



MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM

TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY



Newsletter

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Project Update

The construction of the Memorial was impacted by COVID-19 restrictions; however, these restrictions have been lifted and the Memorial construction site is now open. Progress has been made on other areas of the Memorial such as the limestone for the plinth perimeter, stairs and gathering area which are in production, and the granite for the dedication wall which is also in production. Work on the sculptural element of the Memorial—the Arc of Memory—was also delayed by the restrictions and the fabricator is now making adjustments at the plant to begin work as soon as possible. COVID-19 has had an impact on everyone and the Memorial has not been an exception. We are excited that work at the construction site is now resuming with work on the Arc of Memory to soon begin.



Interview: Kok-Chhay Ly, Specialist at the Documentation Centre of Cambodia

From the website communistcrimes.org

The world knows too little about the extremely harsh experience Cambodia has had with communism. The Khmer Rouge regime, led by dictator Pol Pot, killed approximately 2 million people in the name of communist ideology. Cambodia is now going through a process of coming to terms with this unimaginable political violence, by collecting data and memories, and building the future on the basis of solid historical memory. The following is an interview with Kok-Chhay Ly, who works in the Documentation Centre of Cambodia. His institution has been working on the history of Khmer Rouge since 1997 in five areas: justice, memory, healing, peace and development.

CC.ORG: Please tell me about your position and the activities of your institution in Cambodia?

K.-C.L: I work for the Documentation Centre of Cambodia (DC-Cam), an independent research centre, as a GIS specialist. My job is to collect spatial data and map the crime sites of the Khmer Rouge (name, given to the followers of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) and by extension to the regime through which the CPK ruled in Cambodia between 1975 and 1979 – ed.) as well as plan outreach programs. DC-Cam has been working on the history of Khmer Rouge since 1997 in five areas: justice, memory, healing, peace and development. The centre has provided about one million documents to the Khmer Rouge tribunal to bring justice to the Cambodian people.



We also educate the younger generations about their history with public outreach programs. Moreover, DC-Cam works closely with genocide survivors, helping them cope with the trauma through mobile clinics, which ensure that they continue to speak out about the country's justice, memorialisation and educational processes. "Healing" refers to the reconciliation process between the proprietors (Former Khmer Rouge cadres) and victims (Khmer Rouge's survivors).

To maintain peace, the centre provides peace study tours, human rights training and genocide education in Cambodia. The centre aims to become a leading institution in the region. Finally, development is the key to success – DC-Cam is committed to assisting individuals educate and develop themselves. The centre encourages Cambodians to remember the past, live in the present and look to the future.

Many people outside of Cambodia unfortunately don't know much about Pol Pot's (leader of the Khmer Rouge regime – ed.) dictatorship and its crimes in Cambodia. Can you please give an overview how this

dictatorship came to power and what were the main ideological and political goals of this regime?

Pol Pot's regime came to power on 17 April 1975 with the aim of getting rid of the old society of capitalists by enforcing socio-economic changes. To accomplish this, they abolished money, free market, normal schools, private property, foreign fashion styles, religious practices and the traditional Khmer culture. Moreover, public schools, pagodas, mosques, churches, universities, shops and government buildings were closed down or turned into prisons and re-education camps. Nevertheless, urban dwellers fled to rice farms in the countryside or to other isolated areas. Under his 4 year leadership, approximately 2 million Cambodians died due to executions, starvation, exhaustion and diseases.

How did the machine of terror function – by whom and how were the repressions used and against whom were they aimed?

The Khmer Rouge claimed that only "pure" people were qualified to build the new Cambodia. After Khmer Rouge came to power, they arrested and killed thousands of soldiers, military officers and civil servants associated with Marshal Lon Nol, whom they did not regard as "pure". Furthermore, the Khmer Rouge had a policy of harming hundreds of thousands of intellectuals, city residents and ethnic minorities (e.g. the Chams and the Vietnamese). In 1973, mass executions of the Cambodian Cham Muslims were carried out at the Real village in the Krouh Chhmar district, in 1975, the Koh Phal village and in Svay Khlaing village followed.

Furthermore, the Tuol Sleng prison is one of the most important prisons among the 198 prisons in Cambodia. It held approximately 14 000 prisoners, so-called "traitors of the regime", from 1976-1979, where they were detained, interrogated, tortured and later executed. In the Eastern Zone, many Khmer Rouge cadres were executed because they were close to, or trained by, Vietnam's government.

How many were killed, how many imprisoned or just vanished?

Cambodian schoolchildren are taught that 3.3 million people were killed in 1975-1979 under the Democratic Kampuchea regime. Most scholars place the number at around 1.7 million. However, the researchers are yet to give an exact number of imprisoned or vanished people.

What are the main achievements of research in the field of mass repression under Khmer Rouge regime and the main positions of the researchers?

As we are an independent NGO of researchers, our goal in the Khmer Rouge research is to find the truth about what happened under Pol Pot's dictatorship, including those responsible for the crimes. The Khmer Rouge leaders were brought to Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) to bring justice to genocide survivors. Secondly, the empirical narrative of the research creates a fundamental understanding of Democratic Kampuchea, but also expresses the physical and mental problems of Khmer Rouge survivors. Those pains and wounds can be cured and healed through the process of breaking the silence and sharing their story with others.

Is it important for the researchers of communist repressions to cooperate internationally?

The mass killings and atrocities happened across the globe. Over 80 million people suffered from communist crimes. It is important to discuss the issues of genocide and the challenges of overcoming trauma in Cambodia's society. Thus, this international conference enables the researchers to talk about the issues they have in their countries and find solutions to prevent future genocides not only in Asia or Europe, but also in other countries, which have not experienced a red terror.

How do people honour the memory of innocent victims on private and state level?

Privately, Buddhism and the Khmer culture play an important role in the remembrance process of innocent victims. For example, in one Khmer Rouge grave site at Mesang High school, locals and students respect the victims by inviting Buddhist monks to chant and pray for those who were killed by the Khmer Rouge. To preserve the historic site and the memory of the victims, they have come together to build a memorial garden.

On a state level, the government has built over 80 memorials, commemorating the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime. More importantly, the government has made the 20 May, the National Day of Remembrance, a national holiday. This gives people an opportunity to remember their loved ones, who were lost to the murderous regime, which claimed an estimated 1.7 million lives.

Are the families of the repressed victims and the

survivors still vocal in society?

Yes, victims still have an important voice in the society. According to the Swiss Peace report[1], there are about 4000 individuals who have applied to be civil parties in case 001 (the trial of Kaing Guek Eav, better known as Duch, the head of the infamous security centre S-21) and in case 002 (against Nuon Chea, former Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, and Khieu Samphan, former Head of State). Besides the participants of the court process, there are 5 million genocide survivors, who discuss the Khmer Rouge topics in conferences and international events or tell their stories to their children, family members and neighbours.

How do people in Cambodia today reflect and think about the period of red terror? What do politicians say?

According to data released by the ECCC, more than 353 000 people have observed or participated in court proceedings[2]. In Case 001, 36 493 people observed the trial and appeal hearings. In Case 002, the first trial involving multiple Khmer Rouge leaders, 98 670 people attended the 212-day trial hearings. In addition, nearly 67 000 people from rural areas in Cambodia have attended ECCC community video screenings. This indicates that a large number of Cambodians think the news on the Khmer Rouge is important – they would like to follow the ongoing process of the trial and find the truth about the killing of 2 million people. Actually, both civilians and politicians think that the Khmer Rouge regime was inhuman, involving mass killings and starvation. In 2011, the government also put the Khmer Rouge history into public schools' curriculums. Moreover, politicians used the victory day of Khmer Rouge regime (7 January) for a peace campaign to prevent future genocides.

How did the state prosecute perpetrators of mass repressions in court? Were there criminal cases? Did Cambodia as a state clearly condemn those crimes and what terms do you use – communist crimes or something else?

In 1997, the government requested the United Nations (UN) to assist in establishing a trial to prosecute the senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge. This court is called the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia for the Prosecution of Crimes Committed during the Period of Democratic Kampuchea Extraordinary Chambers. There are two main cases:

Case 001 was the first case before the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. Kaing Guek Eav alias Duch, the former Chairman of the Khmer Rouge S-21 Security Centre in Phnom Penh was the defendant in Case 001. Duch was charged with crimes against humanity, persecution on political grounds, imprisonment, torture and other inhumane acts. Additionally, he was also charged with grave breaches of the Geneva Convention of 1949, such as wilful killing, torture, inhumane treatment and wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body and health.

Case 002: Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan were charged with crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Convention of 1949 and genocide against the Cham Muslims and the Vietnamese. Leng Sary and his wife Leng Thirith, were also part of Case 002. The first trial, Case 002/01, commenced on 21 November 2011, primarily focusing on alleged crimes against humanity related to the forced movement of the population from Phnom Penh and later from other regions (phases one and two), and the execution of Khmer Republic soldiers at Toul Po Chrey execution site immediately after the Khmer Rouge takeover in 1975.

Case 002/02 refers to the second trial against Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, with additional charges from the Closing Order in Case 002. In a decision of 4 April 2014, the Trial Chamber decided that genocide against the Cham and the Vietnamese, forced marriages and rape, internal purges, 1st January Dam Worksite, Tram Kak Cooperatives, treatment of Buddhists etc would form the basis for Case 002/02.

Was there a campaign to remove all supporters of Pol Pot from public positions?

No, there was no campaign to remove all supporters of Pol Pot from public positions. In 1998, the remnants of the Khmer Rouge agreed to be integrated into the Cambodia state. Due to political concessions and a compromise by the government, many former Khmer Rouge cadres are in high ranking positions in the current government. The peace is the result of the desire for national reconciliation among ordinary Cambodians and Khmer Rouge cadres and their families.

Are there some arguments about Pol Pot's dictatorship in the Cambodian society now?

Of course, the arguments about the Khmer Rouge are still a sensitive issue for many Cambodians. A number

of interviewed local people in Prey Veng and Svay Rieng province claim that Pol Pot came to power after Masha Lon Nol and his pro-America associates staged a successful coup to depose Prince Sihanouk as the head of state. However, some also blame the Viet Cong troops and the Americans during the Vietnam War, while fewer people say that King Sihanouk's propaganda called for Cambodians to join the communists in Prey Maki. The second argument is whether Pol Pot is responsible for 2 million dead Cambodians. Some still believe that Khmer Rouge did not kill their own kind and blame the Vietnamese.

More importantly, the arrival of the Vietnamese troops and the siege of Phnom Penh in 1979 is a very sensitive topic. There are arguments whether the Vietnamese came to liberate the Cambodians from the killing fields or if they came to occupy Cambodia for over a decade. From the government's perspective, the Vietnamese troops liberated Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge and assisted Cambodia in its development. However, many Cambodians still believe that the troops were occupiers that took resources away from Cambodia.

[1] "Victim Participation in Cambodia's Transitional Justice Process" Swiss Peace. November 2018

[2] "Information for Media | Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia". ECCC. 30 July 2014

History Unhidden **Jozef Mader's Story**

Jozef Mader was one of 6 children of Anastazia and Frantisek Mader. He was born in the small village of Mast, close to Bratislava in Slovakia. Jozef was an idealist and a dreamer and always strived for a better life for himself and his family.

As a young man, in 1952, living in communist-oppressed Czechoslovakia, he and his buddies devised a plan to run away to Canada. That was not meant to be. They were stowaways in a train heading for Germany. The Russian soldiers were waiting for them. Heroically, Jozef distracted the soldiers chasing them, which gave the opportunity for his friends to escape. His luck was not on his side that day. He was captured, prosecuted and charged with treason and was sentenced to hang to deter others from their village from trying to escape. After numerous pleas, negotiations and bribery with the court officials his death sentence was reduced to five years of hard labour in the Ostrava coal mines, where his health

suffered. He was beaten and tortured repeatedly.



After his release, he was a different man. Nevertheless, his bride to be, Anna, was still waiting for him. They married and had two children, Anna and Jozef junior. His children had no future in the former Czechoslovakia, as he was a marked man, watched closely by the communist regime. He was only able to get labourer's work and his children had no future for higher education. Jozef was not happy and kept on with his ideals and his dreams for a better life for himself and his family.



On August 25, 1968, the Russian forces invaded Czechoslovakia and the country was in a state of flux. Jozef seized the opportunity to leave Czechoslovakia with his wife and two children with nothing but the

clothes on their backs. He brought his family to Austria where he arranged for his family to immigrate to Canada to give his family and his children a better future. His dream for a better life came true! Canada was a land of opportunity where he settled with his family.

He longed to go back to his homeland to visit his family but that was not meant to be. Jozef died at the early age of 57, on October 23, 1988. He died with his dream fulfilled, of a better life in Canada for his family.

History Unhidden **Hartmut Richter's Story**

The day on which Hartmut Richter celebrated his birthday for the second time

A contemporary witness's report can draw audiences' attention more vividly than any history lesson if one can bring the past to life with personal experiences and illustrate political injustice. This applies to the period of National Socialism as well as the German Democratic Republic (GDR), former East Germany. Hartmut Richter told and illustrated to students in the 9th and 10th grades of the Bad Königshofen grammar school, how opponents of the regime were persecuted and suppressed.

Richter, born in Glindow in Brandenburg in 1948, describes very tellingly about his life in the GDR. He described how he, who was initially an enthusiastic Young Pioneer, increasingly alienated himself from the system and began to think of escape as a teenager. He felt it was wrong for him as "group council chairman", as the class spokesman was called in East German jargon, that he should spy on classmates by reporting who was watching West German TV. He was also outraged that he, who loved the music of the Beatles and Beachboys, had to have his long hair cut; the sight of long-haired was considered a sign of Western decadence.

Solitary Confinement and Deprivation of Sleep

As an introduction, Richter showed his young audience a documentary about the Berlin-Hohenschönhausen State Prison, in which he was imprisoned for five years after his arrest as an escape helper. This film mercilessly reveals the deceitful methods used by state security to torture inmates. "Psychological disintegration measures" were

practiced, solitary confinement in dark cells, heat cells or cold cells, sleep deprivation. This is how the prisoners should be made compliant.



Increasingly dissatisfied with the Party's patronizing methods and supervision, Richter planned his first escape as a student. He wanted to take the train to Austria from the CSSR—Czechoslovakia—in January 1966: he was arrested, sentenced to a suspended sentence and excluded from high school. Already in August he made a second attempt to escape: as an accomplished swimmer, he wanted to reach the West by swimming the Teltow Canal. For the 1km route, which took 4 hours, he had to avoid tension wires, overcome barbed wires and get completely chilled before reaching the western shore unharmed. "For me, August 27, 1966 was like a second birthday!" he revealed to the students.

Detention and Federal Cross of Merit

Only then did his life really begin. He enjoys freedom, travels the world as a ship steward, dreams of living in Australia and then returns to Germany. When the transit agreement was signed between the Federal Republic (West Germany) and the GDR (East Germany) in 1972, which guaranteed smooth transit traffic between West Germany and Berlin, he took the opportunity to help people escape. "The transit agreement was well paid for by the SED state (East Germany)!" says Richter. "They collected 3.4 billion Euros!" But at least he managed to help a total of 33 people, hidden in the trunk of his car, to escape. When he tried to get his sister out in 1975, he was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison, five of which had to be served before the Federal Republic bought him out as a political prisoner. Since then Richter has been living in West Berlin and helping to work through the past of the SED state. For his work as an escape helper, he was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit in 2012.

The high school students listened attentively to what

the speaker said. For most, the time of the German-German division is in the past, which has no relation to its present. But, as Hartmut Richter appeals to his young listeners: "Inquire with your parents or grandparents, let them describe that time for you!" Totalitarian systems must not be softened or prettied, he says, they have to be revised to prevent it to reappear.

Resource Spotlight

Museums of Communism

Museum of Communism — Prague
<https://muzeumkomunismu.cz/en/>

Estonia's Victims of Communism 1940-1991 — Tallinn
<https://www.memoriaal.ee/en/>

House of Terror — Budapest
<https://www.terrorhaza.hu/en>

Museum of Occupation of Latvia — Riga
<http://okupacijasmuzejs.lv/en/>

Museum of Communism — Warsaw
<https://mzp.pl/museum-of-communism/?lang=en>

Museum of Occupation and Freedom Fights — Vilnius
<http://genocid.lt/muziejus/en/>

Stasi Museum — Berlin
<https://www.stasimuseum.de/en/enindex.htm>

Stasi in Berlin — Berlin
<https://www.stiftung-hsh.de/en>

Museum of Communist Crimes in Romania — Bucharest
<https://www.iicmer.ro/en/museums/the-museum-of-communism-from-romania/>

Everyday Life in Communist Bulgaria — Sofia
<https://redflatsofia.com>

Site of Witness and Memory — Shkoder
<http://museu.ms/museum/details/17843/site-of-witness-and-memory>

Red History Museum — Dubrovnik
<https://www.redhistorymuseum.com>