peou explained that the “catching” comrades usually went out with their jeeps to arrest people throughout the country. The “catching” comrades were trained in special fighting techniques by Chinese trainers, and these trainers sometimes joined in the raids to make arrests. Peou recalled that on one raid in 1977, more than ten Chinese trainers assisted in the arrest of East Zone comrades who worked under So Phim.¹³⁸

The paranoid attitude engendered by S-21 leaders like Duch, Hor, Him Huy, and Peng contributed to the ubiquitous feeling of fear among the young comrades, and members of the “catching group” were not immune to this fear. Kheng feared Hor and Peng most of all. Those two were always screaming and beating comrades when they made mistakes.¹³⁹ Other former S-21 comrades were also afraid of Hor.¹⁴⁰

*Mistakenly kill an innocent person is better than
mistakenly let free a guilty one.*

LIMITS ON RIGHTS AND FREEDOM

From his first days at S-21 Soeu never thought he could survive. He cried learning about the place and the task, thinking of family and future. "I would not have joined the march if I had known about my assignment," he regretted.¹⁴¹

In 1974, Un was working in a mobile unit responsible for the Bakk Chenh Chien and Prek Chik dam projects. He was working far from his home and parents, and was continually moved from place to place. Finally he left the village for the Center, as directed by his sub-district chief. When he returned to his village after the 1979 liberation, his parents had died:

I was sent further and further from time to time. Finally, I became one of the S-21 comrades. There, I learned that no comrades were allowed to visit home and for the crime of visiting home, the sentence was death. For nearly a decade, I worked far away from my home and parents. When I returned home I could not see my parents. They had already died.¹⁴²

Nol worked and lived far from his family after joining the Khmer Rouge in 1974. At that time Nol was only 12 years old. He was sent to work in a boys' unit (*Kang Koma*), and then was recruited to be a district comrade. Nol left the district for the S-21 in 1975. S-21 regulations did not allow him to visit home.¹⁴³ No one in the family knew where he was or what he was doing. Thim had a similar experience:

I was sure that no S-21 comrades could visit his family. I left home when I was only 12 years old and came back when I was in my twenties. When I came back home in 1982 everyone in my family and village was surprised. They thought I was dead after nearly a decade of separation from the village.¹⁴⁴

When asked if he ever visited home, Kheng said, "No. I asked Soeng for a home visit. He never permitted...Those who went home without permission were killed."¹⁴⁵

Uch and her younger brother were separated because of imposed work rules. Uch was

assigned to work in the girls' unit, while her brother was recruited to be a sub-district comrade. Uch recalled, "Khann never visited home since he left the village to work for the Khmer Rouge party. La came back to the village after liberation day and told me that my brother died while clearing the forest south of Phnom Penh in 1975."¹⁴⁶ Thapp is the mother of S-21 comrade Hun. She does not think that her son survived the revolution. "He would come home if he still survived," she said.¹⁴⁷ Hun left home to work in the boys' unit, and then joined the Khmer Rouge armed forces. Thapp could still see her son while he was working in the boys' unit and as a sub-district comrade. But, she said, "I never saw my son Hun since the Khmer Rouge sent him to fight somewhere far from the village."¹⁴⁸

Ngim is the mother of S-21 comrade Nav. When interviewed, she said she had no idea where her son was. She was separated from her son when she was assigned to a mobile unit while her son was assigned to join the Khmer Rouge armed forces. Ngim asserted:

I went to work in the mobile unit, and Nav was only 10 years old but was forced to become a Khmer Rouge soldier. Nav at that time was too small to carry a gun, so instead of carrying his gun, Nav pulled it on the ground. The Khmer Rouge sent my son from place to place. I have no idea where my son is.¹⁴⁹

Khai, Prim, and other relatives were waiting for their sons, brothers, and nephews to return. Khai did not know when his nephew, Kuy Ry, left the village. Khai recalled:

I did not know where my nephew left for and what he did for the Khmer Rouge party. I thought he was dead, but after the 1979 liberation, Kuy Ry came back and told me about how he was assigned to leave the village, how he worked and about the problems he and his fellows faced while at Tuol Sleng prison.¹⁵⁰

Prim was surprised when her son Tha came back home after nearly a decade of separation. Tha had become "crazy," repeating stories to villagers about his work during the Khmer Rouge regime. Prim said that when Tha sees killing in the movies, or hears people talking about dying, it reminds him of the past and his former employment:

My son became stupid after coming back from working for the Khmer Rouge in the Center. He keeps telling villagers about problems he faced while he was working in Tuol Sleng prison. In 1982, there was a movie about killing people during the Khmer Rouge regime, and Tha recognized Duch in the movie. Tha told villagers that Duch was the chief of S-21 who killed so many people. And he also talks about killing, punishment and the problems he and his fellows faced while they were working there.¹⁵¹

In 1974, Sam was recruited to work in a boys' unit, and was sent far from home. Soon

he was assigned to be a Sumaki Meanchey district comrade, and after that worked even further from his village and parents. Sam left the district in July 1975 without informing any member of his family because no one was at home when he had to depart. “As I could not see them at that time,” he sadly said, “I missed them forever because they had all died by the time I arrived home.” He recalled:

At that time, I tried to ask permission from Peng to visit my family, but Peng would not allow me to visit home. I was not happy but I could do nothing. I really did not know why Peng did not allow S-21 comrades to visit their homes. Peng said, “You have to spend your energy working rather than spend your energy thinking about the people at the base; they are all taken care of quite well by the base organization.”¹⁵²



Comrade Pann Sam *aka* Sam
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Pann Sam
Farmer
Photo 1999

Cheam left home to join the Khmer Rouge revolution when he was 12 years old. After moving from place to place, Cheam was finally assigned to leave the village to work for the party in the Center in 1975. After leaving the village, Cheam had no chance to visit it again until 1980. While working in the Center, Cheam asked Peng for permission to visit home, but he did not know why he was denied. Cheam dared not return to his home, even though he missed his home and his parents very much.¹⁵³

Kheng also asked permission from his group chief, Soeung, to visit his family, but Soeung would not permit it. Kheng agrees that no one was allowed to visit home, and that the penalty for violating this rule was death.¹⁵⁴ Young comrades quickly learned that no one was ever approved for home visits, so soon they ceased to ask. At one point, Sat said that at the time he was quite sure the result of any request would be negative. Sat claimed that he never thought about home or missed his parents; it was

hopeless to do so, because he was sure that no one would be allowed to go home.¹⁵⁵ In 1980, a Khmer Rouge comrade described the general sense of intimidation, similar to what comrades at S-21 felt, “People were insecure psychologically [in the DK period]. People feared being wrong unconsciously or being fingered, [we] just kept smiling but [we] were tense inside.”¹⁵⁶ Former S-21 photographer Nheim Ein, asserted, “Cadres always kept silent, even staying at home because they were afraid of being captured and taken to be killed.”¹⁵⁷ Comrades were taught that the party’s enemies were everywhere, invisible. A CPK policy training notebook has it “...[T]he enemies are inside our body, among the military, the workers, in the co-operatives and even in our rank. Making Socialist Revolution deeply and strongly, these enemies must be progressively wiped out as soon as possible.”¹⁵⁸

According to Peou, young comrades from the same background were not allowed to work together for fear that they would escape and rise up against the regime.¹⁵⁹ “Every unit working at the S-21 prison had different duties, and each unit was responsible for their own duty. No speaking or asking one another about internal problems [was permitted]. If someone was found asking about an internal problem, he would be killed.”¹⁶⁰ Suos Thy described S-21 prison as “unintelligible place, there was no one to talk to, there was no communication or even smiling.”¹⁶¹ Sat added that comrades were separated from one another not only during working hours, but also at mealtimes. “Comrades ate in their own units. Guard comrades ate in the guard unit, interrogator comrades ate in their unit, and the chiefs ate in a separate place. We were eating in different places, and after eating, we all went to work.”¹⁶²

Un was frustrated at S-21 because he suffered from serious illness. In addition to working very long hours, he did not receive adequate food. He complained, “when I was working at S-21, I was very thin and weak, my knees were as big as my head.”¹⁶³ Similarly, Phai became ill as a result of the working conditions and inadequate nutrition. “At that time,” he said, “young comrades were working very hard for long hours in inhuman conditions, but had only papaya trunks and banana stalks to eat.”¹⁶⁴ Kim Chhoeung complained, “We live under the leadership of others. You need permission to do this, you need permission to do that... In the [1970-1975] war we soldiers had difficulties, too... What we wanted [in the end] was to be free or happy, but when the war stopped suddenly everything was just as difficult [as ever].”¹⁶⁵

While working at S-21, Phai attempted to escape several times, but he could not because every place was vigilantly guarded.¹⁶⁶ Former S-21 clerk comrade Suos Thy told one interviewer of his attempt to escape after he became fed up with working at S-21.¹⁶⁷ Sim Mel *aka* Man made an escape attempt, trying to run from S-21 to Region 25 when he discovered that Nun Huy, chief of Prey Sa, was planning to arrest him. Man was brought back, imprisoned and killed at S-21 on April 30, 1978.¹⁶⁸ One S-21 young comrade committed suicide when he learned that his group chief wanted to put him behind bars.¹⁶⁹ When explaining the reasons for all of these incidents, surviving prisoner Van Nath quoted Khmer Rouge security policy “Mistakenly kill an [innocent] person is better than mistakenly let free a guilty one.”¹⁷⁰

If it were not for the day of January 7, 1979, I too would not have survived the Khmer Rouge regime.

PUNISHMENT AND TORTURE



Photo 1975-79: Documentation Center of Cambodia Archive

Nheim Ein recalled that if he took “a picture of A when the photo was not good and A was already killed, then we were charged as enemy. If we did not carefully carry out the job we would not escape from being jailed or [being] stopped from work.”¹⁷¹ Kheng complained about the uncertainty of daily life at S-21, made more acute by the fact that a comrade could not help but notice that other comrades routinely disappeared. Kheng thought, “Today it’s their turns. I don’t know what will happen to me tomorrow.”¹⁷² S-21 comrade Khann also lived in fear. Although he was not punished, he worried that someday it would happen to him. He recalled:

I was scared and frightened while I was responsible for the main gate, where I saw prisoners being brought in and out by trucks. They were covered by plastic to prevent them from being seen. High ranking official prisoners were brought and put in the ground floor cells, and the low ranking comrades and ordinary prisoners

were put on the first and second floors. I felt pity for them, but there was nothing I could do.¹⁷³

Interrogator comrade Prak Khan was worried when his comrades disappeared, A a week after B, next C. One day he became frightened because a guard comrade named Phal woke him up in the middle of the night. Phal called him, “Khan, Khan.” Prak Khan was shaking in sweat. In fact, he was being called to look out for enemies because a *Lolok Khmaoch* bird was singing.¹⁷⁴

Suos Thy worked hard to follow orders because anyone who made a mistake was shown no mercy. “If a guard allowed a prisoner to run away, he would be killed. If I made a mistake, I would be killed,” he said. He thought of escaping, but found no way.¹⁷⁵

One after another, S-21 young comrades would disappear without any explanation. Some were arrested on charges of being allies of the arrested prisoners, while others were killed because the organization decided they were members of the CIA or KGB. Torture was common, even for the young comrades themselves. The tortures typically inflicted on prisoners included:

- ◆ Beatings
 - by hand
 - with a heavy stick
 - with branches
 - with bunches of electric wire
- ◆ Cigarette burns
- ◆ Electric shock
- ◆ Being forced to eat excrement
- ◆ Being forced to drink urine
- ◆ Forced feeding
- ◆ Being forced to drink fish sauce
- ◆ Cut the body and fill with salt or soap
- ◆ *Hanging upside down*
- ◆ *Being forced to hold one’s arms up for an entire day*
- ◆ *Being jabbed with a needle*
- ◆ Being forced to pay homage to images of dogs¹⁷⁶
- ◆ *Being forced to pay homage to a wall*
- ◆ *Being forced to pay homage to a table*
- ◆ *Being forced to pay homage to a chair*
- ◆ Having fingernails pulled out
- ◆ Scratching
- ◆ Shoving
- ◆ Suffocation with a plastic bag
- ◆ Water tortures
 - immersion
 - dripping water onto the forehead.*¹⁷⁷

Soeu and Kheng each saw a prisoner burned to death,¹⁷⁸ and Poeu saw prisoners being slashed on their chests and having soap rubbed in to increase the pain.¹⁷⁹ Tha saw a guard being punished by being made to remove feces from the prison, which was a very unpleasant task.¹⁸⁰ Mean had to do too many push-ups.¹⁸¹ La saw one of his comrades who had committed a mistake being hooked to a yoke for plowing fields, in the place of an ox.¹⁸² Sam suffered from such punishments as beatings, feces removal, and the denial of food for a week:

I was about to die when I was punished with very hard work and no rations for a week. I was punished because I could not stand the long hours of working and guard duty. At that time, I was too young and weak to stand for twelve hours of guard duty. It was trouble when we did not feel well. I once fell asleep during my guard shift, and was denied rations for a week. Again in 1978, I was accused of having a love affair with a Vietnamese woman prisoner. Then Peng did not give me rations and made me shoulder prisoners' shit buckets for a week.¹⁸³

Soeu at one time passed by and saw the torture equipment; he panicked because that told him more about the crying and screaming he had heard every day and night.¹⁸⁴ Kheng is convinced that the worst killing, of both comrades and ordinary prisoners, occurred in 1977 and 1978.¹⁸⁵ He observed that newcomers were awkward and thus the ones who were most often punished or who disappeared. Peou saw it another way, feeling that the comrades who had been on the job longer had it worse, "Duch tried to throw away the old, and keep the new."¹⁸⁶ Everyone was in a constant state of fear.

One of Sam's comrades was arrested and killed in 1977:

In 1977, Thy from Tik La-ak [village] was arrested and taken to be killed by Peng who received orders from Duch. The arrest occurred because Thy burned a wasp's nest during the nighttime. The next morning Thy was blindfolded and walked out through the main gate when I was guarding there. Another was Pech, who was arrested and killed after being accused as an enemy of the party. One night in 1977, Pech had nightmare and shouted that the house was on fire. For this he was arrested and killed.¹⁸⁷

A former animal husbandry comrade named Cheam confirmed that the same type of treatment happened to his group:

One of my comrades', named Ann, was arrested and killed without any real reason. Another one also disappeared after Peng arrested him on accusations of stealing the party's property.¹⁸⁸

From 1976 to 1977, Hong was a chief of a regiment of guard comrades, but then he

was arrested and killed in 1978. He was accused of killing prisoners in the cell he guarded. Peou, who was from Hong's village of Banteay Meas said:

Hong was arrested and accused of being CIA or KGB because two prisoners in cells he was guarding committed suicide. I knew him quite well; he did not work for the CIA or KGB, as the Khmer Rouge had accused. No one could help him. Hong was killed two days after he was arrested. Before being arrested, Hong asked me to tell his parents that he would be killed.¹⁸⁹

Soeu considered that the killing of S-21 young comrades on charges of being allied to other prisoners to be grossly unfair, because in reality, the young comrades knew nothing. He himself was arrested when his name appeared in Moeun's confession. For this, he was sent to the reeducation camp at Prey Sa, and finally was sent into battle at the Vietnamese border.¹⁹⁰ Concurring with Soeu, Khann recalled one of his comrades who was killed after being accused of being allied to his own father, who had been charged with the crime of serving in the military of the Lon Nol regime:

It was true that the killing of "allies" was unreasonable and unjust. One of my group members in the animal husbandry unit, Thy, 14 years old, was brought to S-21 and killed after the Khmer Rouge found that he was a son of a Lon Nol soldier. Thy's father had been arrested and held at S-21.¹⁹¹

Sat estimated that about 30 comrades of his unit disappeared between 1976 to 1979.¹⁹² Thim confirmed that a large number of S-21 comrades were killed because they worked and lived in a killing place; moreover, the chiefs there were violent and brutal.¹⁹³ The chief of guard comrades, Him Huy, was afraid because the number of S-21 comrades decreased day by day, not only the comrades but also the chiefs, like Huy Sre and Hor.¹⁹⁴ Peou believes that if it were not for the day of January 7, 1979, he too would not have survived the Khmer Rouge regime.¹⁹⁵



Comrade Tum Sat *aka* Sat
S-21 Young Comrade
Photo 1977



Tum Sat
Farmer
Photo 1999

If my comrades survived, what would they say about the [Khmer Rouge] tribunal. They sure would be more anxious than me.

Him Kheng, Baribo district, 2001

CONCLUSION

Surviving young comrades from S-21 should be counted not only as perpetrators but also as victims of the Khmer Rouge regime. One piece of evidence for this is presented by Tha, who returned home from his work in S-21 in a condition the villagers all describe as “crazy.” He still screams in fear, and repeatedly tells villagers about his work and his suffering at S-21.

While Tha’s case is an extreme example, it is clear that the young comrades of S-21 suffered serious physical and psychological trauma during their time at the prison. Psychiatrist Richard Mollica has studied Cambodian refugees in the United States in great detail. The sources of trauma he discovered in examining Cambodian patients diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder were:¹⁹⁶

- ✦ lack of food and water
- ✦ ill health
- ✦ lack of shelter
- ✦ war injury
- ✦ witnessed murder
- ✦ torture
- ✦ imprisonment
- ✦ solitary confinement/social isolation
- ✦ sexual abuse
- ✦ near death/witnessing death
- ✦ lost or kidnapped.

Cambodian patients in Mollica’s study suffered from an average of 16 traumatic events. More than two-thirds of the patients in the study were diagnosed with serious psychological disorders, even years after the Khmer Rouge regime.

Comparing the definitions provided by Mollica to the testimony of S-21 young comrades interviewed for this study, it is clear that they suffered from most of these forms of abuse. Moreover, it seems obvious that they must have suffered from literally hundreds, if not thousands, of trauma-inducing events during their work at the prison. While Dr. Mollica’s patients averaged just 16 events, it would seem highly likely that,

even today, they suffer adverse psychological consequences resulting from their work during the Khmer Rouge regime, even though in most cases it may be less obvious than it is for Tha.¹⁹⁷

The young comrades of S-21 suffered many forms of abuse. The abuse began when they were recruited to become district militia and comrades. It worsened when they were taken, in many cases by force, far from their parents to live under the control of chiefs who could order their execution without a second thought. The process resembled kidnapping. Pressed into working for the party in the Center, these children lost their childhood, and in many cases, never saw their families again. They had no chance to attend school or to play in the rice fields with their friends and buffaloes.

After being removed from their villages, these young comrades were “tempered” with labor at S-21 support units at Boeng Tumpun or Prey Sa, and then sent for months of brutal military training at Ta Khmau, under atrocious conditions which included inadequate food and rest, as well as savage punishment and even execution. Finally they were assigned to work at S-21 as husbandry, prison guard, catcher, and interrogator comrades. There they lived in an environment of near-complete social isolation, experiencing regular illnesses brought on by poor nutrition and grueling work schedules. As the jailers of the most secret organ of the Khmer Rouge regime, they themselves were effectively imprisoned as well, surrounded on a daily basis by the utter horror of institutionalized torture and murder.

At each of these stages, the young comrades were indoctrinated to love their work, love the Communist party, and hate their parents. At the same time, they were trained to commit crimes. The young comrades quickly learned that they had to follow orders or be killed. But even so, one by one, group members working at S-21 disappeared, while the surviving comrades worked and lived in fear, waiting for their turn. It is inescapable that these young comrades became victims of the Khmer Rouge regime.

Overall, at least 563 or about one third of S-21 comrades were executed during the course of their employment.¹⁹⁸ This figure may include 45 comrades claimed as executed or disappeared by the 18 former young comrades from Region 31 interviewed for this study. The young comrades speak volumes about suffering, and yet represents only a small subset of those recruited into S-21.¹⁹⁹ The rest from Region 31 or from other regions are yet to be located. How many of them have survived and how would they testify?

NOTES

¹ “Khmer Rouge” is a French word for *Khmer Kraham* or “Red Khmers,” first used by Prince Norodom Sihanouk in the mid 1960s to refer to Khmer Communists and, members of other Khmer left-wing organizations. The term is understood differently depending on time period and historical view. DC-Cam, under its 1975-1979 mandate, refers to Khmer Rouge as those who worked to form and/or lead Democratic Kampuchea (DK). See different views on Khmer Rouge in *Searching for the truth*, No. 6, June 2000.

² There has been no uniform authority for English-Khmer spelling transliteration.

³ James D. Lester, *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*, New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1993.

⁴ A DC-Cam report, *Mapping of the Killing Fields of Cambodia, 1995-2000*, lists 158 prisons, 18,975 mass graves, and 76 memorials throughout the country. See also Pong Rasy Pheng, “Map of Mass Graves, Prisons, and Memorials of Khmer Rouge Genocide Regime,” *Rasmei Kampuchea Daily*, Section B, July 29, 2001.

⁵ According to Van Nath *aka* Heng Nath and other survivors. They are Chum Manh (alive), Heng Nath (alive), Phann Than Chann (alive), Ruy Nea Kung (deceased), Bou Meng (deceased), Ung Pech (deceased), Eam Chann (deceased), Dy Phon (deceased). Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Numbers D13842, K08354, D05944, D05946, D19061, D19062, D00017 and D00018. We have no documents to confirm the status of another prisoner named Pheach Yooun. For Dy Phon, see also an article by his niece, Sokha Irene, “I Met My Uncle Who disappeared in Khmer Rouge Regime Through His Confession In Tuol Sleng Prison,” *Searching for the truth*, No. 2, February 2000, a monthly Khmer/English language magazine published by Documentation Center of Cambodia. The rest is being located.

⁶ Youk Chhang, “The Poisonous Hill that was Tuol Sleng,” *Phnom Penh Post*, May 3-15, 1997. The prison’s execution logs, biographies, confessions, and other records indicate that there were at least 14,000 victims at S-21. See also David Chandler, *Voices from S-21: Terror and History in Pol Pot’s Secret Prison*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

⁷ Cheam Soeu, Him Kheng, and Pann Sam confirmed that S-21 also held prisoners from Europe and Viet Nam. Cheam Soeu remembered two foreign prisoners (Caucasians) who were captured at sea and then burned alive in front of the Tuol Tumpoung pagoda in 1977. Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, a former S-21 guard comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, February 12, 2000. Kheng saw two “Americans” who were held in cell number 8 at S-21, both killed by burning in 1977. Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, a former S-21 guard comrade. Baribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 17, 1999. Tuol Sleng’s records suggest that the American prisoners were actually captured in late 1978. Sam also saw dozens of Vietnamese

prisoners in 1978. Meng-Try Ea's interview with Pann Sam *aka* Sam, a former S-21 guard. Sumaki Meanchey district, Kampong Chhnang province, February 13, 2000. Based on available documents, the foreign prisoners were: 4 Americans; 2 Australians; 1 Arabian; 1 British; 4 French; 1 Laotian; 1 New Zealander; 1 Javanese; 31 Thai; and 488 Vietnamese.

⁸ A total of 1,685 comrades were employed at the prison: 141 internal forces, 148 officers, 54 interrogators, and 1,377 members of the "capable workforce." Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D00034, "The Tuol Sleng Prison," p. 5, a document of Tuol Sleng Museum compiled from research in 1979-1985. See also note 198. The prison staff were carefully selected, and were required to have good "revolutionary" biographies and a firm political standpoint, according to Meng-Try Ea's interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, a former S-21 catcher comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, February 12, 2000.

⁹ Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D00160, "Sok Ra's Confession," p. 3, reveals that the prisoners were sent to work at the prison farm. See also D02678, "Confession of Sim Mel *aka* Man," who was sent to Office 24 for unknown reasons.

¹⁰ The authors find that Boeng Tumpun was an S-21 support unit because almost all S-21 comrades' biographies confirmed that they worked there for a few months before going to Ta Khmau for training and subsequently being assigned to S-21. For details, see the S-21 comrades' biographies in DC-Cam Archive.

¹¹ Cheung Ek was an S-21 sub-unit. It was the largest killing field for S-21 prisoners, according to Him Huy, a former S-21 chief of guard comrades. Sorya Sim's interview with Him Huy in Koh Thom district, February 18, 2001; also Sorya Sim had several other conversations with Him Huy during Rithy Panh's project of filming Him Huy at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Cheung Ek killing sites in 2000 and 2001.

¹² For example, see J.D. Kinzie, et al., "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Among Survivors of Cambodian Concentration Camps," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 141, 5:645-650, May 1984; also R.F. Mollica and J.P. Lavelle, "The Trauma of Mass Violence and Torture: An Overview of the Psychiatric Care of the Southeast Asian Refugees," in L. Comas-Dias and E.H. Griffith, eds., *Clinical Practice in Cross-Cultural Mental Health*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1986.

¹³ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence - From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, New York: Basic Books, 1992, p. 75.

¹⁴ See, for example, J.D. Kinzie, et al., "The Psychiatric Effects of Massive Trauma on Cambodian Children: I. The Children," *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, 25, 3:370-376, 1986; and W.H. Sack, et al., "The Psychiatric Effects of Massive Trauma on Cambodian Children: II. The Family, the Home and the School," *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, 25, 3:377-383, 1986.

¹⁵ According to findings recently announced by the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization, “Symptoms of post-traumatic stress were found in 28% of Cambodians,” British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), *Cambodia’s Lingering Trauma*, May 25, 2000.

¹⁶ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, op cit., pp. 91-93.

¹⁷ Roy F. Baumeister, *Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty*. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1997, p. 211; see also J.T. Gibson and M. Haritos-Fatouros, “The Education of a Torturer,” *Psychology Today*, November 1986, pp. 50-58.

¹⁸ *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, Report of the Expert of the Secretary-General, Ms. Grac’a Machel, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/157, U.N. GA. Fifty-first session, Item 108 of the provisional agenda, A/51/306 26 (August 1996), paragraph 34; see also Rachel Brett, Margaret McCallin and Rhonda O’Shea, “Children: The Invisible Soldiers,” Geneva: Quaker United Nations Office and the International Catholic Child Bureau, April 1996, p. 88.

¹⁹ *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, op. cit., para. 43.

²⁰ Philip Gourevitch, “Letter from Rwanda: After the Genocide.” *New Yorker*, December 18, 1995, 78-95. Quoted in David Chandler, *Voices from S-21*, op. cit., p. 34. Richard Mollica has worked extensively with Cambodian refugees in the United States; see note 12 above and 196 below.

²¹ James P. Grant, “War, Children and the Responsibility of the International Community,” pp. 12-24 in Barry S. Levy and Victor W. Sidel, eds., *War and Public Health*, London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 15.

²² Joanna Santa Barbara, “The Psychological Effects of War on Children,” pp. 168-185 in Barry S. Levy and Victor W. Sidel, eds., *War and Public Health*, op. cit., p. 170.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

²⁵ Roy F. Baumeister, *Evil*, op. cit., p. 47; see especially his section titled “When Perpetrators Become Victims.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 339; see also David Hawk, “The Cambodian Way of Death: 1975-1979,” pp. 45-57 in E. Stover and E. Nightingale, eds., *The Breaking of Bodies and Minds: Torture, Psychiatric Abuse, and the Health Professions*, New York: W.H. Freeman, 1985.

²⁷ J.D. Kinzie, et al., “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Among Survivors of Cambodian

Concentration Camps,” op. cit., p. 649.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ *Tung Padevat* (Revolutionary Flag), Special Issue, December-January 1977-1978, p. 56. This monthly journal was a state propaganda magazine on Khmer Rouge policy that was distributed nationwide.

³⁰ Ministry of Education, Democratic Kampuchea, *Literacy Textbook Grade 2*, First edition, 1977.

³¹ Henri Locard, *Le “Petit Livre Rouge” de Pol Pot, ou Les Paroles de L’Angkar*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1996, p. 242.

³² Ben Kiernan, “Introduction: A World Turned Upside Down,” in Dith Pran, ed., *Children of Cambodia’s Killing Fields*, Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 1997, p. xvii.

³³ Ibid., p. xii.

³⁴ Elizabeth Becker, *When the War Was Over: The Voices of Cambodia’s Revolution and Its People*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986, p. 266.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 267.

³⁶ Craig Etcheson, *The Rise and Demise of Democratic Kampuchea*, London: Pinter Publishers, 1984, p. 160.

³⁷ May Ebihara, “Revolution and Reformulation in Cambodian Village Culture,” pp. 16-61 in *The Cambodian Agony*, David A. Ablin and Marlowe Hood, eds., Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1990, p. 29.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Hun Sen, *13 Decades of Cambodia*, Phnom Penh: n.p., 1989, pp. 206-207; see especially the first chapter, “The Origin of the Khmer Rouge Regime.” For the story of how Hun Sen joined and defected from the Khmer Rouge regime, see Harish C. Mehta and Julie B. Mehta, *Hun Sen: The Strongman of Cambodia*, Singapore: Graham Brash Pte Ltd, 1999.

⁴⁰ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Seng Rom, a former Khmer Rouge comrade – teacher, and assistant to the Chief of District 10 (Baribo district), Baribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 14, 1999. Seng Rom confirmed that Kampong Tralach was a large district, having 19 sub-districts. Later it was divided into two districts: Kampong Tralach Leu and Kampong Tralach Kraom (the latter was also known as Sumaki Meanchey district.)

Region 31 was part of West Zone; see DK map and geographical definition. For information on Region 31 as Kampong Chhnang and as part of the Southwest before the victory of 1974, see Lon Nol Sipra report no. 60 Sipra, L00570, and Lon Nol Sipra report no. 204, L00675. Before April 1975, there was a special zone (*Phoumpheak Pises*) comprising Kandal Stung district, Dangkao district, Ang Snuol district, Ponhea Leu district, Kien Svay district, Sa-ang district, Leuk Dek district, Koh Thom district of Kandal province, and Phnom Penh. [Lon Nol Sipra report L00665.] After 1975, Phnom Penh became the headquarters of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK). Mok was secretary of the Southwest zone [Lon Nol Sipra report Sipra no. 52, L00567, dated 1970-1974.] Chou Chet *aka* Si, was secretary of the West zone until his arrest and imprisonment at S-21 in 1978 according to his confession J637. Chan was secretary of Region 31, Sarun was secretary of region 32 military, Pann was secretary of Sumaki Meanchey district, and Sarin was secretary of Sumaki Meanchey district military, according to Lon Nol Sipra report dated 1973-1974, L00570.

⁴¹ In this study, these children are referred to as young comrades.

⁴² Meng-Try Ea's interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, *op. cit.* Meng-Try Ea's interview with Kung, Sumaki Meanchey district, Kampong Chhnang province, February 11, 2000. Kung did not make his way to S-21, but his brother Saroeun did and died there. According to biographies (History of Activities) of S-21 comrades who came from Region 31, the reasons they joined the Khmer Rouge include local propaganda to clearly understand the Khmer Rouge lines, hatred of class oppression of farmers/workers by landlords/feudalists, and the struggle against invading imperialists.

⁴³ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Kung, a former Khmer Rouge comrade. *op. cit.* Meng-Try Ea's interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ The Center refers to the CPK, headquartered in Phnom Penh.

⁴⁵ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Tum Sat *aka* Sat, a former S-21 guard comrade. Baribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 26, 1999.

⁴⁸ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Meuk Un *aka* Un, a former S-21 guard comrade. Sumaki Meanchey district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 30, 1999.

⁴⁹ For the purposes of this paper, the civil war refers to the pre-1975 period of Khmer Rouge activities against the ruling governments.

⁵⁰ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Neou Soeun *aka* Docun, a former S-21 electrician comrade.

Baribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, February 27, 2000.

⁵¹ Peany sub-district, Kampong Chhnang province. During the civil war, when Khmer Rouge troops temporarily seized a Lon Nol-controlled village, they herded villagers back with them if they had to retreat.

⁵² Meng-Try Ea's interview with Kung Phai *aka* Phai. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang Province, February 25, 2000.

⁵³ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Seng Phalla *aka* La, a former S-21 animal husbandry comrade. Baribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, February 26, 2000.

⁵⁴ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Bim Khann *aka* Khann, a former S-21 animal husbandry comrade. Baribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 18, 1999.

⁵⁵ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Chroek Soeun *aka* Pheap, a former S-21 guard comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, February 12, 2000.

⁵⁶ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Yan, mother of Teu Thim *aka* Thim, a former S-21 nurse comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 26, 1999.

⁵⁷ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Teu Thim, a former S-21 nurse comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 26, 1999.

⁵⁸ Ministry of Education, Democratic Kampuchea, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁵⁹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Yan, mother of Teu Thim, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Say, father of Sie, a disappeared S-21 young comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 26, 1999.

⁶¹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Ruon, father of Math *aka* Sok, a disappeared S-21 young comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 26, 1999.

⁶² *Kang* means unit, *Neary* means girls.

⁶³ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Thach, sister of Chea Hon, a disappeared S-21 young comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 26, 1999.

⁶⁴ The Khmer Rouge required all comrades to produce written biographies; a collection of S-21 comrade biographies is housed in the DC-Cam Archive. All of the biographies describe the comrades as having been trained at Ta Khmau. However, Uy Saret *aka* Ret, when interviewed by Meng-Try Ea, insisted that he did not join the training at Ta Khmau. He was working at

Prey Sa, but because he was educated, the Khmer Rouge did not like him. In his biography, name is spelled Uy Saret. The biography does not say he joined the military training. Meng-Try Ea's interview with Uy Saret. Baribo, Kampong Chhnang province, February 27, 2000.

⁶⁵ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Seng Phalla *aka* La, op. cit.

⁶⁶ According to Him Huy, chief of guard comrades at S-21, during the entire period 1975-1979, only one prisoner escaped while being led to the killing field at Cheung Ek. The escapee was re-arrested the following day by Prey Sa forces. Sorya Sim had several interviews with Him Huy during Rithy Panh's project of filming Him Huy at Tuol Sleng and Cheung Ek in 2000 and 2001.

⁶⁷ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, op. cit.

⁶⁸ "During the training, young comrades not only worked hard in the daytime, but also at night. Young comrades were trained from 7 am to 11 am and from 12 noon to 5 pm. Moreover, young comrades had to stand guard duty for two hours to protect against enemies stealing or robbing at night." Meng-Try Ea's interview with Pann Sam *aka* Sam, op. cit.

⁶⁹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Kung Phai *aka* Phai, op. cit.

⁷⁰ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Seng Phalla *aka* La, op. cit.

⁷¹ This village is in Thma Eth sub-district, Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province.

⁷² Meng-Try Ea's interview with Hean Chhan *aka* Cheam, a former S-21 animal husbandry comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 26, 1999.

⁷³ "I suffered from malaria when I was in Ta Khmau military training school for only one and a half months. Then, I was sent to stay at the Phnom Penh hospital. Everyone thought I was dead because at that time, all my hair dropped off my head. After staying for one month in the hospital, I got better and returned to training school again. I felt sick because at that time, I worked too hard and ate only porridge, banana trunks and papaya stalks." Meng-Try Ea's interview with Seng Phalla *aka* La, op. cit.

⁷⁴ "On the Traitorous Activities of Tum Than, Former Military Spy, deputy guard group chief at S-21, Interrogated by Chorn Chhay," February 22, 1978, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number J846, p. 23.

⁷⁵ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Pann Sam *aka* Sam, op. cit. Group (*Krom*) is used in this study to refer to a smaller number of people than a unit (*Kang*).

⁷⁶ Michael Vickery, *Cambodia: 1975-1982*, Boston: South End Press, 1984, p. 172.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁷⁸ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Seng Rom, *op. cit.*

⁷⁹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, *op. cit.* A study session note by an S-21 comrade reads, "Wife, brother or sister, or parents, if they have problems, it is their business [they have to take care of themselves]. For us, we strengthen the socialist revolution. Most important, stick ourselves to the line." [Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D00505]. Former S-21 photographer Nheim Ein, when referring his friends, acquaintances, and distant relatives, said, "I was so scared and felt so bad when they walked through the door and I had to take their photograph. I reminded myself of the Khmer Rouge slogan, *Your hair is your head.*" Eric Unmacht and Chheang Sopheng's interview with Nheim Ein, Phnom Penh, March 10, 2001.

⁸⁰ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Sao Khe *aka* Khe, a former S-21 guard comrade. Tik Phos district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 29, 1999.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Meng-Try Ea's interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, *op. cit.* An S-21 comrade recorded political training sessions in his notebook, as well as lists of his personal possessions such as a cigarette lighter, two sets of clothes, and three "Revolutionary Flag" journals. The journal was a state publication for CPK propaganda and ideology. For instance, page 57 of the Special Issue of December 1977-January 1978 reads, "Be careful of bad elements at the party level and in our level, that would distract people from the party line. If these elements exist, it would be impossible to build a strong popular force, even one or two of them could cause complications ...These are the worms in the flesh that needs to be picked out..."

⁸³ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Pann Sam *aka* Sam, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Teu Thim *aka* Thim, *op. cit.*

⁸⁵ Peter Maguire's interview with Nheim Ein. Phnom Penh, March 2, 2000.

⁸⁶ Sorya Sim, Meng-Try Ea, and Ysa Osman's interview with Van Nath, Phnom Penh, July 20, 2000.

⁸⁷ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, *op. cit.*

⁸⁸ Sorya Sim and Huy Vannak's interview with Prak Khan *aka* Khan, a former S-21 interrogator comrade. Bati district, Takeo province, January 26, 2001.

⁸⁹ Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D00075. Statue of Communist Party of Kampuchea, undated, 56 pages. Constitution of Democratic Kampuchea, effective on January 5, 1976.

⁹⁰ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Teu Thim *aka* Thim, op. cit.

⁹¹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Hean Chhan *aka* Cheam, op. cit.

⁹² Meng-Try Ea's interview with Seng Phalla *aka* La, op. cit.

⁹³ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Tum Sat *aka* Sat, op. cit.

⁹⁴ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, op. cit.

⁹⁵ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Ho Mean *aka* Mean, a former S-21 guard comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 28, 1999. Pol Pot stated that in the rice fields enemies also existed and they were those who made mistakes in transplanting, harvesting, transporting, and such. *Tung Padevat*, April 1978, p. 45.

⁹⁶ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Chroek Soeun *aka* Pheap, op. cit.

⁹⁷ Born in about 1942 to a Sino-Cambodian family in Kampong Thom province, Duch was known as a hard-working student and later became a mathematics teacher. He had no formal training before he was put in charge of security in Region 33 in the early 1970s. Although no document specifies the exact date on which he began working at S-21, he is known to have been there from at least 1976 to 1979. In 1996 he converted to Christianity. He is now in prison in Phnom Penh. For more information, please see Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number L00562 and the biography of S-21 young comrade Yin Lonh, as well as David Chandlers' *Voices from S-21*, op. cit.

⁹⁸ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, op. cit.

⁹⁹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Chroek Soeun *aka* Pheap, op. cit.

¹⁰⁰ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, op. cit.

¹⁰¹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Nol, a former S-21 guard comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 27, 1999.

¹⁰² S-21 Prison: Circulation. Three-page long discipline for guard comrades. Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D19063.

¹⁰³ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Seth Mydans' interview with Suos Thy *aka* Thy, a former S-21 clerk comrade. Sa-ang district, Kandal province, May 1996. See also Seth Mydans, "Cambodian Killers' Careful Records Used Against Them," *The New York Times*, June 7, 1996.

¹⁰⁵ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Seng Phalla *aka* La, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁶ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Sao Khe *aka* Khe, *op. cit.* Khe and other former young comrades said that they were to help work at Prey Sa when required.

¹⁰⁷ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁸ David Chandler's interview with Kok Sros, reported in *Voices from S-21*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Pann Sam *aka* Sam, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰ Seth Mydans' interview with Suos Thy, *op. cit.* According to the biography of Khim Vat *aka* Hor, Hor joined the Khmer Rouge revolution on December 13, 1966. His birthplace was Nao Ny village, Traey Sla sub-district, Sa-ang district, Kandal province. His father was Bun and his mother was Ly. Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number K09336.

¹¹¹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Pann Sam *aka* Sam, *op. cit.*

¹¹² See prisoners' confessions, for example, Neou Kantha, Documentation Center of Cambodia, Catalogue Number D00153; Sim Mel *aka* Man, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D02678; and Sok Ra, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D00160. It was typical that an S-21 confession was completed and submitted to the chief with a summary.

¹¹³ Sorya Sim and Huy Vannak's interview with Prak Khan *aka* Khan, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁴ *Angkar* is "only used to refer to an organizational body and not allowed to refer to an individual," a July 24, 1977 circulation endorsed by both Defense Minister Son Sen and Committee 870, according to Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D01266. See also *Searching for the truth*, No. 19, July 2001. Meng-Try Ea's interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, *op. cit.* Sorya Sim's interview with Tuy Kin, the controversial S-21 interrogator comrade and with Him Huy, Koh Thom district, Kandal province, February 18, 2001. Ysa Osman's interview with Sok Chea, a former Krauch Chhmar district prison comrade, Krauch Chhmar district, Kampong Cham, February 4, 2001.

¹¹⁵ See interviews in note 114 above.

¹¹⁶ Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D06936. The S-21 *Santebal* notebook concerns the responsibilities of the interrogator comrades. The political view, duty

requirements, and the vulnerabilities of the interrogator comrades are described in detail. See also David Chandler, *Voices from S-21*, op. cit.

¹¹⁷ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, op. cit.

¹¹⁸ Uncatalogued item from S-21 archive dated February 18, 1976. Cited in David Chandler, *Voices from S-21*, op. cit., p. 152.

¹¹⁹ Confession of Nop Nuon, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D07397. See also Cornell Microfilm Reel (CMR) 87.2 and CMR58.4 cited in David Chandler, *Voices from S-21*, op. cit., p. 95.

¹²⁰ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, op. cit.

¹²¹ For more information about Neou Kantha and Sok Ra, see their confessions. Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Numbers D00153 and D00160.

¹²² "Sok Ra told Saom Sa Loem that he wanted to get out with four people because if he stayed he would not be able to free himself from imprisonment." Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D00153, "Neou Kantha's Confession," p. 29.

¹²³ Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number J854, "Vung Sam At's *aka* Vung Oeun, traitorous activity."

¹²⁴ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Kung Phai *aka* Phai, op. cit.

¹²⁵ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Seng Phalla *aka* La, op. cit.

¹²⁶ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Kung Phai *aka* Phai, op. cit.

¹²⁷ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Hean Chhan *aka* Cheam, op. cit.

¹²⁸ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Oeun Tha *aka* Tha, a former S-21 animal husbandry comrade. Baribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 18, 1999.

¹²⁹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Hean Chhan *aka* Cheam, op. cit.

¹³⁰ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Bim Khann *aka* Khann, op. cit.

¹³¹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Hean Chhan *aka* Cheam, op. cit.

¹³² Meng-Try Ea's interview with Bim Khann *aka* Khann, op. cit. Khann added that the guard was Duch's.

¹³³ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Teu Thim *aka* Thim, op. cit.

¹³⁴ According to Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, the group was known as *Nearasa Krong* or city messengers. Meng-Try Ea's interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, op. cit.

¹³⁵ S-21 Prison: Circulation, op. cit.

¹³⁶ First Staff session, dated October 20, 1976. Revolutionary biographical viewpoint. Duch was the S-21 chief, Hor was deputy, and members included Huy, Snguon, Pho, Noeun, Run, Peng, Than, Sokh, Khatt, and Meng. Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number N01494.

¹³⁷ A reading of the most incriminating S-21 documents reveals that correspondence was conducted by writing notes on the confessions, from Duch to Son Sen, from Son Sen to Nuon Chea, and from Son Sen to Pol Pot, discussing the fate of prisoners and prospective prisoners. Meng-Try Ea's interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, op. cit.

¹³⁸ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, op. cit. So Phim, Secretary of East Zone, was accused of plotting to take power by cooperating with the Vietnamese. See also "The Confession of Chin Ea *aka* Sou," interrogated by Nan, June 5, 1977. Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number J410. Confession of Chann Mon *aka* Tol from region 42 of North Zone, dated June 11, 1977. Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number J85. Confession of Tan Try *aka* Chhoeun, member of State Commerce, dated May 8, 1977. Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number J404.

¹³⁹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, op. cit.

¹⁴⁰ Seth Mydans' interview with Suos Thy, a former S-21 clerk comrade, op. cit.

¹⁴¹ Soeu had been happy, singing and laughing with his friends while on the road to the Center. He began to develop regrets on arrival at the Center. Meng-Try Ea's interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, op. cit.

¹⁴² Meng-Try Ea's interview with Meuk Un *aka* Un, op. cit.

¹⁴³ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Nol, op. cit.

¹⁴⁴ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Teu Thim *aka* Thim, op. cit.

¹⁴⁵ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, op. cit.

¹⁴⁶ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Uch, older sister of Khann, a disappeared S-21 young comrade. Baribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 18, 1999.

¹⁴⁷ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Thapp, mother of Sim Hun, a disappeared S-21 young comrade. Sumaki Meanchey district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 25, 1999.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Ngim, mother of Nav, a disappeared S-21 young comrade. Sumaki Meanchey district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 25, 1999.

¹⁵⁰ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Khai, uncle of Kuy Ry, a disappeared S-21 young comrade. Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 26, 1999. According to Khai, Kuy Ry died of illness in 1982.

¹⁵¹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Prim, mother of Tha, a former S-21 animal husbandry comrade. Baribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, December 18, 1999.

¹⁵² Meng-Try Ea's interview with Pann Sam *aka* Sam, op. cit.

¹⁵³ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Hean Chhan *aka* Cheam, op. cit.

¹⁵⁴ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, op. cit.

¹⁵⁵ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Tum Sat *aka* Sat, op. cit.

¹⁵⁶ Steve Heder's interview, quoted in David Chandler, *Voices from S-21*, op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁵⁷ Peter Maguire's interview with Nheim Ein, op. cit.

¹⁵⁸ *Ieng Sary's Regime: The Diary of the Khmer Rouge Foreign Ministry, 1976-1979*, Translated by Ben Kiernan and Kosal Phat, Yale's Cambodian Genocide Program and Documentation Center of Cambodia, January 1997. Former guard comrade Sat at the time was afraid of his comrades picking up on his mistakes because a faulted person could be critiqued three times [the next time he would be killed.] See also David Chandler, *Voices from S-21*, op. cit., which quotes from Steve Heder's interview with a former Khmer Rouge comrade saying, "We were all spying on each other," p. 87.

¹⁵⁹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, op. cit.

¹⁶⁰ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, op. cit.

¹⁶¹ Seth Mydans' interview with Suos Thy, op. cit.

¹⁶² Meng-Try Ea's interview with Tum Sat *aka* Sat, op. cit.

¹⁶³ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Meuk Un *aka* Un, op. cit.

¹⁶⁴ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Kung Phai *aka* Phai, op. cit.

¹⁶⁵ Cornell Microfilm Reel (CMR) 87.2 and CMR58.4. Cited in David Chandler, *Voices from S-21*, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁶⁶ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Kung Phai *aka* Phai, op. cit.

¹⁶⁷ Seth Mydans' interview with Suos Thy, op. cit.

¹⁶⁸ Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D02678. "Sim Mel's *aka* Man, confession," interrogated by Tuy, dated January 15, 1978.

¹⁶⁹ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Hean Chhan *aka* Cheam, op. cit.

¹⁷⁰ Van Nath explained in early 1977 that his neighbor Nhanh was arrested in Battambang for unknown reasons; in fact, all five people named Nhanh who lived Battambang were killed. He saw about 30 soldiers walking the tied-up Nhanh. Nhanh, Van Nath knew, had been simply a water carrying man since he was young. Nhanh was killed just behind his home and he heard the sound of guns. He explained that he saw a slogan, and everyone knew this policy, "Mistakenly kill an [innocent] person is better than mistakenly let free a guilty one." Sorya Sim, Meng-Try Ea, and Ysa Osman's interview with Van Nath, op. cit. See also Henri Locard, *Le "Petit Livre Rouge" de Pol Pot, ou Les Paroles de L'Angkar*, op. cit., p. 175.

¹⁷¹ Peter Maguire's interview with Nheim Ein, op. cit.

¹⁷² Meng-Try Ea's interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, op. cit.

¹⁷³ Bim Khann insisted that the majority of the low-ranking comrade prisoners were brought from the East Zone, which was under the control of So Phim. In 1978, Phim was killed by the party after being accused of treason. By the time their chief was accused, most remaining comrades in the East Zone were also regarded as traitors. Meng-Try Ea's interview with Bim Khann *aka* Khann, op. cit.

¹⁷⁴ Sorya Sim and Huy Vannak's interview with Prak Khan *aka* Khan, op. cit.

¹⁷⁵ "I also thought about the escaping but it was impossible. If I was gone even a half an hour they would know. And where would I go? If I went to my village, they would arrest me. The only way to escape was to Viet Nam." Seth Mydans' interview with Suos Thy, op. cit. "A guard comrade must be present at the assigned spot where the Party entrusts a responsibility." S-21 Prison: Circulation, op. cit.

¹⁷⁶ An S-21 interrogation regulation dated May 28, 1978 states that prisoners must worship (*Sampeah/Thvay Bangkum*) a picture of two dogs; one represents the Vietnamese and the other the Americans. If they worship, that means they respect and support their regimes. “Dog” is very insulting term for Cambodians; forcing people to pay homage to dogs was intended to break prisoners’ spirits and test whether they respected the *Santebal*. Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D00512.

¹⁷⁷ The italic items are from David Chandler, *Voices from S-21*, op. cit., p. 130. The rest are from Meng-Try’s interviews, 1999-2000.

¹⁷⁸ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, op. cit. Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, op. cit.

¹⁷⁹ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, op. cit.

¹⁸⁰ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Oeun Tha *aka* Tha, op. cit.

¹⁸¹ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Ho Mean *aka* Mean, op. cit.

¹⁸² Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Seng Phalla *aka* La, op. cit.

¹⁸³ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Pann Sam *aka* Sam, op. cit.

¹⁸⁴ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, op. cit.

¹⁸⁵ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Him Kheng *aka* Kheng, op. cit.

¹⁸⁶ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, op. cit.

¹⁸⁷ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Pann Sam *aka* Sam, op. cit.

¹⁸⁸ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Hean Chhan *aka* Cheam, op. cit.

¹⁸⁹ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, op. cit.

¹⁹⁰ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Cheam Soeu *aka* Soeu, op. cit.

¹⁹¹ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Bim Khann *aka* Khann, op. cit.

¹⁹² Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Tum Sat *aka* Sat, op. cit.

¹⁹³ Meng-Try Ea’s interview with Teu Thim *aka* Thim, op. cit.

¹⁹⁴ Sorya Sim's interview with Him Huy, Koh Thom district, Kandal province, February 18, 2001. Nun Huy *aka* Huy Sre's (who was chief of S-21 *Khor* or Prey Sa) confession CMR83.2. He was killed on December 5, 1978.

¹⁹⁵ Meng-Try Ea's interview with Khieu Ches *aka* Peou, *op. cit.*

¹⁹⁶ See Table 1 in Richard Mollica, Grace Wyshak and James Lavelle, "The Psychosocial Impact of War Trauma and Torture on the Southeast Asian Refugee," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, June 1986.

¹⁹⁷ The less obvious cases among the former young comrades interviewed include feeling guilty, feeling that their bodies can be violated, and refraining from telling their Khmer Rouge or S-21 experience to relatives and villagers. Others, when their experience is revealed, defend themselves, saying that they had simply been low-ranking comrades or were misguided by the higher-ranking comrades.

¹⁹⁸ This rough estimate is based on logs showing the number of S-21 personnel who were executed and a 1976 list showing 1,685 S-21 staff. However, in 1977 S-21 listed its workforce at 2,367. The estimate is based on an assumption that those listed as from S-21 *Khor* or Prey Sa were all comrades. Although there were both prisoners and comrades at Prey Sa, the list does not make clear and other related records are not available. This estimate concurs with Kheng's statement on page 29. See also note 8 above.

¹⁹⁹ As this paper was nearing completion, the authors revisited Him Kheng at the request of Brook Larmer, *Newsweek's* Hong Kong Bureau Chief (See A Special Report: "Cambodia Begins Uncovering Its Gruesome Past," *Newsweek*, US edition, August 13, 2001). We asked Kheng what he and his comrades (had they survived) would say about the coming Khmer Rouge tribunal. He replied that survivors like himself were angry at the Khmer Rouge leaders; if his comrades had survived, they would have much more to say and be more anxious to hold a tribunal. Thirty days after we interviewed Kheng, King Norodom Sihanouk signed the Khmer Rouge tribunal into law on August 10, 2001. Kheng and his fallen comrades might be glad to learn that the law states that the "senior" leaders responsible will be punished. Article 1 states, "The purpose of this law is to pass judgement on senior leaders of Democratic Kampuchea and all those who bear the highest responsibility for the crimes and serious violations of Cambodian penal law, violations of international humanitarian law and international custom, and violations of international conventions recognized by Cambodia, that were committed during the period from 17 April 1975 to 6 January 1979."

However, Kheng and his comrades might also feel that simply imprisoning the leaders is insufficient. Article 3 provides, "...The penalties under Articles 209, 500, 506 and 507 of the 1956 Penal Code shall be limited to a maximum of life imprisonment, pursuant to Article 32 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia and specified further in Articles 38 and 39 of this law."

Articles 1 and 3 as quoted above were translated into English by David Ashly, who in 1998 served as a member of the United Nations Group of Experts to negotiate with the Royal Government of Cambodia's Task Force on the Khmer Rouge Tribunal headed by H.E. Mr. Sok An. Mr. Ashly is now head of the War Crimes Office of the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office. For further information on these two articles, the full text of the draft law and its debate by the National Assembly, see Youk Chhang, "The Historic Nature of the Khmer Rouge Trial Law," *Searching for the truth*, No. 20, August 2001 and *Searching for the truth*, No. 13, January 2001.

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Comrade Bim Khann	ប៊ឹម ខាន់	Survived
Comrade Bou Khann	ប៊ូ ខាន់	Disappeared
Comrade Bun Chun	ប៊ុន ជុន	Unknown
Comrade Chea Hon	ជា ហុន	Disappeared
Comrade Chea Hong	ជា ហុង	Disappeared
Comrade Chea Paen	ជា ប៉ែន	Unknown
Comrade Chea Un	ជា ឌុន	Unknown
Comrade Chea Yong	ជា យ៉ុង	Unknown
Comrade Cheam Soeu	ជាម ស្ងៀ	Survived
Comrade Chek Sam	ចេក សំ	Survived
Comrade Chhuon Hauv	ឈួន ហ្សាវ	Disappeared
Comrade Chhuon Phal	ឈួន ផល	Unknown
Comrade Chim Kin	ជឹម គីន	Unknown
Comrade Chum Vat	ជុំ វ៉ាត	Unknown
Comrade Chuon Ky	ជួន គី	Unknown
Comrade Ek An	ឆែក អាន	Unknown
Comrade El Saom	ឆែល សោម	Unknown
Comrade Hang Pheang	ហង់ ផាង	Unknown
Comrade Hean Chhan	ហ៊ាន ឆាន	Survived
Comrade Heng Yong	ហេង យ៉ុង	Disappeared
Comrade Him Kheng	ហ៊ឹម ខេង	Survived
Comrade Hing Chan	ហ៊ីង ចាន	Unknown
Comrade Ho Mean	ហូ ម៉ាន	Survived
Comrade Iem Ron	អៀម រ៉ុន	Unknown
Comrade Iem Vy	អៀម វី	Unknown
Comrade Im Hieng	អ៊ឹម ហៀង	Unknown
Comrade Ket Hong	កេត ហុង	Unknown
Comrade Khieu Ches	ខៀវ ចេស	Survived
Comrade Khin Run	ឃិន រុន	Unknown
Comrade Kiek In	កៀក អ៊ិន	Unknown
Comrade Kit Koeun	គីត កៀន	Unknown
Comrade Kun Dim	គុន ឌឹម	Unknown

Comrade Kung Phai	កង់ ងៃ	Survived
Comrade Kuy Ry	គុយ រី	Disappeared
Comrade Lang Noeun	ឡាន ឡើន	Unknown
Comrade Loas Rorn	លាស់ រេន	Unknown
Comrade Long Ry	ឡុង រី	Unknown
Comrade Makk Horn	ម៉ក់ ហ៊ិន	Unknown
Comrade Man Hok	ម៉ន ហុក	Unknown
Comrade Mao An	ម៉ៅ អាណ	Unknown
Comrade Mao Et	ម៉ៅ អិត	Unknown
Comrade Meas San	មាស សន	Unknown
Comrade Meuk Un	ម៉េក អ៊ុន	Survived
Comrade Mel Morn	ម៉ែល មន	Unknown
Comrade Mit Met	មិត្ត ម៉េត	Disappeared
Comrade Neou Nav	នៅ ណាវ	Unknown
Comrade Neou Soeun	នៅ សៀន	Survived
Comrade Nhem Mai	ញឹម ម៉ៃ	Unknown
Comrade Nhep Mon	ញ៉ែប ម៉ុន	Unknown
Comrade Nhim May	ញឹម ម៉ាយ	Unknown
Comrade Nhim Rin	ញឹម រិន	Unknown
Comrade Nhung Cheng	ញុង ចេង	Unknown
Comrade Noeu At	នៅ អាត	Unknown
Comrade Nuon Um	នួន អ៊ុម	Disappeared
Comrade Nut Khim	នុត ឃឹម	Unknown
Comrade Oeun Tha	ឡើន ថា	Survived
Comrade Pann Sam	ប៉ាន់ សំ	Survived
Comrade Pay Roy	ប៉ាយ រ៉ុយ	Unknown
Comrade Pen Phen	ប៉ែន ភេន	Unknown
Comrade Phann Hong	ផាន់ ហុង	Disappeared
Comrade Phlaok Pha	ផ្លោក ផា	Unknown
Comrade Phuong Rik	ផួង រិក	Unknown
Comrade Pol Nhim	ប៉ុល ញឹម	Unknown
Comrade Port Lan	ពត ឡុន	Unknown
Comrade Pring Chhoeun	ប្រឹង ឈៀន	Unknown
Comrade Prum Set	ប្រាំ សេត	Survived
Comrade Prum Sok	ប្រាំ សុក	Unknown
Comrade Rit Saroeun	រិត សារឿន	Disappeared

Comrade Ruos Em	រូស ែម	Unknown
Comrade Ruos Pres	រូស ្រេស	Unknown
Comrade Ruon Sok	រួន សុខ	Disappeared
Comrade San Porn	សាន ពន	Unknown
Comrade San Saut	សាន ស្នត	Unknown
Comrade Sao Khe	សៅ ខេ	Survived
Comrade Sek Chan	សេក ចន	Unknown
Comrade Sem Chhoy	សែម ឆុយ	Unknown
Comrade Seng Phalla	សេង ផល្លា	Survived
Comrade Sien Srim	ស្ងៀន ស្រីម	Disappeared
Comrade Sim Hak	ស៊ីម ហាក់	Disappeared
Comrade Sim Hun	ស៊ីម ហ៊ុន	Disappeared
Comrade Sim Som	ស៊ីម សុម	Unknown
Comrade Soen Phan	ស៊ិន ផន	Unknown
Comrade Sok Phat	សុក ផាត	Unknown
Comrade Suon Thoeun	សួន ធៀន	Disappeared
Comrade Tang Hakk	តង ហាក់	Disappeared
Comrade Tauch Se	តួច សៃ	Disappeared
Comrade Teu Thim	ទី ធ័ម	Survived
Comrade Than Tha	ថន ថា	Unknown
Comrade Tit Kann	ទឹត កាន់	Disappeared
Comrade Tory Sie	ទយ ស្ងៀ	Disappeared
Comrade Touch Khann	ទួច ខាន់	Disappeared
Comrade Tum Sat	ទុំ សាត	Survived
Comrade Uk Thing	អ៊ុក ធីង	Unknown
Comrade Uy Saret	អ៊ុយ សារ៉េត	Survived
Comrade Vung Srun	វង់ ស្រ្ងន	Unknown
Comrade Yin Chim	យិន ជីម	Unknown
Comrade Yin Lonh	យិន ឡូញ	Unknown
Comrade You Yim	យូ យីម	Unknown

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3. Interviews Related to S-21 Young Comrades from Region 31

Former S-21 Young Comrades		Date	District
Bim Khann	ប៊ឹម ខាន់	Dec. 18, 1999	Baribo
Cheam Soeu	ជាំម សៀង	Feb. 12, 2000	K. Tralach
Chroek Soeun	ច្រឹក សៀង	Feb. 12, 2000	K. Tralach
Hean Chhan	ហ៊ាន ឆន	Dec. 26, 1999	K. Tralach
Him Kheng	ហ៊ឹម ខេង	Dec. 17, 1999	Baribo
Ho Mean	ហូ ម៉ាន	Dec. 28, 1999	K. Tralach
Khieu Ches	ខៀវ ចេស	Feb. 12, 2000	K. Tralach
Kung Phai	កុង ផៃ	Feb. 25, 2000	K. Tralach
Meuk Un	ម៉ែក អ៊ុន	Dec. 30, 1999	S. Meanchey
Neou Soeun	នេវ សៀង	Feb. 27, 2000	Baribo
Nol	ណុល	Dec. 27, 1999	K. Tralach
Oeun Tha	អៀង ថា	Dec. 18, 1999	Baribo

Pann Sam	ប៉ាន់ សំ	Feb. 13, 2000	S. Meanchey
Sao Khe	សៅ ខេ	Dec. 29, 1999	Tik Phos
Seng Phalla	សេង ផល្លា	Feb. 26, 2000	Baribo
Teu Thim	ទ្រី ធីម	Dec. 26, 1999	K. Tralach
Tum Sat	ទុំ សាត	Dec. 26, 1999	Baribo
Uy Saret	អ៊ុយ សារ៉េត	Feb. 27, 2000	Baribo

Relatives of Deceased S-21 Young Comrades

Chey Vung, uncle of Tit Kan	វង់	Dec. 29, 1999	Tik Phos
Kung, older brother of Ret Saroeun	កង់	Feb. 11, 2000	S. Meanchey
Chhorn, mother of Chhun Houv	ឈន	Dec. 18, 1999	Baribo
Hean, older sister of Sien Srim	ហ៊ាន	Feb. 11, 2000	S. Meanchey
Horn, older sister of Sum	ហ៊ិន	Dec. 27, 1999	K. Tralach
Hun, aunt of Yong	ហ៊ិន	Dec. 28, 1999	K. Tralach
Khai, uncle of Kuy Ry	ខៃ	Dec. 26, 1999	K. Tralach
Kien, older sister of Nav	កៀន	Dec. 25, 1999	S. Meanchey
Ruon, father of Math	រួន	Dec. 16, 1999	K. Tralach
Mech, sister of Yim Pong	ម៉ិច	Dec. 17, 1999	Baribo
Men, sister of Suon Thoeun	មេន	Dec. 26, 1999	K. Tralach
Met, sister of Sie	ម៉េត	Dec. 27, 1999	K. Tralach
Mot, uncle of Sim Hak	ម៉ុត	Feb. 11, 2000	S. Meanchey
Ngim, mother of Neou Nav	ញីម	Dec. 25, 1999	S. Meanchey
Nin, mother of Nuon Um	នីន	Feb. 11, 2000	S. Meanchey
Phlay, mother of Hong	ផ្លាយ	Feb. 27, 2000	K. Tralach
Say, father of Tory Sie	សាយ	Dec. 26, 1999	K. Tralach
Se, sister of Mit Met	សៃ	Dec. 26, 1999	K. Tralach
Thach, sister of Chea Hon	ថាច	Dec. 26, 1999	K. Tralach
Thapp, mother of Sim Hun	ថាប	Dec. 25, 1999	S. Meanchey
Uch, older sister of Touch Khann	អ៊ុច	Dec. 18, 1999	Baribo
Yim, sister of Chhoeun	យីម	Dec. 26, 1999	K. Tralach

Relatives of Surviving S-21 Young Comrades

Prim, mother of Oeun Tha	ព្រីម	Dec. 18, 1999	Baribo
Yan, mother of Teu Thim	យ៉ាន	Dec. 27, 1999	K. Tralach

Other interviews related to S-21 Young Comrades

Ann	អាន់	Dec. 3, 1999	Baribo
Chan Vooun	ចន វៀន	Dec. 25, 1999	S. Meanchey
Chhim Vat	ឈឹម វ៉ាត	Dec. 16, 1999	Baribo
Chhoeun Than	ឈៀន ថន	Dec. 15, 1999	Baribo
Chhun Ry	ឈុន រី	Dec. 3, 1999	Baribo
Choek Kim	ចឹក គឹម	Dec. 14, 1999	Baribo
Chim Sok	ជឹម សុក	Dec. 16, 1999	Baribo
Chun Socheat	ជុន សុដាតិ	Dec. 25, 1999	S. Meanchey
Hong May	ហុង មាយ	Dec. 16, 1999	Baribo
Khleang Rey	ឃ្មុំង រៃ	Dec. 25, 1999	S. Meanchey
Khun	ឃុន	Feb. 25, 2000	S. Meanchey
Lan	ឡាន	Dec. 15, 1999	Baribo
Lav	ឡាវ	Dec. 3, 1999	Baribo
Lum	លុំ	Dec. 15, 1999	Baribo
Mean	មាន	Dec. 27, 1999	S. Meanchey
Mut	មុត	Feb. 11, 2000	K. Tralach
Ngi Tho	ងឹ ថូ	Dec. 16, 1999	Baribo
Nom	ណុម	Dec. 17, 1999	Baribo
Nop Than	ណុប ថន	Dec. 15, 1999	Baribo
Pam	ប៉ម	Feb. 27, 2000	K. Tralach
Pann Sok	ប៉ាន់ សុក	Feb. 13, 2000	K. Tralach
Phin	ភិន	Dec. 16, 1999	Baribo
Pim	ពីម	Dec. 16, 1999	Baribo
Sa	សា	Dec. 27, 1999	S. Meanchey
San	សាន	Dec. 17, 1999	Baribo
Sann	សាន់	Dec. 14, 1999	Baribo
Seng Rom	សេង រ៉ុម	Dec. 14, 1999	Baribo
Siek	សៀក	Feb. 27, 2000	K. Tralach
Sien	សៀន	Feb. 11, 2000	K. Tralach
Soeu	សៀ	Dec. 3, 1999	Baribo
Vannak	វ៉ណ្ណុក	Dec. 25, 1999	S. Meanchey
Sophal	សុផល	Dec. 3, 1999	Baribo
Uch Tann	អ៊ុច តាន់	Dec. 15, 1999	Baribo
Vanna	វ៉ណ្ណា	Feb. 27, 2000	K. Tralach

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DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA IN BRIEF

The Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) has two main objectives. The first objective is to record and preserve the history of the Khmer Rouge regime for future generations. The second objective is to assemble materials that can serve as potential evidence in support of those who seek accountability for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge. These two objectives - memory and justice - serve to build a foundation for the rule of law and genuine national reconciliation. Also, an ongoing research project attempts to analyze the primary materials collected through these various means, to understand how they fit into the overall historical context of the Khmer Rouge period.

A society cannot know itself if it does not have an accurate memory of its own history. Toward this end, DC-Cam is laboring to reconstruct Cambodia's modern history, much of which has been obscured by the flames of war and genocide. Between 1995 and 2000, DC-Cam catalogued approximately 155,000 pages of primary Khmer Rouge documents and more than 6,000 photographs. This mammoth effort has barely scratched the surface of DC-Cam holdings. The bulk of the DC-Cam Archive has not yet been catalogued, including nearly 30,000 more photographs and more than 400,000 additional pages of documents, not to mention a wide array of other types of materials. DC-Cam is devising a work plan for the next five years, during which we aim to complete the cataloguing of this backlog of materials, while simultaneously continuing to acquire new materials. By collecting, preserving and analyzing these individual pieces of historical memory, DC-Cam endeavors to help Cambodians understand the country's difficult journey through the twentieth century, the better to know the road which lies ahead. As a permanent institute for the study of Cambodia's history, DC-Cam stands poised to assist the nation in guiding the way to a more peaceful and prosperous tomorrow.

The second objective is to assemble materials that can serve as potential evidence in support of those who seek accountability for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge. In support of this objective, DC-Cam is constantly cataloguing the materials gathered through various means and entering them into computer databases to produce annotated indexes to the contents of the Archive. Through this process, DC-Cam in cooperation with its international partners has assembled extensive bibliographic, biographic, photographic and geographic databases of information related to Khmer Rouge abuses. This provides legal scholars and investigators - no less than researchers and historians - with valuable tools to understand precisely who did what to whom, when, where and how, and sometimes, even why. This also allows Cambodians to know their own history, and to come to terms with it. Based principally on their examination of DC-Cam holdings, in February 1999 the UN Group of Experts found *prima facie* culpability against the Khmer Rouge leadership for war crimes, genocide and other crimes against humanity. DC-Cam also expects to be called upon as the principal source of evidentiary materials for any Khmer Rouge tribunal. Prosecutors and defense counsel involved in the cases of Khmer Rouge military chief Mok and Tuol Sleng (S-21) prison chief Duch have already requested substantial assistance from DC-Cam. Successfully achieving our two primary objectives - memory and justice - will serve to help build a foundation for the rule of law and genuine national reconciliation in Cambodia. We aim to pursue these objectives in several ways.

First, we will sustain and then accelerate our rate of cataloguing the primary materials relating to the Khmer Rouge regime. Second, we will expand the scope of our analysis of these primary materials, focusing on topic areas relevant to accountability and finding the truth. Third, in the coming five years, we will massively expand the computer databases assembled during our first six years of work. These goals can be accomplished only if we have a stable and predictable source of core funding. Securing such a stable source of core funding will permit us to engage in long-term planning and to better schedule our resource utilization.

DC-Cam is staffed entirely by Cambodians. Without exception, every member of the DC-Cam team began as a volunteer, gradually gaining the experience and confidence necessary to be brought on board as paid staff. The senior members of the management team thus have all worked their way up from the bottom. DC-Cam staff have been cross-trained in a variety of specialties, so they can back up each other as needed.

DC-Cam relies heavily on volunteers, interns and guest researchers. All permanent staffers began as volunteers, and presently some one hundred persons work in a volunteer capacity on various projects. This provides a pool of talent with gradually increasing experience in DC-Cam methodologies from which to recruit future staff members. Meanwhile, DC-Cam volunteers produce large quantities of output that would otherwise not be accomplished. DC-Cam also regularly hosts interns from universities, law firms and other institutions abroad to work on specific projects, including people from the United States, Australia, Britain, The Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and other countries. In addition, many of the world's leading scholars in such areas as the Khmer Rouge, modern Cambodia and genocide studies are regularly hosted as guest scholars to pursue advanced studies in the DC-Cam Archive. Finally, because of the highly technical nature of many DC-Cam activities, we occasionally retain the services of professional consultants in a variety of disciplines such as international law, architecture, remote sensing, and so on.

DC-Cam's quest for memory and justice has more to do with the future than with the past. It is about the struggle for truth in the face of an overwhelming power that virtually destroyed our society, a power that continues in more subtle ways to threaten our aspirations for a peaceful future. The violence of that power shattered Cambodian society and scattered the Cambodian people across the planet in a terrible diaspora. But no matter how far or near to the homeland, and whether they are survivors or the new generation born after the overthrow of Pol Pot, all Cambodians still suffer from a profound sense of dislocation. This dislocation is rooted in a loss deeper than material deprivation or personal bereavement. It is the loss of soul, of something central to the Cambodian heart. It is a loss that can never be recovered, and thus full healing of the wounds of genocide will require that something new is built to take the place of that which has been lost. By reconstructing a historical narrative of what happened to Cambodia, and by striving for justice where that is an appropriate remedy, we aim to lay a foundation upon which all Cambodians can find firm footing in moving toward a better future. Reconciliation in Cambodia will happen one heart at a time. Cambodians cannot forgive one another until they know who to forgive, and for what. DC-Cam's focus on memory and justice seeks to assist Cambodians in discovering the truth upon which a genuine national reconciliation depends.