Cambodia Project

Wars during the Genocide, 1975-1979
Vietnam war was ending
The Lebanese War
Iranian Revolution of 1979
Russian civil war
Afghan war

Quotes

"We went through a horrible time and nobody cares." Chuck Sart "Saddam was a mass murderer - and so was Pol Pot," Sart says, in wonderment at the imbalance of global justice. "You can't just kill a million people and get away with it."

Vesna Nuon "I stole the communal food even knowing that when you get caught they would kill you. When you're starving, you don't think about anything else," The community here rarely speaks out for justice in Cambodia, Nuon says, because "they know it's not going to happen. And if it does happen, it's not going to be up to international standards for fairness. "Besides, he says, shrugging, "It's not going to be any closure for a lot of Cambodians, because they know that there are a number of [former Khmer Rouge leaders] still around and still in power."

"After all of those things, I felt a little hope - Oh, my life would be spared because if they were doing all this process I thought I would not be killed." Vann Nath

They told him that he was accused of violating the moral code of the organization of Angka. He wasn't clear what that meant. (the title page is Vann Nath's self portrait of his first day in prison)

They interrogated him later that night, "I was very, very confused because they asked me what network of betrayal I was in and whom I had relationships with, but I was confused because they used live electrical wire on me and I fell unconscious a few times."

"It was like hell, I can't describe it. At that time, in that condition, the hope that I had earlier had disappeared,"
On April 17th, 1975 the Khmer Rouge, a communist guerrilla group led by Pol Pot, took power in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. It began a brutal four-year regime. They forced all city residents into the countryside and to labor camps. During their rule it is said that about 2 million Cambodians died by starvation, torture or execution. Those 2 million Cambodians represented approximately 30% of the Cambodian population during that time.

The Khmer Rouge turned Cambodia to “year zero”. They banned all institutions, including stores, banks, hospitals, schools, religion, and family. Everyone was forced to work 12 - 14 hours a day, every day. Children were separated from their parents to work in mobile groups or as soldiers. People were fed one watery bowl of soup with a few grains of rice thrown in. Babies, children, adults and the elderly were killed everywhere. The Khmer Rouge killed people if they didn’t like them, if they didn’t work hard enough, if they were educated, if they came from different ethnic groups, or if they showed sympathy when their family members were taken away to be killed. All of them were killed without reason. Many died from starvation, malnutrition and misdiagnosed or mistreated illness. Everyone had to guarantee total loyalty to Angka, the Khmer Rouge government. It was a campaign based on putting constant fear and keeping their victims off balance.

After the Vietnamese invaded and liberated the Cambodian people from the Khmer Rouge, 600,000 Cambodians fled to Thai border camps. Ten million landmines
were left in the ground, one for every person in Cambodia. The United Nations installed the largest peacekeeping mission in the world in Cambodia in 1991 to ensure free and fair elections after the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops.
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