
Second Life, Second Death: The Khmer Rouge After 1978

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Most studies of the Khmer Rouge have concentrated on their rise, or their period in power.¹ There has been little scholarly attention focused on the movement since it fell from power in early 1979, except as a “problem” in the larger polity and the UN peace process of the early 1990s. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the history of the movement over this period, and to identify the reasons for its rebirth in the 1980s and its final collapse in the 1990s. In outline, the Khmer Rouge benefited from Cold War diplomacy, but were unable to rebuild any substantial constituency inside Cambodia. The movement collapsed when they lost international support after the Paris Peace Agreement of 1991, despite having made significant military gains. The way in which the movement collapsed was shaped by the Stalinist outlook and behaviour of the leadership, and had significant parallels with the self-destruction of the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) regime of 1975-1979.

First Death

Pol Pot’s Democratic Kampuchea (DK) regime collapsed in 1979.² It was truly a collapse, not just a military defeat. While the central leadership remained intact, it was compelled to flee to the Thai border, taking with them whatever people they were able to round up along the way. The DK military was shattered and the regime fell apart throughout the country, even where the Vietnamese had not yet established a presence. This was followed by large-scale spontaneous migrations of the ordinary population, as people relocated by the regime returned home, searched for their families, or tried to flee the country. Many returned from the northwest to central and eastern Cambodia - that is, to areas under the control of the Vietnamese and their Cambodian allies. Others gathered on the Thai border. Few, if any, went to the areas where the Khmer Rouge were reorganising.

The Khmer Rouge zones were in the hills and mountains of western Cambodia. These areas were jungle-clad, with few roads, and largely uninhabited. They were close to the border, and it was easy to take sanctuary in Thailand. These areas were the traditional refuges of bandits and rebels. By 1980 the Khmer Rouge had a military force of about 35,000 and a population base of around 100,000 people under their control. In Phnom Penh a new Vietnamese-backed government, calling itself the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), was in at least nominal control of about 90 percent of the territory and population (then numbering some seven million) of Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge forces faced at least 100,000 Vietnamese troops, while the PRK was forming its own army.

The Vietnamese attempted to seal the Khmer Rouge zones off from the populated, food-growing areas of the interior, with considerable success. In anticipation of an invasion, the DK leaders had stockpiled supplies in the southwest. But by October 1979, the population in their zones in the southwest were starving. The Khmer Rouge leaders had little choice but to allow them to cross into Thailand, where international agencies organized emergency relief and hastily built a chain of refugee camps to house them, along with many other displaced persons.

By 1980 the Khmer Rouge had lost access to the bulk of the population. The surviving remnants of their state power persisted principally on foreign soil. The areas inside Cambodia where they retained a presence were peripheral ones that had been the traditional refuge of rebels, smugglers and bandits. An early nationalist rival of Sihanouk's, Son Ngoc Than, took refuge in one of these areas in the early 1950s. His movement had lingered on there for several years, without having any major influence on the course of Cambodian national politics. In 1980 the Khmer Rouge were in an even more parlous condition, and it seemed the same fate would befall them.

Second Life

In fact, the Khmer Rouge movement was not dead. The late-DK leadership was still intact, as was much of its senior military command. They had been abandoned by most of their supporters from the 1970s, but they still had a significant population base under their control. In their own eyes they had won, through struggle and sacrifice, the right to rule the Cambodian nation. They

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had been robbed of power by Cambodia's traditional enemies, the Vietnamese, and only they had the capacity to save the Cambodian people from extermination at the hands of the Vietnamese. And so they resolutely set about rehabilitating their movement through appeals to Cambodian nationalism and anti-Vietnamese sentiment. In this, they had international support. China had actively supported the DK regime, and invaded northern Vietnam in an attempt to relieve Vietnamese pressure on it. The US had backed the Lon Nol regime, but saw an opportunity to hit back at the Soviet-supported Vietnamese. The US deplored the Khmer Rouge's record in power, but gave them diplomatic support in the UN and elsewhere. The ASEAN countries, Thailand in particular, supported the American-Chinese position.³

In late 1979 and early 1980, food shortages developed in Cambodia, as cultivation was neglected in the period of anarchy following the Vietnamese invasion. People began to gather on the Thai border on the flat land to the north of Aranyapratet, especially when aid agencies began distributing food and emergency supplies there. Soon there were about 500,000 people on this part of the border in refugee camps inside Thailand, or in sprawling makeshift settlements on the Cambodian side of the border. In the camps in Thailand, the agencies had some control over how supplies were distributed; on the border, they had none. In 1980, at least 80 percent of the material distributed there was commandeered by armed groups. There was a flourishing cross-border smuggling trade, estimated to be worth at least US\$1million a day at its peak.

Control of these sources of revenue became a basis of political power. The initial beneficiaries were an assortment of local demagogues, warlords and teenage gangs, who fought with each other over the spoils. By early 1981, with an influx of anti-Vietnamese politicians, these groups had been transformed into the non-Communist resistance. Half a dozen military commanders each controlled a more-or-less disciplined army, through which they controlled their own fiefdoms along the border. The feuding gangs had been absorbed or eliminated. The commanders in turn gave their allegiance to Prince Sihanouk's *Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Independent, Neutre, Pacifique et Cooperatif* (FUNCINPEC), or to Son Sann's Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF).

This situation also facilitated the rebirth of the Khmer Rouge. To the south of Aranyapratet, their base areas became focal points for the distribution of humanitarian aid. The consequences paralleled those just described. The main difference was that these areas were from the beginning controlled by a unified

and disciplined political apparatus. They were neither anarchic nor the focus of black market trade flows, and free of the gangster politics characteristic of the area north of Aranyapratet. DK cadres did not resell supplies for private enrichment, but by administering its distribution, built up a patron-client system and used this to rebuild their political and military apparatus, to the dismay of many of the aid workers involved.⁴ With even fewer outside observers, similar developments took place in the Dangrek Mountains in the north of Cambodia. Meanwhile, flows of Chinese military aid, transported by the Thai army, began to flow secretly to the Khmer Rouge. In 1980, refugees from refugee camps in Thailand were repatriated back to the zones under Khmer Rouge control. The process was supposedly voluntary, but was organized by DK cadres. The political objective was obvious. Singapore's Foreign Minister exhorted the refugees to "go back and fight."⁵

By 1981, when I visited the Khmer Rouge base at Phnom Malai, the Khmer Rouge were overseeing a functioning society. The area appeared quite peaceful, and under an effective administration, although we were within earshot of fighting with the Vietnamese. The cadres, presumably seeking to counter the image of the Khmer Rouge as "Year Zero" primitivists, made special show of the school and dispensary they had built. But food, housing and other resources were allocated by officials, who had organized the whole population of the area in support of their burgeoning war effort. On the whole, it appeared to be a functioning example of war-communism, not unlike what was reported from the "good" zones in the DK period.⁶ But Phnom Malai was not self-sufficient. The uniforms and guns came from China, and the food from markets in Thailand.

In this period, the Khmer Rouge rebuilt their military, now titled the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK). By the middle 1980s, it was about 35 to 50 thousand strong. They also rebuilt their ruling party. The Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), the ruling party of the DK regime was officially disbanded. Khmer Rouge officials began referring to the ruling entity in their zones as the Party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK). In 1981 the PDK officially renounced communism. After giving a couple of interviews in 1980, Pol Pot disappeared from public view. In 1985, his "retirement" was announced.

This was mainly a facade. Pol Pot remained the supreme leader. The PDK's leadership consisted of himself and his closest allies in the murderous power struggles inside the CPK in 1975-78: his brother-in-law Ieng Sary, Nuon Chea, Ta Mok, Son Sen and Khieu Samphan. The renunciation of communism meant

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little in practice. CPK propaganda had always relied on nationalist rather than revolutionary appeals. Communist parties have a long tradition of secretiveness, but the CPK carried this to unprecedented levels.⁷ In the 1980s, as a “party of resistance” rather than government, the PDK proved to be even more secretive than the CPK.

Nor did the Khmer Rouge leaders ever come to terms with the catastrophe over which they had presided in 1975-78. In public, they preferred to avoid any reference to this period. Like Stalin in the 1930s, Pol Pot blamed everything that had gone wrong on treachery. Chandler quotes a Khmer Rouge cadre who gave this account of a talk by Pol Pot at Phnom Malai in 1981:

[Pol Pot] said that he knows that many people in the country hate him and think he’s responsible for the killings. He said that he knows many people died. When he said this he nearly broke down and cried. He said he must accept responsibility because the line was too far to the left, and because he didn’t keep proper track of what was going on. He said he was like the master in a house he didn’t know what the kids were up to, and that he trusted people too much. For example, he allowed [one person] to take care of central committee business for him, [another person] to take care of intellectuals, and [a third person] to take care of political education.... These were the people to whom he felt very close, and he trusted them completely. Then in the end ... they made a mess of everything.... They would tell him things that were not true, that everything was fine, that this person or that was a traitor. In the end they were the real traitors. The major problem had been cadres formed by the Vietnamese.⁸

Now Pol Pot was getting ready to fight his way back to power, and accusing all those who opposed him of being traitors and “puppets” of the Vietnamese. China, the US and ASEAN forced Cambodia’s non-Communist groups to join with the Khmer Rouge in a government-in-exile created in 1981, the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK).⁹ With this in place, foreign aid flowed to the Cambodian resistance groups. Lee Kuan Yew has recently stated that China, the US, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand provided US\$1.3 billion in assistance to the CGDK over the course of the 1980s.¹⁰ In return, these groups were expected to wage war against the Vietnamese and their allies in Phnom Penh.

The New War

Once the CGDK had been formed, its forces slowly stepped up their attacks inside Cambodia. Khmer Rouge propaganda constantly claimed devastating CGDK triumphs, usually denied by the PRK authorities. Independent observers lacked much access to provincial Cambodia, so the truth of the matter was hard to judge. But there does seem to have been a substantial decline in security from 1983 to 1985. In the 1984 dry-season, Khmer Rouge commandos raided the provincial city of Siem Reap, a development that alarmed the Vietnamese leadership enough to dispatch a fact-finding mission to Cambodia and to rethink their strategy.

After 1979, Vietnamese diplomatic strategy had aimed at a diplomatic settlement in which they would withdraw in return for a political settlement excluding the Khmer Rouge from power. The CGDK, ASEAN, China and the US all insisted that this was unacceptable. Vietnam could not be permitted to benefit from its invasion. It would have to accept the restoration of Cambodia's "legitimate" government, meaning the DK regime, or its successor, the CGDK. In 1985, the Vietnamese announced that they would complete their withdrawal from Cambodia by the end of 1990 even without a diplomatic settlement.

Of course the Vietnamese had no intention of allowing the Khmer Rouge to return to power. General Le Duc Ahn, commander of the Vietnamese forces in Cambodia, stressed that the Vietnamese strategy was to strengthen the PRK. Its success would be measured not by anything the Vietnamese did, but by what their Cambodian "friends" did. The strategy Anh set forth involved an active role for the Vietnamese before their withdrawal.¹¹ The first prong of the strategy was to militarily weaken the CGDK groups, above all the Khmer Rouge. Vietnamese troops launched a full-scale offensive in the 1985 dry season, destroying every CGDK camp on the Cambodian side of the border. Tens of thousands of people escaped into Thailand, including the Khmer Rouge and their followers. In a follow-up campaign in 1987 the Vietnamese destroyed a major Khmer Rouge military complex straddling the border at Chong Bok, near the junction of the Thai Cambodian and Lao borders.

The second prong of the Vietnamese strategy was to build up the PRK's administrative and military capacity. This enabled them to shift responsibility for defence and security matters to the PRK. The PRK army built up its numbers through conscription (often amounting to press-ganging), dispatched officers to Vietnam and the Soviet Union for training, and progressively

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replaced Vietnamese forces as they were withdrawn from Cambodia. The PRK also promoted the creation of village militias, as a local front line of defence. The growth of the military (and administrative, and patronage) capabilities of the PRK in the 1980s was greatly under-estimated by most western observers at the time, who therefore under-rated its capacity to survive after the Vietnamese departure.

Once the CGDK forces had been pushed into Thailand, the PRK attempted to prevent re-infiltration by creating a “bamboo curtain” by clearing forest and planting land mines. Under what was known as the K-5 plan, this was done through the use of conscripted labour, which was compelled to work in primitive and dangerous conditions. Like conscription for the army, this was understandably unpopular. CGDK propaganda exploited this, depicting it as proof of Vietnamese villainy rather than a consequence of their determination to withdraw from Cambodia.¹²

After 1985, the camp system in Thailand was reorganised to accommodate the people displaced by the 1995 fighting. Each resistance faction had its own large camp. The Khmer Rouge one was Site 8, which housed 30,000 people at the foot of a rugged mountain to the south of Aranyapratet, in Thailand’s Prachinburi province. They also had four smaller camps at Huay Chan, Bo Rai, Na Trao and Ta Luan, with a total population of about 40,000 people, to which all outsiders were denied access. In contrast to the non-Communist leaders, who spent much of their time in Bangkok, Paris or elsewhere, the Khmer Rouge leaders lived in the border camps or in Cambodia itself. Pol Pot spent most of this period at the Bo Rai camp. However he was a frequent visitor to Bangkok and Beijing, for medical as well as political reasons. His health was beginning to fail.¹³

As the Vietnamese withdrew, the Khmer Rouge rebuilt their old bases along the southwestern and northern borders of Cambodia. The remote township of Anlong Veng, at the foot of the Dangrek mountains, became the main Khmer Rouge “capital.” The non-Communist resistance groups also carved out modest “liberated zones” of their own, principally in the far northwest. The PRK and Vietnamese forces, their “bamboo curtain” notwithstanding, were unable to prevent this. From these areas, the guerrillas were able to carry out continuing hit-and-run raids into the interior.

Despite these successes, the CGDK groups were unable to establish a stable presence in the interior. “I don’t trust anybody in Cambodia,” one guerilla told a reporter. “Most villages we come across are inclined towards the Heng Samrin regime [PRK]. In each village there is at least one Heng Samrin agent.... We never stay long in villages, and we never enter them at night. It’s too dangerous.”¹⁴ To try and establish control over areas in the interior would have provided a fixed target in areas where the PRK military could bring its advantages to bear. The Khmer Rouge and their allies therefore continued to operate from the periphery, to depend on outside supplies of food and weaponry, and on military manpower recruited from their border-camp base-area population. However as the intensity of the conflict rose, so did the rate of attrition. By 1989, according to Nate Thayer, an American journalist with strong Khmer Rouge contacts, the “vast majority” (perhaps 80 percent) of their soldiers had been recruited since 1979. The Khmer Rouge thus could not match the numerical expansion of the military undertaken by the PRK in the mid-1980s. By 1989 the PRK’s military, including village militia, numbered at least 150,000, while the NADK army remained around 35,000 strong. Even so, the NADK wielded considerably more clout than either the KPNLF or FUNCINPEC, which had only a few thousand troops each.

Negotiations to settle the conflict began seriously in 1987. The Cold War was coming to an end, Sino-Soviet and Sino-Vietnamese relations were improving rapidly, and the CGDK was losing its geo-strategic significance. Realizing this, Prince Sihanouk opened talks with PRK Prime Minister Hun Sen in 1987. The PDK rightly feared that the outcome of such negotiations would be that FUNCINPEC and the KPNLF would abandon the CGDK for a coalition with Phnom Penh. The Vietnamese announced that they would complete the withdrawal of their troops in 1989, a year ahead of the original deadline they had set themselves. In May 1989 it appeared that Sihanouk was prepared to reach a compromise settlement with Hun Sen. (As part of the deal, the PRK changed its name to the State of Cambodia [SOC], and the ruling party changed its name from the People’s Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea [PRPK] to the Cambodian People’s Party [CPP]). Such a settlement was of course strongly opposed by the PDK. Its intransigence was backed by China and the US, who thought Sihanouk had given too much to Hun Sen’s side. This resulted in the failure of the Paris Peace Conference in 1989.¹⁵

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Following the Vietnamese withdrawal the NADK launched major attacks. It seized the town of Pailin in western Battambang province. It created new bases, and it carried out hit-and-run raids in SOC-controlled provinces. These spread insecurity and fear through much of western Cambodia, and as far east as Kompong Thom province in the north and Kompong Speu and Kampot provinces in the south. The KPNLF and FUNCINPEC also went on the offensive, seizing much of the area to the west of the Sisaphon-Thmar Puok-Samrong road in northern Battambang province. Then their offensives petered out. The resistance groups had demonstrated their presence on Cambodian soil, and established control over whole districts in the west. By 1990, the Khmer Rouge had two significant towns - Anlong Veng and Pailin - under their control.

The CGDK groups had little success expanding control into the interior. This would have exposed them as reasonably fixed and accessible targets to effective SOC counter-attacks. In fact, they seem to have made little effort to do this and stuck largely to hit-and-run tactics. Thus, when this round of fighting began to die down, the vast bulk of the Cambodian population remained under SOC control. Continuing raids and clashes over the next couple of years took a considerable (but uncounted) toll of lives on both sides. However it did little to alter the political-military map of Cambodia, contrary to the claims of some CGDK sympathisers.¹⁶

With the end of the Cold War and the Vietnamese withdrawal, the great powers lost interest in the Cambodian conflict. The Soviets declared they would end their aid to the SOC in 1991. The US, concerned by the poor military performance of the non-communist groups, recast its policy in mid-1990.¹⁷ It began to look to elections as a way for the non-communists to win government. The Chinese grew increasingly impatient with the intransigence of the Khmer Rouge, at the same time as their relations with Hanoi became more friendly and their view of Phnom Penh relaxed noticeably.

The PDK was demanding inclusion in government before any elections. The Chinese continued to insist on the inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in any peace settlement, but early in 1991 they conceded that any role for the PDK in national government must depend on the outcome of national elections. This opened the way to the signing of a peace agreement between the Cambodian groups in Paris in October 1991.¹⁸

Opting Out of the Peace Process

The Paris Peace Agreement provided for the creation of a UN body to oversee the country through a cease-fire and the creation of a new government through nation-wide elections. Both the SOC and the CGDK set aside their claims to legitimate rule, and the PDK had the right to run candidates for office like any other party. A Supreme National Council (SNC) was established with representatives of the main four parties. It was a symbolic repository of national sovereignty, and exercised no real power. Each of the parties administered their own zones under the overall supervision of a special body, the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). This left the SOC in control of at least 80 percent of the country, and UNTAC's ability to carry out even a semblance of its mission depended on SOC cooperation. When it came to the crunch, as the Khmer Rouge would duly discover, the others were ultimately dispensable.

All groups resented the intrusive role of UNTAC, complied reluctantly, and guarded their sovereignty where they could.¹⁹ But it was the refusal of the PDK to accept the cantonment and demobilisation of its army that plunged UNTAC into crisis. There is some dispute as to why it did this. Steve Heder argued that the PDK went into the UNTAC period fully intending to comply with the Paris Agreement. They opted out when it became clear that UNTAC was not dismantling the SOC administration as expected. Ben Kiernan argued that the PDK leaders never intended to comply with the agreements.²⁰

The latter view was closer to the truth. It was based on the actions and statements of the PDK leadership. From the beginning they refused to allow UNTAC access to their zones, even when they were promising to cooperate. The PDK leaders reneged on this promise when faced with the deadline for cantonment of the NADK. This forced them into finally choosing between electoral and military politics, and they chose the latter. The PDK leaders had good reasons for making this choice. It enabled them to preserve their main political assets, the NADK and absolute control of the people in their zones, in exchange for giving up whatever share of national power they could hope to win through nation-wide elections. They decided that they had little chance of making substantial gains through elections. On the other hand, Heder's claims were not without foundation. His sources were rank-and-file Khmer Rouge who defected to the SOC ("self-demobilised" was the UNTAC jargon) in the wake of this decision. What his evidence showed was that the PDK leadership,

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as usual, justified their own decisions by blaming the treachery of others. But the Paris Agreement had never provided for the dismantling of the SOC administration, merely its supervision and control. UNTAC did this very imperfectly, of course. But it certainly exercised far greater control over the SOC than it did over the Khmer Rouge.

However a rift was emerging within the Khmer Rouge. By this time, many of the rank-and-file Khmer Rouge were younger people, with no involvement in the events of 1975-1979.²¹ By the 1990s, they were increasingly weary of the war, of which they bore the main brunt. But the PDK leaders were older, insulated from the day-to-day human cost of the conflict, and deeply implicated in the events of 1975-1979. Many lower-ranking Khmer Rouge therefore welcomed the peace-process as a way for them to enter the mainstream of Cambodian life, while the top-level leaders feared that this would leave them exposed to retribution for past actions.

The decision to quit the peace-process was a big disappointment for many of the rank-and-file Khmer Rouge. In addition, it led to the first split in the PDK leadership since 1979. In 1993, Son Sen and Ieng Sary were removed from leadership positions because they had favoured cooperating with UNTAC. From this point the PDK was led by the troika of Pol Pot, Ta Mok and Khieu Samphan.²² This leadership pursued a strategy of refusing to accept the constraints UNTAC would impose on the Khmer Rouge and taking military and political advantage of whatever constraints it managed to impose on the SOC.

In the short term, the new hard-line strategy yielded significant gains. In central Cambodia, NADK troops moved forward to “dismantle” SOC village administrations (i.e., to replace them with an administration answering to the CGDK groups). The SOC abandoned cantonment and demobilisation and began to strike back. To prevent a full resumption of military hostilities and the collapse of the whole process, UNTAC pressed SOC to limit its response. The upshot was that NADK guerrillas infiltrated more widely into the SOC zones than ever before, especially in Kompong Cham province in central Cambodia. They also carried out massacres of Vietnamese civilians, mostly defenceless fisher folk, in Kompong Chhnang province. Around 200 people were murdered, and thousands fled. Thus, in a cruel irony, UNTAC, which sought to build respect for human rights in Cambodia found itself presiding over the worst atrocities and the largest exodus of refugees from Cambodia since 1979-80. The PDK leaders publicly applauded these crimes and called for more.²³

In the longer term, the decision to opt out of the peace process meant that the Khmer Rouge would face international isolation. As the head of UNTAC, Yasushi Akashi, warned them at the time:

The party of the DK risks stripping itself of the legitimacy it gained by signing those agreements and has taken a dangerous step towards outlaw status. Let us be clear about what this means: nothing less than internal and international isolation. The world will not forgive the party of DK for disrupting the Cambodian elections. There should be no more sanctuaries for that party, and no more chances... [That party] still has the choice of allowing the elections to proceed without further attacks and making such accommodations as it can with the new government.²⁴

The elections went ahead successfully in May 1993. UNTAC observers were surprised to find that Khmer Rouge cadres organised people in their zones to go in by the truckload to vote. They were presumably instructed to vote for FUNCINPEC and other opponents of the CPP. After several months of disputes and manoeuvring in Phnom Penh, the outcome of the elections was the formation of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). It was built mainly around cooperation between FUNCINPEC, now led by Prince Rannaridh, and the CPP, led by Hun Sen. Son Sann's Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party (BLDP), the main descendant of the KPNLF, was given a minor role in government. Sihanouk was consecrated as a constitutional monarch with no effective power. The main non-communist components of the CGDK were now allied with their old enemy the CPP, leaving the PDK politically isolated.²⁵

The PDK's response was to attempt to bargain itself a share of government, despite its refusal to participate in the elections. Khieu Samphan opened peace negotiations with Prince Rannaridh. Rannaridh believed that only royalty had the power to unify all Cambodians. Having achieved government through agreement with Hun Sen, he now hoped to end to the fighting through a settlement with the Khmer Rouge. But he found Khieu Samphan's demands for important positions in the government for the PDK unacceptable. When these negotiations broke down, the PDK leaders denounced Rannaridh as a "liar prince" and a traitor for joining Hun Sen in a "two headed government," and declared he had "sold himself out to the alliance [a term they used for the US, Australia and France, all supposedly colluding with Hanoi], the Communist Vietnamese and Vietnamese puppets in exchange for United States dollars, gold, luxurious cars, and private aeroplanes."²⁶

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Armed hostilities had already resumed in late 1993. The RGC outlawed the Khmer Rouge in mid-1994, a move supported by both Prince Rannaridh and Hun Sen. The PDK responded by proclaiming a new government, the Provisional Government of National Union and National Salvation (PGNUNS). But without the participation of any other Cambodian political group or personality, this was a far flimsier front for the Khmer Rouge than the CGDK had been. Furthermore, the Cold War was over; the PGNUNS received no international recognition or support. It was ignored by the Chinese, who began cultivating relations with Phnom Penh. Following the formation of the RGC, the Chinese declared they were “willing to work with the Cambodian government to develop various fields on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence.”²⁷ They subsequently agreed to provide not only economic but also military aid to the RGC.

Khmer Rouge ideology stressed self-reliance, but they had accepted international assistance throughout the 1980s, as had other Cambodian groups. In this period, they had appeared much more moderate than when they had been in power. They had made considerable gains, especially in the UNTAC period. By 1994 they were operating over a larger geographical area than ever before. The FUNCINPEC-CPP coalition government in Phnom Penh - dismissed as a “two-headed government,” an obvious freak, in Khmer Rouge propaganda - was factionalised, fragile and vulnerable. But the Khmer Rouge still had no substantial population base, and they had lost the international support that had sustained them through their second life in the 1980s. Now, under pressure, the PDK leaders abandoned the moderation characteristic of that period.

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In some ways, the end of international support appeared to make it easier for the PDK leadership to sustain their war-communist political economy. This had always been based on a closed society ruled through centralized political and military control. On the border, this had been inevitably eroded by contacts with outsiders, which widened the intellectual horizons of younger cadres. Returning to “self-reliance” would protect the Khmer Rouge movement from such contaminating contacts by isolating it in the forest. As they had never honestly analysed what went wrong in the 1975-79 period, it is doubtful if the PDK leaders understood what a heavy price they would pay for this. They could

no longer offer the modest levels of security, food, shelter and clothing they had provided in their camps on the border. At the same time, they were demanding a renewed military effort, for what appeared to their rank-and-file followers to be no good reason. One PDK leader reportedly told the party faithful they would “wage war until the end of time if necessary.” Faced with this prospect, the morale of even the most loyal began to crumble. The small stream of defectors flowing to the Phnom Penh side through the 1980s began to swell.

The new ruling troika at Anlong Veng dealt with this by launching a purge of those who had allegedly become “corrupted” in the preceding period of relative liberalism. After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge, residents of Anlong Veng told a visiting reporter of the first regular “Killing Field” since the fall of the DK regime, in a heavily mined forest some six kilometres out of the town. The site has not been excavated, but Youk Chhang, director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, believes that 3,000 people were killed there from 1993 to 1997. The executions were said to have been carried out by officers under Ta Mok’s command.²⁸

The new line also had major repercussions for Khmer Rouge commanders elsewhere. They were now ordered to be self-reliant rather than drawing on the patronage of the central authorities. They did this with varying degrees of success. There was a boom in logging in the Khmer Rouge zones. The Khmer Rouge controlling the Pailin area, under the control of Pol Pot’s brother-in-law Ieng Sary, invited Thai companies in to strip-mine for gemstones. The PDK party centre had invested substantial amounts of the money it had received in the 1980s in real estate and other ventures in Thailand’s booming economy. Overall it is believed that this diverse portfolio was yielding the Khmer Rouge an annual income of as much as \$100 million. For other commanders, however, the pickings were slimmer. They could do little beyond raiding poor villages and extorting money from travellers. For the Khmer Rouge based at Phnom Vour in Kampot province, kidnapping travellers for ransom became for a time a lucrative source of revenue. Some of these erstwhile Maoist revolutionaries were being transformed into comprador capitalists and others into common bandits. In both cases they found their ties with the PDK centre were becoming more a liability than an asset. Under these circumstances, the chain of command through which the PDK leadership controlled its zones began to disintegrate.

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So did the ideological ties binding the movement together. The gap between Khmer Rouge propaganda and reality, never small, now became enormous. The PDK leadership relied on anti-Vietnamese nationalism to motivate their fighters. But the Vietnamese had been gone for years. The reality facing NADK troops was that of conscripted Cambodians on one side fighting conscripted Cambodians on the other, increasingly with no idea of what it was all about. The PDK leaders preached austerity, but some grew conspicuously rich themselves.

Thus, as Pol Pot intended, the war resumed; but the outcome was not what he wanted. In early 1994, the RGC launched offensives to capture both Anlong Veng and Pailin. Its soldiers were successful, and they systematically looted and trashed the mills and mines that were generating income for the Khmer Rouge. But the RGC was unable to adequately provision its troops in these outlying places. The NADK soon recaptured their towns, and then launched new offensives against the government forces. Ieng Sary's troops made a major effort to capture Battambang city. They fought their way to within a few kilometres of the city, but were unable either to take it or to consolidate their grip on the territory they had occupied. Further north in Battambang province, Khmer Rouge forces attacked and terrorized villages indiscriminately, generating a war-displaced population of over 60,000 in a few months.

Ever since it had been formed, the RGC had been divided over how to deal with the Khmer Rouge. Rannaridh still favoured a conciliatory approach, offering an amnesty to Khmer Rouge who defected to the government side. Hun Sen believed military pressure was the only approach that would yield results. A divided government pursued both approaches simultaneously. Probably more by accident than design, it got the mix about right. The cost of military action in 1994-95 was high for both sides, but it created the pressures that led to a stream of defections from the Khmer Rouge. Over the next couple of years the number of defectors snowballed. The most important was Sar Kim Lamouth, who controlled their bank accounts in Bangkok.²⁹

The PDK centre at Anlong Veng stepped up its efforts to reassert control over Pailin. When Ieng Sary refused to accept this, Pol Pot's radio declared that he had "sold himself to the alliance [France, Australia, the US] and the Vietnamese communist aggressors." The broadcast added that Ieng Sary should be "severely punished because he has sneakily posed as a resistance fighter, whereas he is, in reality, a traitor to the entire nation."³⁰ Pol Pot dispatched

troops to deal with Ieng Sary's treason, but the latter successfully rallied the timber-trading military commanders in the southwest to his side. Pol Pot's military expedition collapsed, his soldiers defecting to Ieng Sary's side. The attempt to restore the authority of the PDK centre failed. This must have been an alarming development, for a dictatorship that can be defied with impunity is running out of time.

This attack prompted Ieng Sary to open negotiations with Phnom Penh. He agreed to bring the largest part of the Khmer Rouge's armed forces and much of their remaining wealth, over to the government. In return, he demanded a royal pardon and continued control (through his son, Ieng Vuth, officially deputy governor) of the Pailin region. Hun Sen agreed to the deal. At a press conference on 9 September 1996, Ieng Sary committed himself to the RGC side. He declared that he had been in disagreement with Pol Pot since "the very day the party was formed" in 1960. While Pol Pot "could not tolerate any views other than his own," Ieng Sary recalled his own consistent "love for democracy" through all these years, and claimed he "had always advocated a moderate line." When he was Deputy Prime Minister in the DK regime he had been powerless; it was Pol Pot and others, such as Nuon Chea and Son Sen who had been responsible for "arresting, incarcerating, torturing or killing anyone who expressed opposing views, or destroying anyone [they] disliked, such as the intellectuals."³¹ Ieng Sary's defection left the surviving rump of the Khmer Rouge at Anlong Veng desperately isolated. Further defections followed, including, in December 1996, a son of Ta Mok and two of Son Sen's brothers.

At this point, the PDK centre was thrown a lifeline by Prince Rannaridh. Ironically, this proved their undoing. Rannaridh's action was a response to the weakening of his position within the RGC. Since 1993 he had been consistently outmanoeuvred by Hun Sen and the CPP. Splits occurred in FUNCINPEC, with important leaders aligning themselves with Hun Sen. Rannaridh increasingly turned to advisers who had served as military commanders on the Thai border in the 1980s. They were bitter enemies of the CPP and had, to varying degrees, worked with the Khmer Rouge on the border. They urged Rannaridh to split with the CPP, to form an alliance with the Khmer Rouge, and to rally all anti-CPP forces to its banner. In effect, they called for him to dismantle the governing coalition created in 1993, and to recreate the CGDK. Rannaridh accepted this advice and sent negotiators to Anlong Veng. For many in the beleaguered PDK, this represented an opportunity they could not afford to

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miss. But while Rannaridh was prepared to bring Khieu Samphan back into the political mainstream, he was not prepared to do so for Pol Pot.

This opened new schisms in the PDK leadership, and a gruesome political quadrille unfolded at Anlong Veng. Fearing betrayal, Pol Pot in June 1997 launched a new purge of the PDK centre. His troops arrested Khieu Samphan and murdered Son Sen and his wife and family. They also attempted to murder Ta Mok. But they failed in this mission, and Pol Pot himself had to flee to the jungle. He was pursued and taken prisoner by Mok's men, who then organised a humiliating "people's trial" (reported and filmed by Nate Thayer) on 25 July 1997. Mok had the crowd denounce the boss he had served loyally for decades as a murderer and tyrant, and had him sentenced to house arrest for life. One may think this a rather mild penalty, given the crimes involved. But Pol Pot would soon be overtaken by a much grimmer destiny.

On 4 July, in the immediate aftermath of the showdown with Pol Pot, Mok had agreed to an alliance with Rannaridh. When this news broke in Phnom Penh, tensions between troops loyal to Hun Sen and those loyal to Rannaridh erupted into full-scale fighting. Hun Sen's troops struck hard at what they saw as pro-Khmer Rouge sections of FUNCINPEC. More than 100 people were killed in the fighting, and at least 41 royalist officers were executed. The details need not detain us here, beyond noting that this involved not just a struggle between Rannaridh and Hun Sen: it was also the final showdown between the border warlords and their Phnom Penh rivals, the bloody climax of a struggle that began in 1980.³²

In the aftermath of the 1997 crisis, the Khmer Rouge military commanders at Anlong Veng rebelled against Ta Mok. Along with the surviving PDK leaders, including Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, they followed Ieng Sary's example and negotiated a surrender in exchange for an amnesty. These events compelled Ta Mok to flee to the jungle, taking Pol Pot with him as his prisoner. Only a couple hundred loyalists followed them. On 15 April 1998 Pol Pot died in Ta Mok's captivity. Mok declared the death was from natural causes, but others suspected suicide or murder.³³ Ta Mok continued to evade government forces for months, but was finally captured on 6 March 1999. The Khmer Rouge movement was finished. There would be no rebirth this time.

Autopsy

The Khmer Rouge movement died not just once, but twice. They had been decisively defeated in 1979. After its first death in 1979, the movement was revived with international support. Through their own unaided efforts, the Khmer Rouge leaders probably could have continued a guerilla war against the new Phnom Penh government for a few years. But it would have been subject to pressures similar to those experienced by the Khmer Rouge after 1993, and the outcome would most likely have been similar - but it would have occurred much earlier.

In the 1980s the Khmer Rouge presented themselves as champions of Cambodian nationalism against the Vietnamese. The importance of peasant nationalism in the rise of Asian Communism is well understood. It certainly played a role in rise of the Khmer Rouge movement in the 1970s, but this experience was not repeated in the 1980s. In China, Vietnam and Korea in the 1940s the sudden collapse of Japan also played a crucial role, suddenly creating a political vacuum which the Communists rushed to fill. By contrast, the Vietnamese in Cambodia oversaw a return to some kind of normality after the DK period. And, far from behaving like colonialists - as the PDK and other anti-Vietnamese groups claimed - the Vietnamese always insisted on their intention to withdraw. When they could not achieve this through a negotiated settlement, they did so unilaterally. The political vacuum here was created by the collapse of the DK regime, and was filled by the PRK. The Vietnamese did not withdraw until they thought the PRK had developed the capacity to defend itself, and their withdrawal undercut Khmer Rouge claims that their war was the only way to free Cambodia from Vietnamese domination.

The rebirth of the Khmer Rouge was primarily a consequence of Cold War politics, the confluence of Chinese and US hostility to a Soviet-backed Vietnam. For at least some American officials, a desire to avenge their own humiliation in Vietnam was also important. They relished the idea of turning Cambodia into "Vietnam's Vietnam," with little concern for what this would mean for Cambodians. Traditional regional rivalries, notably Thailand's fear of Vietnamese domination of the Lao-Khmer borderlands between the two countries, also played a key role.

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The context of this rebirth was one in which hundreds of thousands of people had fled fighting and food shortages inside Cambodia in 1979-80 and taken refuge on the Thai-Cambodian border. This was a genuine humanitarian crisis, and there is no doubt that international assistance was justified. It undoubtedly saved many lives. But this situation was exploited for political and military ends. International support flowing for humanitarian purposes maintained a reservoir of manpower on which the Khmer Rouge and their non-communist allies drew for their military effort. It thus contributed substantially to the new war in the 1980s. Such a pattern has been repeated in other conflicts, especially in Central America and Africa, and most notably in the Rwanda-Congo border region in the middle 1990s.³⁴ This raises very difficult questions for NGOs and other international agencies seeking to provide emergency humanitarian assistance in zones of conflict.

Life on the border after 1978 significantly influenced the Khmer Rouge. For some time, international assistance enabled the PDK leadership to rule through relatively benign patronage, rather than the terroristic dictatorship characteristic of the DK regime. However the underlying Maoist-Stalinist outlook of the leadership remained unchanged. When the shifting tides of world politics deprived the Khmer Rouge of international support, the violent thread of this outlook re-emerged. It was central to the self-destruction of the PDK leadership after 1993, just as it was central to the self-destruction of the DK regime in 1975-1978.

There appears to have been no effective resistance to the PDK leadership in their own zones in the 1980s. No doubt any overt signs of this were quickly dealt with by the Khmer Rouge security apparatus. The principal consequence of disaffection was desertion. This swelled as the PDK leaders forced their followers into renewed isolation and war after 1993. The attempts by the PDK leaders to stem this process through purges and armed attacks only accelerated the process, and culminated in the second death of the Khmer Rouge movement. Pol Pot died a humiliated captive of his own deputy, himself a hunted man. By this point, almost the entire movement - its rank-and-file, its cadres, and those of the leadership that had survived - had joined his enemies. And many of those enemies were, of course, followers who had fled the blood-purges of Pol Pot's DK regime.³⁵

Only those with senior positions in the PDK leadership, people with personal command of sufficient force - Ieng Sary, Ta Mok - engaged in any form of resistance after 1978, and this was when they personally came under attack from Pol Pot. This is, of course, reminiscent of the final death throes of the DK regime. But in this case, it came so late, and on such a restricted stage, that it is better viewed as the final implosion of the Khmer Rouge leadership rather than a rebellion or resistance to it.

Khmer Rouge attempts to expand their control into the interior of Cambodia was checked by armed resistance. This was not a spontaneous people's resistance. Most villages tended to flee rather than to fight. This may have changed as a result of the formation of village militia, but this has not been investigated. The main brunt of checking Khmer Rouge efforts to advance was borne by the Vietnamese and PRK military. As Vietnam withdrew, the PRK government built up its military capacity. As it became more exclusively dependent on local resources, it became more exploitative and violent, and lost popular support. But the PDK was unable to take advantage of this. The PRK/SOC was now well entrenched, and Vietnam's withdrawal undercut the nationalist appeal of Khmer Rouge propaganda and set the stage for an international settlement.

All the Cambodian groups had to adjust to the scaling back of external support, but the PDK found this the most difficult. Its leaders were unable to come to terms, however roughly (and their rivals were rough), with the ideas of compromise, shared power and national integration that lay at the heart of this settlement. This was not just a matter of ideology. Exhausted by years of war, most of the low-ranking Khmer Rouge could accept such ideas. Their leaders could not. Their murderous past meant that they could be secure only where they had absolute power. Increasingly desperate efforts to maintain this led the Khmer Rouge leaders to further alienate themselves from an already shrinking constituency, and then to tear themselves apart in a last, bloody feud. Pol Pot personally initiated this, and was its ultimate victim.

International support gave the Khmer Rouge a second life. But its leaders could not escape the consequences of what they had done in their first life, and once their usefulness to the great powers had expended itself, their movement died its second death. As one Khmer Rouge cadre put it to Nate Thayer: "Because Pol Pot had his problems with national society and international society, he continually led the movement into darkness, into a black hole from which there was no way out."³⁶

Endnotes

¹ The most authoritative accounts are those of Ben Kiernan: see *How Pol Pot Came to Power: A History of Cambodian Communism 1930-75*, London, Verso, 1986, and *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1996. See also David P. Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History: Politics, War and Revolution since 1945*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1991. For more conceptual treatments, see Rosemary H.T. O’Kane, ‘Cambodia in the Zero Years: Rudimentary Totalitarianism,’ *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.14 No.4 (1993), pp.735-48; Kate Frieson, ‘The Political Nature of Democratic Kampuchea,’ *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.61 No.3 (Fall 1998), pp.405-27.

² I have discussed the events of 1979-90 in Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War: Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos*, 2nd ed, London, Verso, 1990, Chs.6 and 8. The most recent discussion of the origins of Vietnam’s war with the Khmer Rouge regime is Stephen J. Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia: Political Culture and the Causes of War*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999.

³ For a recent study of Thai policy at this time, see Puangthong Rungswasdisab, *Thailand’s Response to the Cambodian Genocide*, New Haven, Cambodian Genocide Program, Yale Centre for International and Area Studies, Yale University, Working Paper GS 12, 1999’s chapter in this volume. In 2000, The leader of a recent Thai Senatorial delegation to Phnom Penh, Kraisak Choonhaven (son of former Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhaven) has said that Thailand should apologize to Cambodia for its policies in the 1970s and 1980s (Tom Fawthrop, *Phnom Penh Post*, 16-29 March 2000).

⁴ Cf. Linda Mason And Roger Brown, *Rice, Rivalry and Politics: Managing Cambodian Relief*, Notre Dame and London, University of Notre Dame, 1983, Ch.4.

⁵ Quoted in Evans and Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War*, p.199.

⁶ For a discussion of “good” and “bad” regions in the DK period, see Michael Vickery, *Cambodia 1975-1982*, Boston, South End Press, 1984, Ch.3.

⁷ Serge Thion has written: “ ... the most striking feature of the idea of revolution entertained by the Khmer communists was that it was unexpressed.... [Revolution] and the existence of a revolutionary party were not only played down in its propaganda, they were completely hidden truths, revealed only to the enlightened few who could achieve senior positions in the apparatus.” (‘The Cambodian Idea of Revolution,’ in his *Watching Cambodia: Ten Paths to Enter the Cambodian Tangle*, Bangkok, White Lotus, 1993, p.87.)

⁸ Quoted in David P Chandler, *Brother Number One: A Political Biography of Pol Pot*, rev ed, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 2000, p.163.

⁹ One person who played a significant role in this was J. Stapleton Roy, then Charge d’Affaires in the US Embassy in Beijing., By 2000 he had become one of the top-ranking figures in the State Department. He resigned in December of that year, following a dispute with Madeline Albright. A couple of days later he became Managing Director of Henry Kissinger and Associates (Steve Mufson, *Washington Post*, 7 December 2000).

¹⁰ Michael Richardson, *International Herald Tribune*, 29 September 2000.

¹¹ Le Duc Anh’s article was widely misrepresented in the western press at the time as simply an assertion of Vietnamese intransigence. For a discussion, cf. Evans and Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War*, pp.214-15. Le Duc Anh later became the President of Vietnam (1992-97).

¹² For details, see Margaret Slocomb, ‘The K5 Gamble: National Defence and Nation-Building Under the People’s Republic of Kampuchea,’ *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol.32 (2001), pp.195-210.

¹³ Josephine Reynell, *Political Pawns: Refugees on the Thai-Kampuchean Border*, Oxford, Refugee Studies Program, 1989, is the best study of this period. On Pol Pot at this time, cf. Chandler, *Brother Number One*, pp.162-70.

¹⁴ Quoted by Francis Deron, *Australian*, 1 August 1985.

¹⁵ Cf. Michael Haas, ‘The Paris Conference on Cambodia, 1989,’ *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol 23 No 2 (April-June 1991), pp.42-53.

¹⁶ Nate Thayer claimed that while CGDK forces had “controlled no territory of significance in the country” in September 1989, but by 1991 they had made “unprecedented gains” and “seized thousands of villages” by 1991,” and

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controlled “much of the country to the north and the west.” The Khmer Rouge appeared “to enjoy growing support based on their conduct and programs.” (‘Cambodia: Misperceptions and Peace,’ *Washington Quarterly*, Vol.24 (1991), pp.179, 181). While the Khmer Rouge made gains in this period the number of villages they controlled numbered in the dozens rather than the thousands.

¹⁷ Christopher Brady, *United States Foreign Policy Towards Cambodia, 1977-92: A Question of Realities*, London, Macmillan, 1999, pp.52-59.

¹⁸ For an overview of the peace-process, cf. Ken Berry, *Cambodia: From Red to Blue*, St Leonards, Allen & Unwin, 1997.

¹⁹ For useful overviews, see MacAlister Brown and Joseph J. Zazloff, *Cambodia Confounds the Peacemakers 1979-1998*, Ithaca and London, 1998; Sorpong Peou, *Intervention and Change in Cambodia: Towards Democracy?*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000; and David W. Roberts, *Political Transition in Cambodia: Power, Elitism and Democracy*, Richmond, Curzon, 2001.

²⁰ Steven Heder, ‘The Resumption of Armed Struggle by the Party of Democratic Kampuchea: Evidence from National Army of Democratic Kampuchea “Self-Demobilizers,”’ in Steven Heder and Judy Ledgerwood (eds), *Propaganda, Politics, and Violence in Cambodia: Democratic Transition under United Nations Peace-keeping*, Armonk, M.E. Sharpe, 1996, pp.73-113; Ben Kiernan, ‘The Inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in the Cambodian Peace Process: Causes and Consequences,’ in Ben Kiernan (ed), *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia*, New Haven, Yale University Southeast Asian Studies Monograph Series No.41, 1993, p.233.

²¹ For a sceptical account of the Khmer Rouge at this time by a close observer, cf. Christophe Peschoux, *Les “Nouveaux” Khmer Rouge 1979-90*, Paris, l’Harmattan, 1992.

²² *Kyoto News Service* (Tokyo), 12 May 1993; Nate Thayer, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 February 1994.

²³ Cf. Jay Jordans, ‘Persecution of Cambodia’s Ethnic Vietnamese Communities During and Since the UNTAC Period,’ in Steven Heder and Judy Ledgerwood

(eds) Propaganda, Politics, and Violence in Cambodia: Democratic Transition Under United Nations Peace-keeping, Armonk, M.E. Sharpe, 1996, pp.134-58.

²⁴ Quoted in Brown and Zazloff, Cambodia Confounds the Peacemakers, p.140.

²⁵ For my analysis of the politics of this period, see Kelvin Rowley, 'The Making of the Royal Government of Cambodia,' in Viberto Selochan and Carlyle A. Thayer (eds), Bringing Democracy to Cambodia: Peacekeeping and Elections, Canberra, Australian Defence Forces Academy, 1996, pp.1-44. For different different perspectives, see William Shawcross, Cambodia's New Deal: A Report, New York, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994, and Kate Frieson, 'The Cambodian Elections of 1993: A Case of Power to the People,' in Robert H. Taylor (ed) The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp.224-42.

²⁶ Voice of the Great National Union Front of Cambodia (Khmer Rouge Radio), 146 May 1994.

²⁷ Xinhua, 17 January 1994. A Chinese diplomat later commented: "The Khmer Rouge deserved to be outlawed because of their stupidity in refusing to participate in the 1993 elections. After that, China has refused any talk with their leaders... Deng Xiaoping has changed but the Khmer Rouge remained the same." (Quoted by Sorpong Peou, Intervention and Change in Cambodia, p.405.)

²⁸ Marc Levy, Boston Globe, 7 June 1998.,

²⁹ Nate Thayer, Far Eastern Economic Review, 9 February 1995.

³⁰ Radio of the Provisional Government of National Union and National Salvation of Cambodia (Khmer Rouge Radio), 7 August 1996.

³¹ Far Eastern Economic Review, 26 September 1996.

³² Many accounts of the "events" of 1997 present it as a "coup" by a power-hungry Hun Sen and downplay the significance of Rannaridh's dealings with Anlong Veng. For discussions from a variety of viewpoints, see Brown and Zazloff, Cambodia Confounds the Peacemakers, Ch.8; Sorpong Peou, Intervention and Change, Chs.8-9; and Roberts, Political Transition in Cambodia, Chs.8-9.

³³ Cf. Chandler, Brother Number One, pp.185-86. Chandler takes Ta Mok's claim of death by natural causes at face value. Other senior Khmer Rouge cadres at

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Anlong Veng claimed Pol Pot committed suicide after learning that Ta Mok was negotiating handing him over in exchange for an amnesty for himself (Far Eastern Economic Review, 21 January 1999). I have received hearsay favouring murder, at the hands of Ta Mok. But we will probably never have the evidence to decide exactly what happened.

³⁴ See Richard Orth's chapter in this volume.

³⁵ Most prominently, of course, Hun Sen. See the account of his life during these years in Harish C. Mehta and Julie B Mehta, *Hun Sen: Strong Man of Cambodia*, Singapore, Graham Brash, 1999, Chs.3-4. This work relies heavily on interviews with Hun Sen and his wife, and much of the account is uncorroborated. A more thoroughly researched account is needed, but at least the general outline presented by the Mehtas is accurate.

³⁶ Quoted in Chandler, *Brother Number One*, p.180.