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Myth, nationalism and genocide

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In the second half of 1978, the Pol Pot regime was in its death throes. A rebellion had spread in the Eastern Zone of Cambodia, and was proving difficult to suppress. One Cambodian man who lived through these events was a former blacksmith whom I met in Phnom Penh in 1991. His cousin was married to a niece of Heng Samrin, one of the rebellion's leaders and later President of the State of Cambodia (SOC). The blacksmith was working for the SOC Interior Ministry. A technique he claimed the Pol Pot armed forces had used to round up rebels, in those last months of 1978, was to call people to film showings in the countryside. He said officials would first project the films, then arrest alleged rebels in the audience. One film which the blacksmith claimed to have seen was of particular interest, at least for how he remembered it.

The film was of Pol Pot's 1977 state visit to China. The blacksmith recalled seeing footage of Pol Pot's trip to an unnamed interior province of China, one which was constantly short of water. In this province, the film showed "seven million" people assembled to welcome Pol Pot. The massive crowd comprised only young men and women of the Chinese province, all carefully "chosen for their beauty." The film also showed how the province was watered by a man-made canal bringing water from the sea, the blacksmith claimed. However, the canal was only able to supply the province with a single bucket of water per person.

Here is a fascinating example of Khmer myth-making in progress. The Cambodian script of this "Chinese" film is striking: the preoccupation with the agricultural water supply that dominated Democratic Kampuchea; the Cambodian's unfamiliarity with the sea and the unserviceability of salt water for irrigation; the vast crowd of "seven million," the reputed population of Cambodia at the time; and its division into young men and women, crack troops of the "mobile brigades" into which single adult Cambodian workers were divided by the Khmer Rouge, usually being fed rations of a single can of rice per person per day. The remembered film was a projection of the Cambodian experience. Of course, in one sense the Pol Pot regime did "show" Cambodians a new country.

At the same time the Vietnamese were making their own projections—far into the past—about the Chinese–Cambodian relationship. A cartoon published in an October, 1978 Hanoi magazine for political cadres shows a Khmer Rouge "burning the books" while a Chinese in imperial attire, suggesting Chin Shih Huang, fans the flames with his breath.[1]

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Myth and nationalism

The Cambodian revolution was not fought against China. It was preoccupied rather with its role in a modern myth, that of an epic, historic confrontation between Cambodia and its immediate neighbors, Thailand and especially Vietnam.

The Lon Nol regime from 1970–1975 (like its successor, the Cambodian "Non-Communist Resistance") drew much of its propaganda strength from its ability to persuade Cambodians that Ho Chi Minh, in the will made before his death in 1969, had called upon his fellow Vietnamese to take over Cambodia. There has never been any evidence for this, but it is widely and unquestioningly believed among Cambodian elites.

That myth has been grafted onto much earlier ones, taken up by adherents of all three Khmer regimes before 1979—those of Sihanouk, Lon Nol and Pol Pot alike. The Pol Pot regime's anti-Vietnamese *Black Paper* of September, 1978 revives a common Cambodian myth about the French term for the Mekong Delta region, "Cochinchina"—which Khmers call "Lower Cambodia" because it was ruled by the Khmer monarchy until the eighteenth century. The Vietnamese encroachment began, according to Cambodian chronicles, when a Khmer king married a Vietnamese princess, and in return for her hand, in 1623 he gave up the town that would become Saigon. The *Black Paper* adds:

> The French called Kampuchea Krom [Lower Cambodia] "Cochinchine." This name is made up of the Vietnamese words Co-Chin-Xin. "Co" means "Miss," "Chin" is the name of a girl, and "Xin" means "ask for." Thus, "Co-Chin-Xin" means "Miss Chin asks for."[2]

We are treated to this as an example of "the sordid use of Vietnamese girls" by their historical leaders. In fact, the word "Cochin" is a French version of a Portuguese pronunciation of the Chinese term for Vietnam (*Giao-chi*), with the suffix "China" added to distinguish it from the port of Cochin in India.[3] Only vaguely reflected in this modern Cambodian myth is the fact that the Khmer chronicles show Vietnamese–Cambodian relations to have been reasonably close as late as the mid-seventeenth century.[4]

Another example is a memory which, in the words of the *Black Paper*, "Kampuchea's people have kept alive" quite deliberately, "in order to maintain their vigilance":

> It recalls the barbarous crime committed by the "Yuons" [Vietnamese] in 1813 … The Yuons buried alive the Khmer people up to their necks and used the latter's heads as a stand for a wood stove to boil water for their master's tea. As they burned and suffered, the victims shook their heads. At that moment, the Yuon torturers said to them: "Be careful not to spill the master's tea!"[5]

The *Black Paper* quickly explains the alleged meaning of the Khmer word for Vietnamese: "Yuon is the name given by Kampuchea's people to the Vietnamese since the epoch of Angkor and it means 'savage'." Now, a 1906 French scholarly dictionary finds the same word *Yuon* in the neighboring Cham language, but gives it a different etymology. Edward Schafer thus reports that

Yuon comes from "Yavana (to use the Sanskrit original), or ultimately, 'Ionians'—a term suggesting subnormal, devilish men." Serge Thion asserts:

> These inhabitants of Iona, or Ionaka (i.e., Ionia, Greece) cropped up rather abruptly on the borders of the Indus, brought there by Alexander in 326 B.C. The commotion was felt in the rest of the subcontinent. These intruders were not your ordinary barbarians; they came with an organised army, a script and a government, not to mention the arts … Transplanted onto the Indochina coast … the pilgrims and merchants from India quickly realised that to the north lay a threat to their trading posts and settlements—the threat of an organised force equipped with an army, a script, a technology, a body of art, etc. The term Yavana fitted them like a glove. It designated the Chinese colony Giao Chi before it freed itself to become Vietnam … [T]he Cambodians just adopted the term which was already detached from the area to which it originally referred.[6]

In other words, Yavana was a Sanskrit term denoting "serious foreign threat," and was thus applied by Indianized Khmers to locals who fit this description, the Vietnamese, and so we have the term "Yuon."

The trouble with this fascinating explanation is the existence of a much simpler one. Since the Vietnamese called themselves "Yueh" ("Viets"), Khmers may have adopted this word for them fairly accurately. "Yuon" more likely derives from "Yueh" than from "Ionians" or *Yavana*. [The word "Yuon" is spelled in Khmer យួន, with the (subscripted) dipthong "uo," not a "v" like Yavana.] If so, "Yuon" does not mean "savages," "subnormal, devilish men," or even potent strangers who "crop up abruptly"; but simply, "Vietnamese." But the Pol Pot regime, following French orientalists, mythologized its conflict with Hanoi as part of a millennial ethnic epic. (Conversely, the traditional Vietnamese word for Cambodians, *Cao Mien*, has also been translated as "highland barbarians."[7] It has no such meaning and probably derives from the word *khmaer* (ខ្មែរ) or "Khmer."[8])

This was not the only example of combined colonial and communist Cambodian mythology. Pol Pot's regime also fell for one of the more serious mistakes of French orientalism on Cambodia. This was the self-serving colonial case of Cambodian economic and territorial decline, first declaimed by Henri Mouhot when reporting his "discovery" of the Angkor ruins: "What has become of this powerful race, so civilised, so enlightened … ? It presents a sad contrast to the state of barbarism into which the nation is now plunged."[9]

According to later development of this view, the Angkorian empire had risen to economic and political predominance in medieval Southeast Asia by means of an irrigation system that permitted the harvest of three or even four crops of rice per year on the same land—reduced to one over the centuries of Cambodia's alleged decline. This theory was long unchallenged as a result of the authority of the French scholar who propounded it, Bernard-Philippe Groslier. But he abandoned it in the late 1970s, conceding that irrigation canals at Angkor were used to increase the area of land under cultivation, and that there was no evidence of intensive rather than extensive rice agriculture. In the meantime, however, the Pol Pot regime had set out to recover what it saw as the country's

lost productive capacity. The evidence now suggests that the Khmer Rouge agricultural system was a failure, its goal of multiple annual harvests probably impossible from the start. The total reshaping of Cambodia under Pol Pot may be said to demonstrate the power of a myth.

History and territory

In an extraordinary speech in August, 1939, Hitler announced that Germany and Poland "cannot face each other forever with rifles cocked":

> The probability is still great that the west will not intervene. But we must take that risk with ruthless determination, the politician just as much as the general. We are faced with the harsh alternative of striking now or of *certain annihilation sooner or later.*

"I have taken risks," he went on immediately, "in occupying the Rhineland when the generals wanted me to pull back, in taking Austria, the Sudetenland, and the rest of Czechoslovakia."[10] Thus, even as he recited this list of territorial *gains*, Hitler was still proclaiming the threat of Germany's "certain annihilation." There is a political, tactical ring of "crash through or crash" about the speech. Striking, though, is the assumption that German *territorial* stability was equally unachievable. Failure to expand meant annihilation. This special perception of the conditions of Germany's survival has a counterpart common among Cambodian nationalists. I believe the reasons are also similar: a historically recent national territorial formation, and the twin peaks, heightened by the proximity of such recent gains, of national ambition and national insecurity.

Modern Cambodia's territory, like Germany's, was consolidated as recently as the pre-World War I period. 1907 saw the "return" to Cambodia (then under French rule) of its entire northwest quadrant, the provinces of Battambang, Siemreap, and Preah Vihear, which had been under Thai rule since 1794. In 1914, more territory was restored to Cambodia by the French, in an exchange with their other colony, Vietnam, to the east.[11] A third territorial dispute was resolved in Cambodia's favor as recently as 1961, when the World Court successfully ordered Thailand to hand over to it the picturesque pre-Angkorian border temple of Preah Vihear.

There is a Khmer popular saying, *srok khmaer men dael son*, "the Khmer country will never disappear." As Anthony Barnett has pointed out,[12] it seems to represent a commonsense understanding that empires rise and fall but peoples are generally resilient. But unlike much popular wisdom, this saying seems to be not a piece of normative advice but rather an answer to a question, or a response to a fear. Investigation would be rewarding, but my guess is that the fearful question was first posed in 1907.

The return of the northwest territories had a major impact on Cambodian elite nationalism. The new areas included the famous medieval temples of Angkor, and their recovery was greatly welcomed by Cambodia's King Sisowath (r. 1904–1927). He erected a commemorative monument, which still stands prominently in Phnom Penh.

Cambodian nationalist attention now focused on other, longer-lost, Khmer-speaking areas. When large territories are first regained, especially by a weak colonized state, they necessarily raise the stakes in the border conflict, but they also heighten consciousness of further ancestral losses. In the Cambodian case, these included Surin and Buriram provinces of modern Thailand, whose ethnic Khmer majority still call themselves "Upper Cambodians," and also Vietnam's Mekong Delta, whose ethnic Khmer minority are known as "Lower Cambodians." The territorial gains of 1907–1914 undoubtedly encouraged the Cambodian government in the 1940s to petition its French protector for an additional transfer of the Mekong Delta from Vietnamese to Cambodian rule for the first time since 1750.[13]

Charles Meyer has referred to what he calls the "burden of the past" weighing on the Khmers, living in the shadow of their ancestors' monumental and territorial grandeur. But perhaps only in the twentieth century, and for very specific reasons, was the past really present as a pragmatic option, and, even if a tenuous one, for some Khmers it was therefore a terrible responsibility.

Obviously the 1907 restoration of the northwest territories was a result of exogenous French power, far exceeding Cambodia's capacity to conquer or defend them. So their return ironically made Cambodia *less* secure. A much greater struggle was now required to defend the additional territory, whose loss would of course cut the country down by a quarter in a way that mere preservation of the pre-1907 *status quo ante* could never have done. The restoration of Cambodia to part of its former size thus created a new threat to a small country. The mythical past was brought into the twentieth century. Thai irredentism was now all the more likely and more possible. Many Thais believed their claim to Cambodia's northwest had continuing legitimacy, despite the 1907 enforced hand-over, and they maintained close ties with Cambodians in the territories who had grown up there during a century of Thai influence.

So in World War II, with Japanese support, Bangkok again seized northwest Cambodia: Battambang, Siemreap and Preah Vihear provinces. The tide was turned again in 1946, and Thailand had to return the territories. But Khmer vulnerability had been re-emphasized in both military defeat and territorial diminution, which became the nationalist nightmare, even though it had been a loss only in post-1907 terms, and only a temporary one.

The first Khmer nationalist leader, Son Ngoc Thanh, was born in the Cambodian districts of Vietnam. He was not an anti-Vietnamese racist, but he was genuinely shocked by the Thai re-annexations of Cambodian territory in 1940–1946. He explicitly described Thailand as "the last belligerent and frenzied imperialist," and the local "enemy" of Cambodian nationhood.[14] This same wartime period saw the formative schoolboy years of the future leaders of Democratic Kampuchea: Pol Pot, Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary and Son Sen.

Cambodia has been called "The Land in Between,"[15] resembling "a walnut caught in the open jaws of its neighbours,"[16] Thailand and Vietnam. James Fenton sees "the clue to Cambodian politics and character" in a "fear of total extinction": "Look at Cambodia on a map—see how little coastline it has, and

how eerily Thailand has eaten away at its share. Look at the Mekong Delta, look as far as Saigon—all that was Cambodian once. It is really not incredible to a Cambodian that the Vietnamese should decide to initiate a final solution."[17]

But as the popular saying "Cambodia will never disappear" suggests, mythical territorial diminution was an urgent national issue only among Khmer elites, particularly government officials and the small intellectual element. Pol Pot's predecessor Lon Nol belonged to the first group, and Pol Pot to the second. Both men dreamed of reversing a perceived territorial decline, and Pol Pot in particular saw that decline as uninterrupted by the twentieth century facts. His millennial view of the past stressed "2,000 years of exploitation," and rule by national traitors selling off territory, right up to the alleged 1960 formation of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), an event he postdated just as he did the reversal of the country's territorial diminution.[18]

In his major public speech, Pol Pot urged his people to "prevent the constant loss of Cambodia's territory."[19] In the same breath, he related the issue of geographic national decline directly to his own group of intellectuals. He urged respect for the CPK, "so that our Cambodian intellectuals, who lived in ignominy and were subjected to oppression and slavery *for several centuries*, can enjoy honour and resounding prestige in the world."

Who were these intellectuals? Nuon Chea, Pol Pot's deputy, grew up in Battambang and was educated in Bangkok. Ieng Sary and Son Sen (like Cambodia's first nationalist, Son Ngoc Thanh) were Khmer Krom, ethnic Cambodians born in "Lower Cambodia."

Nationalism and genocide

Khmer Rouge nationalism differs from the Cambodian nationalism of the other parties. There are similarities, as we have seen, especially with the nationalism of Norodom Sihanouk, a Khmer Rouge ally for 20 years. But the major difference between the Khmer Rouge and the other Cambodian parties is this: the Khmer Rouge define as "traitors," or "Khmer bodies with Vietnamese minds," broad categories of the Cambodian population who do not accept Khmer Rouge leadership in an anti-Vietnamese crusade. These fellow citizens were not regarded as Cambodians but as surrogate foreigners. Massive Khmer Rouge brutality in the repression of Cambodian "treason" resulted in genocide.

Pol Potism

Over one and a half million Cambodians perished in "Democratic Kampuchea" (DK) under Khmer Rouge rule in 1975–1979.[20] The nature of the ideology that prevailed over this catastrophe has yet to be defined. But it is possible to identify the major characteristics of a "Pol Potist" approach to each of the following eight issues: the national question; race; class struggle; the economy; political methods; traditional institutions; Party organization; and political philosophy.

Not all of these characteristics are distinctive in Marxist or other traditions.

But their combination is distinctive, even though Pol Pot exaggerated when he claimed to visiting Yugoslav journalists in 1978: "We have no model in building up our new society."[21] It was necessary to acknowledge no model, because the project was dominated and driven by the mythical historic struggle between Cambodia and Vietnam. Its core was racial, and Cambodians were racially unique. Pol Pot in his youth had used the pseudonym "The Original Khmer" (*khmaer da'em*),[22] betraying his own preoccupation with the country's deep, dark past and its predestined confrontation with what DK was to call the country's "hereditary enemy."[23] Class and economic issues were framed in communist parlance, but were directed at the need to remove foreign "contaminations" and to make the country self-reliant and strong enough to defy or even defeat its neighbors.

The national question. In Democratic Kampuchea, the ideology of self-reliance was extended to all fields. The Pol Potist national policy has been described as "The Politics of Perfect Sovereignty."[24] In a victory speech in mid-1975, Pol Pot claimed: "We have won total, definitive and *clean* victory, meaning that we have won it without any foreign connection or involvement."[25]

Although Democratic Kampuchea remained on close terms with the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (its sources of foreign aid), it clashed militarily with all three of its neighbors—Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.[26] Foreign languages were banned in DK.

Despite its xenophobia, it would be wrong to see DK as a hermit state, shunning foreign entanglements. The Pol Pot regime was in fact very conscious of a position in the world, describing itself as "the Number 1 Communist state." (In the early 1970s, the CPK had ranked Albania in this position, followed by China and then the CPK itself, while Vietnam was described then as "Comrade Number 7."[27]) In 1976, DK claimed to be "four to ten years ahead" of the other Asian communist states, having "leaped" from feudalism "to a socialist society straight away."[28] It even described Vietnam as a nation-state incompatible with Cambodia's very existence:

> The enemy will continue to exist for 10, 20, or 30 years … The national struggle … will be continuous … When we are strong they are weak, when they are weak we are strong …[29]

This zero-sum conception of the relationship with Vietnam[30] eventually led the Pol Pot regime to call for genocide. On May 10, 1978, the DK radio station proclaimed:

> So far, we have succeeded in implementing this slogan of one against 30: that is to say, we lose one against 30 Vietnamese killed … We need only two million troops to crush the 50 million Vietnamese—and we would still have 6 million people left …

In this cause, the DK broadcast also called for Cambodia's "masses of the people" to be "purified."[31]

Race. An underlying theme of the political world-view of the Pol Pot group was a concern for national and racial grandiosity. Their early disagreements with Vietnamese communists concerned the symbolic grandeur of the medieval Khmer temple of Angkor Wat, and their sensitivities over the small size of Kampuchea's population. As we have seen, when a young student in Paris in 1952, Pol Pot had used the pseudonym "Original Khmer." When in power, his regime was very concerned with racial issues. Minorities were expelled, exterminated or assimilated to the Khmer majority. The worst to suffer were the Vietnamese minority (totally eliminated), the Chinese (half of them, about 200,000 people, perished) and the Muslim Chams, of whom about a third were killed.[32] The fact that racial minorities had tended to occupy specific economic niches (the Chinese in business, for instance) does not account for this genocide, which in the cases of the Vietnamese and Chams was a national chauvinist campaign rather than an economic one. Pol Potist racial preoccupations eventually became introspective: those Khmers suspected of dissidence were accused of having "Vietnamese minds," and over 100,000 Khmers living near Vietnam were massacred in the second half of 1978.[33]

Class struggle. Pol Potism places greatest importance upon the peasantry, even more than Maoism does. The absolute priority of rural factors over urban ones is illustrated by the total evacuation to the countryside of the two million inhabitants of Cambodia's capital city, Phnom Penh, and all other towns, in 1975. As an article in the CPK monthly political magazine *Tung Padevat* (*Revolutionary Flags*) put it the next year: "We evacuated the people from the cities which is our class struggle." The article warned against "markets, cities, confusion. Slavery."[34] Money and wages were abolished, and one third of the urban population died of hunger, starvation, overwork or political murder.

In 1977 a secret CPK document described Cambodia's "revolutionary forces" as follows: "Concretely, we did not rely on the forces of the workers. The workers were the overt vanguard but in concrete fact they did not become the vanguard. In concrete fact there were only the peasants. Therefore we did not copy anyone."[35] The Pol Pot regime actually destroyed the working class when it evacuated all urban workers to the countryside, demonstrating a contempt for the historical proletariat which goes far beyond Maoism. The working class was relatively small in an overwhelmingly peasant society where 85% of the population lived in the countryside before the war and the US bombing campaigns.[36] But an orthodox Marxist regime, faced with these circumstances, might have treasured rather than terminated the existing proletariat. The Pol Pot regime did attempt to fill the workers' shoes by training new proletarians from peasant backgrounds. This program does betray some Marxist vestiges, distinguishing the regime from a "peasant revolution."[37]

The economy. Rural factors predominated here as well. The regime claimed: "With water we can have rice, with rice we can have everything." In 1976 *Tung*

Padevat had this to say: "We rely on agriculture in order to expand other fields such as industry, factories, minerals, oil, etc. The basic key is agriculture. Self-reliance means capital from agriculture."[38] This means capital from rice, and that meant from large scale irrigation networks—before mechanization. If the myth of Angkorian intensive agriculture had not existed, it would have had to be invented by DK.

Again the influence of Maoism suggests itself, but in DK industry was severely neglected, quite unlike in Mao's China. (The "Great Leap Forward," for instance, was largely a crash industrialization program.[39]) In DK, little capital drawn from agriculture was ever invested in industry, which subsisted at a low level on minimal foreign aid. The regime's bias towards rural development won it initial peasant support, which was dissipated when it became clear to most peasants that the revolution offered them only unpaid collective labor, not land or material prosperity.[40]

But an equally important feature of Pol Potism in DK was the extremely *violent repression* of various social groups, such as urban dwellers, political opponents, Buddhist monks, the educated and skilled workers, whole "networks" of the friends and acquaintances of victims, as well as peasant recalcitrants and their families. The concept of collective responsibility for alleged misdemeanors did exist in traditional Cambodia: in 1925, the king had punished an entire village for the killing of a Frenchman by several of the villagers.[41] But this concept was expanded beyond recognition by the Pol Pot regime's mass murder campaigns. Fifteen percent of the peasant population perished in 1975–1979, mostly killed in purges.

Social atomization was achieved in DK through enforced dissolution of all pre-existing social institutions ("We did not wish to entangle ourselves with old affairs," the CPK leadership said in 1976).[42] These included currency, schools, culture, unsupervised leisure, religious practice, and communications networks, and the replacement of "familism" by the separation of family members and compulsory communal eating.[43]

Absolute control of the CPK was maintained by a supra-Party clique of half a dozen leaders (the "Center," led by "Brother Number 1," Pol Pot) by means of massive, rolling purges of the Party, without holding any known meetings of the CPK Central Committee.[44] This was all justified by a *totalist philosophy* that had two main characteristics—a (rather ahistorical) sense of an unchanging "2000 years of oppression" now quickly giving way to a completely new society with "neither rich nor poor,"[45] and an uncompromising (rather apolitical) demand that goals be achieved "at all costs." This applied, for instance, to "opportunists" such as those "not fully committed to the revolution" yet "not entirely won over to the side of the enemy." "These elements are not useful to the revolution and the Party, as they are incessantly concerned only with their private, individual interests … Such a stand should be regarded as very dangerous to the revolution and should be exterminated *at all costs*."[46]

Why was the DK regime like it was?

Cambodia and theories of nationalism

In his book *Nations and Nationalism*, the late Ernest Gellner presented an arresting schema of agrarian societies, or "agro-literate polities," before the age of nationalism. They were characterized first by a "major chasm between the great and little traditions," between the literate "high culture" of the ruling "clerisy," and the unwritten folk culture. Second, the "warrior–scribe ruling class" was "trans-ethnic and even trans-political," "easily exportable."[47]

Benedict Anderson, too, in his study *Imagined Communities*, notes that pre-nationalist elites were defined by their "pilgrimages" abroad. For illustration he cites the pre-nationalist name "Kampuchea," a dynasticism derived not from any Khmer ethnic or popular association but by reference to a foreign cultural model. *Kambuja* is an Indian toponym, and India had provided the "sacred language" of Cambodia's pre-modern high culture.[48]

Christendom, Confucianism, colonialism, comintern?

Marxist internationalists, too, could be known for their "pilgrimages abroad." Here I will argue for the possibility that international communism might find a place in such a cultural schema, as the "sacred language" of a bilingual clerisy, with communist cadres playing a role perhaps similar to that of the crusaders, the ulama, or the mandarinate. At first this seems unlikely. The extensive cultural reach of these traditional clerisies lacked comparable depth. As Anderson points out: "There was no idea of systematically imposing the language on the dynast's various subject populations."[49] This is quite different from the practice of communism, which does attempt to impose its culture on the masses.

Anderson adds further features specific to pre-nationalist agrarian societies. Their world-views are often personalized, their representatives "direct intermediaries" with the divine. Their time-world he calls "messianic," with no "idea of a sociological organism," like a nation "moving calendrically" through "empty time," making its own history as a nation is imagined to do.[50] Cosmology and history are thus inseparable, societies are conceived as organized around and under "high centers," and access to truth is monopolized by the guardians of the "script-language." Neither does this sound too much like international communism. But let us examine the effects on each of the process of nationalism.

The rise of nationalism

According to Gellner, "the secret of nationalism" is that "a high culture pervades the whole of society" and "defines it." This occurs, as part of the new division of labor required for industrial society, in the form of mass literacy through a "national" education system. Social mobility or interchangeability of roles (or atomization) requires a general education for all rather than lifelong skill training for some (like the specialists in pre-nationalist agrarian societies). "In the industrial world, high cultures prevail, but they need a state not a church, and they need a state each."[51]

The process of nationalism, therefore, is twofold: the *lateral* constriction of previously trans-ethnic high cultures within newly demarcated state boundaries, and their *vertical* intensification downwards, obliterating and replacing the folk culture and "little traditions" of the masses. In this process the medium is the message.[52] The words of nationalism are not important. What matters is that everyone within a polity or culture, and few from outside, hears or, more aptly, reads them. Newspaper readerships are the seedbeds of nations, schools the hothouses.

Anderson especially stresses these last points, locating the rise of nationalism in "print-capitalism" rather than the general industrial division of labor. "The book was the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity." Anti-colonial novels, describing the common experiences of "a people" under foreign rule, are the clarion calls of most nationalisms. "Print-language ... invents nationalism."[53] Furthermore, the study of languages and the rise of philology opened new vistas on history, as modernity became contrasted with rather than intermingled with antiquity as before. A linear conception of history emerges, and so does the nation as a homogeneous, simultaneous community with a past (and a future), to which it is connected by a recognizable but changing language.[54] This linear conception replaces folk culture and high culture cosmology as the dominant historical world-view.

Philology is thus the midwife of nationalism. Its father is the expansion of state bureaucracies in the nineteenth century, which required a mass education system in a single language of state. Previously "marginalised vernacular-based coalitions of the educated" move to center stage, with access to the sacred language and vast new opportunities for employment based on their role in inducting "the lower classes into political life."

Here Anderson distinguishes such popular or vernacular nationalism based on ethnic awakening from "official nationalism," a reaction to it by traditional ruling groups, which feel threatened. These attempt to pre-empt vernacular movements by officially proclaiming a nationalism from above. Print-capitalism "egged into self-naturalisation every dynasty positioned to do so." The effect is to circumscribe the development of nationalism by harnessing it to more traditional world-views. Anderson argues that the Asian and African nationalisms that emerged after World War II were "a blend of popular and official nationalisms."[55]

In a discussion of nationalism in the *London Review of Books*, Tom Nairn takes issue with Gellner's book for "its powerful bias towards industrialisation and urban–cultural growth as the key factors in nation-building." This view, Nairn argues, "leaves out a lot," particularly the role of the peasants in ethnic nationalism. Nairn even asserted that my book, *The Pol Pot Regime*, is "a great rebuke to Gellner's model."[56] To test the appropriateness of these theories of nationalism for predominantly peasant societies, I shall now apply Gellner's and Anderson's theories to Cambodia. We shall see how elements of both are not only mutually consistent but also help provide an understanding of the Cambodian revolution—though not necessarily as a case of nationalism.

The Cambodian case

Unlike the history of decolonization in other Southeast Asian countries, Anderson's term "official nationalism" seems an apt description of the Cambodian experience. There the dynast Sihanouk jumped onto the anti-French nationalist bandwagon in 1953. He offloaded the grassroots independence ("Issarak") forces and seized the reins himself, holding to the same course. French forces left the country in his hands in 1954. From then on, Sihanouk's was undoubtedly a nationalism of substance, as exemplified by his foreign policy of neutrality, but it was "official," not vernacular. Thus, the Issarak preference for the popular ethnic name for the country, *srok Khmer* ("Khmerland" in English-language publications),[57] was eclipsed. The dynastic name "Kampuchea," "international" in origin, was maintained, but constricted into the new nationalist framework.[58]

Sihanouk's move came in time to head off a vernacular nationalist revolution, because of the very recent development within Cambodia of the prerequisites for nationalism. Gellner's industrial division of labor is notably absent in overwhelmingly agrarian Cambodia, and almost as hard to find are Anderson's ingredients of vernacular nationalism: newspapers, mass education, mass communications, and a national civil service. One reason for their late appearance was that Cambodia was legally insulated as a French "Protectorate," neither a direct colonial territory nor an independent nation developing modern relations with its neighbors. Anderson notes two characteristics of French Indochinese policy: erecting a wall around Indochina to separate the Khmer community from the Thai, and the Vietnamese from China, and second, creating a French-speaking elite.

The first Khmer-language newspaper was, as Anderson's theory suggests, a nationalist one, but it began publication as late as 1936. By contrast, the first Greek newspaper appeared in 1784, Turkish in 1870, Burmese in 1911, Thai and Vietnamese by 1890. The popularly based imagined community of Khmers was only 17 years old in 1953, when it was officially appropriated by a still-colonial monarchy.

Mass education, too was very late in being imposed on Cambodia, while traditional village monastic education had been significantly reduced by the end of the French period. A national education system, a "colossal, highly rationalised, tightly centralised hierarchy, structurally analogous to the state bureaucracy itself,"[59] whose development in Indonesia Anderson posits as a major reason for the emergence of nationhood under Dutch rule, did not appear in Cambodia, at least until the 1960s. In 1950 there were still only 200,000 Khmer students in state primary schools, and by 1953 only 2,700 secondary students. It is not surprising that the first Khmer prose novel was not published until 1938, and that this genre, so crucial to the rise of nationalism elsewhere, took root in Cambodia only after 1950.

Neither was the transportation revolution, "railways and steamships … motor transport and aviation," a significant feature of French colonial rule in Cambodia. Few roads were built, and travel for Khmers within the country remained limited.[60]

The final prerequisite for nationalism stressed by Anderson is colonialism's need for "armies of clerks," bilingual and able to help run a colonial state.[61] In Cambodia, however, such people were recruited from Vietnam more than among the indigenous Khmers.[62] This was not the case in reverse. Khmers who did manage to get a modern education (mostly those born in southern Vietnam, a colony treated as part of metropolitan France) still could not obtain bureaucratic positions outside their ethnic boundaries, i.e. the Protectorate of Cambodia. Though some Khmers studied at Hanoi University in the late colonial period, and then had to compete with ethnic Vietnamese for posts in Phnom Penh afterwards, Khmer career paths stopped at the Vietnamese border. By contrast in colonial Indonesia, members of all ethnic groups could compete for posts in Batavia, capital of a unitary colonial state. Anderson sees this truncation of Indochina as the major reason for the emergence of a separate Khmer nationalism there. He suggests that had French administrative organization been similar to Dutch rule of the Netherlands East Indies, an "Indochinese" nationalism would have emerged similar to the Indonesian kind. If so, an "official nationalist" character of the Cambodian phenomenon is all the more evident. The ceiling on the administrative career is the defining factor, not the reach of the vernacular culture or the boundary of the ethnic catchment area.

Although he does not stress French divide-and-rule tactics that raised walls *within* Indochina, Anderson shows how the emerging Indochinese community of feeling was nipped in the bud by the careful separatism of French educational policies in the second quarter of the twentieth century.[63] Other examples include the forceful French prohibition from Cambodian soil of the Vietnam-based Cao Dai religion, which had attempted to create for itself a cross-border clerisy and proved popular in Cambodia in the late 1920s; and regular French expulsions back to Vietnam of Vietnamese subversives active in Cambodia. All this suggests that the French considered their policy a rearguard, active, holding action. It was no mere preservation of the status quo or accommodation of "millennial hatred" between two peoples. French rule neither "created" divisions between Khmers and Vietnamese, which predated colonial rule, nor did it simply respect the existing racial divide. Colonial power deliberately fossilized it, separating the two nations in a new way. (Orientalism helped, as we have seen.) Such intra-colonial barriers were not only uncharacteristic of the Dutch colonial practice in Indonesia; without French enforcement they could not have been comparably implemented in Cambodia by an independent Khmer monarchy.

So Cambodia's separate colonization by the French as a Protectorate not only proved the saving grace of the Khmer royal family and traditional elite. Its effects also offered them the opportunity to stage a comeback on the shoulders of a youthful anti-French vernacular nationalism. Shut out of an Indochinese "high culture" by French policy, the Khmer vernacular movement felt its way slowly towards cooperation with its Vietnamese equivalent, and was more easily guided in its dynastic, almost pre-nationalist direction: Cambodia's collision course with Vietnam.[64]

This raises the key question about nationalism. Does it require direction

against some other polity competing with it in the same international milieu? In my view, this tends to be true of "official nationalism," if only because it involves a usurpation, and therefore makes good use of foreign hostility to garner needed support. *Vernacular* nationalism is at least more compatible with a self-confident assertion of membership of a fraternity of nations, each with an equal right to exist within its newly defined borders.

Conquer or be conquered

Anderson notes that Japan emerged into the modern world of nations with no such conception of itself. Rather, in Masao's words, Japan's leaders viewed international relations "from positions within the national hierarchy based on the supremacy of superiors over inferiors. Consequently international problems were reduced to a single alternative: conquer or be conquered."[65] Consider again the 1976 view of Pol Pot's Communist Party towards its communist neighbor, Vietnam: "The enemy will continue to exist for 10, 20, or 30 years … The national struggle … will be continuous …"[66] Such a "national struggle" admits no concept of a family of nations existing side by side, but rather betrays one of mutually conflicting forces of nationhood competing for the same terrain, perhaps even literally; note the implication that after, say, 30 years, the opposing nation will no longer "exist." This is reminiscent of Anderson's description of the messianic "time-world" of pre-nationalist high cultures. If it also recalls the similarly hierarchical view of the Japanese elite in the nineteenth century, it may reflect a similarly hierarchical view of the structure of domestic Cambodian society. And one emerging from a similar international isolation: that imposed on Cambodia by French colonialism may have produced ideological results similar to Japan's self-imposed isolation by its traditional rulers before 1868.

Anderson examines a more genuine example of "passionate patriotism," a poem by the Filipino nationalist Jose Rizal before his execution by the Spanish in 1896. He makes three points: the "insignificant" element of hatred it expresses, the fact that the nationality of the tyrants goes unmentioned, and the fact that it was written in their language.[67] On each count Rizal's nationalism, which like many others began not as separatism but a call for equal rights under Spain, is distinguishable from the variant expressed in the national anthem of Democratic Kampuchea.[68]

Similarly, the ultra-nationalist DK claim to the "no. 1 communist state in the world" recalls not only one of Anderson's pre-nationalist "high centers," where access to truth is monopolized by guardians of the "script-language," but the trans-ethnic world-view that also predates nationalism. Here Cambodia's identity is defined in a hierarchical international context, one in which it had to strive for dominance, or cease to exist. This is the transnational ideology of Japanese expansion, and also of what Gellner calls the "agro-literate polity" and its clerisy. The internationalism of the crusaders.

This conquer-or-be-conquered sentiment characterizes Khmer anti-Vietnamese nationalism, but it was not a feature of Khmer anti-French ideology. They seem

quite different phenomena. But the latter was fragile, due to the late appearance of the conditions for modern vernacular nationalism, and was suppressed by Sihanouk's official dynastic nationalism. From 1955, Sihanouk's constant banning of newspapers, harassment of their editors, and suppression of nearly all Khmer-language books exploring history, politics, economics or even literature[69] kept the ethnic-vernacular awakening in a cocoon until his overthrow in 1970. Another whole generation of students, for instance, had been trained in the French medium, divorced from their country's recent history and its vernacular culture. So the soil was still fertile for a new species of official nationalism. The hybrid that sprouted combined a pre-nationalist, traditional kill-or-be-killed hierarchical world-view, with the Khmer Rouge variant of international communism. The result was a neo-dynastic internationalism, complete with communist clerisy—the Paris-educated Khmer Rouge leaders, who with their warlord commanders (e.g. Mok and Ke Pauk) comprised a "warrior–scribe ruling class" as described by Gellner.

Sihanouk's overthrow in 1970 had allowed a brief outpouring of Khmer-language political and historical publications, including memoirs of dissidents. The delayed vernacular awakening was symbolized by the choice of the new, ethnic name for the country, "Khmer Republic," in 1970. With Pol Pot's victory in 1975, however, the re-emergence of dynastic internationalism in the clothing of official nationalism was symbolized by the return to the dynastic name of the country. Its title was now "Democratic *Kampuchea*," an apt combination of pre-nationalist tradition with international communist usage.[70]

There is no need to invoke Pol Pot's 1930s' upbringing in the Cambodian palace, as a distant cousin of Prince Sihanouk, to find a connection between Khmer Rouge communism and Sihanoukist official nationalism. Both represent pre-nationalist, dynastic formations that were "egged into self-naturalization" by a threatened vernacular awakening that sought membership of the family of nations. Faced with such a threat, Sihanouk's official nationalism served to "naturalize" the Prince's "transnational" dynastic and colonial traits; Pol Pot's regime naturalized its Stalinist–internationalist political formation. Each of their regimes suppressed the Cambodian people's emerging consciousness of its past, its vernacular community, and its consciousness of international contacts with other such communities as equal members of an imagined family of nations. Myth played an important role in this process.

Just as nationalism (to Gellner at least) means the domestication of a transnational culture, the Khmer Rouge forced international communism into a national straightjacket. Its lateral, international range was constricted: relations with the USSR and Vietnam were cut and even China could be described as an enemy. Just as nationalism makes a high culture "pervade the whole of society," Khmer Rouge ideology and culture were now imposed downwards on the mass of the people of Cambodia. Leninist categories normally used only for communists, such as "full rights" and "candidate" Party members, were in Democratic Kampuchea applied to the whole population, which was divided into "full rights," "candidates," and "deportees." In the course of a similar nationalist

process, the Philippine Revolution that broke out after Rizal's death under the banner of the Katipunan organization, revolutionary leader Emilio Aguinaldo had eventually abolished the organization, declaring the whole country to be the Katipunan.[71] But otherwise the Philippine Revolution, a genuine popular upheaval, was conducted nowhere near as oppressively as in Cambodia. In DK, the entire population was subjected to the procedures and violent internecine purges of a Stalinist Communist Party. Sexual abstention, too, was nationally enforced, another vertical imposition on the masses of a behavioral code normally limited to Party members, or to the traditional Buddhist monkhood.

Nationalist-style DK popularization of the clerisy's "sacred language" (again, Gellner's term) also led to general usage of a Pali terminology that was formerly the preserve of the monkhood. The country was divided into new administrative zones designated by a compass-point, and their names were not Khmer but Pali (e.g. *phumipeak niredey*, "Southwest Zone"). Other unfamiliar, Pali "high culture" terms, even for "boys" (*komara*) and "girls" (*komarey*), became obligatory usage in DK.

Some elite language was repressed rather than generalized, such as the urban word *nyam* ("eat") which was banned in favor of the rural *hop*. Like the evacuation of the towns, this contrasts with Gellner's point about nationalism's relationship with the industrial division of labor, "talking of peasants and making townsmen."[72] Democratic Kampuchea has often been seen as a form of utopian socialism, an inchoate, pre-industrial, agrarian form of socialism. It is also possible to describe the Khmer Rouge phenomenon as a kind of agro-literate society wracked by "utopian nationalism."

The most utopian policy of all was probably national "self-reliance." It highlighted the dilemma of forcing the international communist square peg into the nationalist round hole. "Self-reliance" is a common nationalist theme: the first Katipunan leader, Andres Bonifacio, warned Filipinos to "rely upon ourselves alone,"[73] as Sinn Fein did the Irish. But Democratic Kampuchea pursued this ideal together with communism, a unique combination best described as "communism in one country." It repressed "privateness" (*kar ekachun*) in all fields and abolished domestic markets and wages; eschewing overseas markets as well, it further limited national income and incentives to produce. This required the state to bully the individual producer more directly than ever before in history. Collectives could not be allowed to mediate. The ironic trend, therefore, was for national self-reliance to degenerate into enforced "individual self-reliance," i.e. personalized performance targets for each worker. Interestingly, a similar process had emerged in a quite different context. When Australia was established as an isolated convict labor colony, without cash wages and far from international trade routes, an early feature was personal labor targets for each convict.[74]

The same process of involution applied to the concept of race, another cross-border factor to be constricted within national boundaries. Khmers in neighboring countries predictably showed little interest in the DK project, so their role, like that of the international communist movement, was thrown back

onto the domestic Cambodian population. They had to supply food and cannon fodder for the army that would "liberate" Lower Cambodia from the Vietnamese. With the exchange of the international for the national stage, minorities within the country became "enemies," and new allegedly racial categories appeared within the Khmer population, such as "Khmer bodies with Vietnamese minds."

Two "transnational" ideologies—one traditional and dynastic, one modern and communist—provided the high culture from which Democratic Kampuchea's ultra-nationalism actually derived. In a process similar in structure (not in implementation) to the making of nationalism elsewhere, this combination of international cultures was constricted within national boundaries and, with its accompanying myths, forcibly imposed upon the population of Cambodia. Although modern international communism, like nationalism, usually imposed itself vertically upon the population, the Khmer Rouge version of communism was imposed with much more penetration than in any other case. The reason was its amalgamation with the ideology and myths of a pre-nationalist, trans-ethnic, early twentieth century dynastic/colonial high culture, with which it shared the same process of lateral constriction and vertical imposition that elsewhere was characteristic of nationalism's transformation of a high culture. The unique historical amalgam was also an important factor in the hierarchical DK conception of its international relations, and in the genocidal outcome for Cambodia's both "foreign" minorities and the Khmer majority.

But the project was ultimately unsuccessful. The epic confrontation with Vietnam brought an end to the DK regime, and as we saw at the start of this chapter, the actions of the myth-dominated DK regime provoked the emergence of an indigenous Cambodian resistance, and of a new government with its own spontaneous, vernacular process of ethnic myth-making.

Notes and References

1. *Van Hoa Nghe Thuat* (Hanoi), Vol 10, 1978, p 67. I am grateful to David G. Marr for sending me a copy of this cartoon at the time. For American myths about post-war Indochina, see Grant Evans, *The Yellow Rainmakers*, London: Verso, 1983, and H. Bruce Franklin, *M.I.A, or Myth-Making in America* (New York: Lawrence Hill, 1992). The most striking example of contemporary French historical mythology comes from the pen of François Ponchaud: "And so in 1863 Cambodia became a French Protectorate. For ninety years, the Khmer people and their monarchs were able to doze out of the way of the great worldwide changes, an island of happiness isolated in another century." "Introduction (Historique)," in Esmeralda Luciolli, ed., *Le Mur de bamboo* (Paris: Médecins sans Frontières/Regine Deforges, 1988), p 14.
2. *Black Paper: Facts and Evidences of the Acts of Aggression and Annexation of Vietnam against Kampuchea* (Phnom Penh: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Democratic Kampuchea, 1978) (reprinted with excisions by New York: G. K. RAM, 1979).
3. See, for instance, Serge Thion, "The ingratitude of the crocodiles: the 1978 Cambodian *Black Paper*," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol 12, No 4, 1980, pp 38–54, at pp 39–40.
4. According to Khmer chronicles, King Barom Reachea IV is alleged to have said in 1617: "When the Thais have defeated and subjected the Lao and Mon countries, because of their resentment towards us, they will certainly raise troops to come and attack our country again. It is fruitful for us to contract an alliance with the Vietnamese kingdom … If the Thais raise troops to come [to attack us], we will take the troops of the Vietnamese kingdom to help us make war, so that the Thais can no longer harm our country." *Chroniques Royales du Cambodge (de 1594 à 1677)*, translated and with an Introduction by Mak Phoeun (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1981), p 120. Barom Reachea's son Chey Chetta married the Vietnamese princess Ang Cuv (as well as a Lao wife). In the 1640s, their sons rebelled against Ibrahim,

Cambodia's one Muslim king, and asked their cousin the Vietnamese monarch to send troops to assist them. The Vietnamese army captured Ibrahim, and he died in Hue. When Chey Chetta's part-Vietnamese son was in turn overthrown and murdered, some members of the royal family fled to Vietnam and again secured Hue's intervention, but the Vietnamese force was driven out, with their nominee for the throne following them to the borderlands. Chey Chetta IV reigned from 1675 to 1695 despite sporadic Vietnamese and Thai interventions, and managed to reconstruct much of the Khmer social order, while accepting formal Vietnamese suzerainty.

5. *Black Paper*, p 9. It is not at all clear that such an incident occurred, though it has enjoyed wide currency. It is not mentioned in David P. Chandler's authoritative accounts of the events of 1810–1822. The earliest record is in manuscripts compiled in 1856 and 1869, over 40 years after the alleged incident. See Chandler, *A History of Cambodia* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1983), pp 117ff.; Chandler, "An anti-Vietnamese rebellion in early nineteenth century Cambodia: pre-colonial imperialism and a pre-nationalist response," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol VI, No 1, 1975, pp 16–24, at p 20; and Chandler, "Songs from the edge of the forest: perceptions of order in three Cambodian texts," in David K. Wyatt and Alexander Woodside, eds., *Moral Order and the Question of Change: Essays on Southeast Asian Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Council, Monograph No 24, 1982), pp 53–77, at p 75, note 16.
6. Serge Thion, "The ingratitude of the crocodiles," p 41. See also Thion, "What's in a name?," *Phnom Penh Post*, January 1–14, 1993, p 12.
7. Nayan Chanda, *Brother Enemy: The War After the War. A History of Indochina Since the Fall of Saigon* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp 52–53, gives the incorrect meanings for both *Yuon* and *Cao Mien*.
8. I am grateful to Huynh Sang Thong for this information.
9. See also *Henri Mouhot's Diary*, edited and abridged by Christopher Pym (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp 114–115. The same view of the decline of the neighboring Chams was advanced by Antoine Cabaton, who described them as once having been "one of the great powers of Indochina," but that now (1910), "only a few miserable relics of the race remain." "Chams," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol 3, 1910, pp 341–342.
10. Anthony Read and David Fisher, *The Deadly Embrace: Hitler, Stalin, and the Nazi—Soviet Pact. 1939–1941* (New York: Norton, 1988), pp 241–242. Emphasis added. For an explanation of the psychology of the Nazi belief in "total annihilation," see *Psychopolitical Analysis: Selected Writings of Nathan Leites*, pp 284–285.
11. Sarin Chhak, *Les frontières du Cambodge* (Paris: Dailloz, 1966), pp 143–144; map 4, "L'Arondissement de Tayninh," shows the salient transferred to Cambodia at the same time as a small transfer of coastal territory to Vietnam.
12. Anthony Barnett, "Cambodia Will Never Disappear," *New Left Review*, Vol 180, 1990, pp 101–125.
13. For details of this 1949 claim, see V.M. Reddi, *A History of the Cambodian Independence Movement, 1863–1954* (Tirupati: Sri Venkatesvara University, 1973), pp 174–175, note 24.
14. See Ben Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power: A History of Communism in Kampuchea, 1930–1975* (London: Verso, 1985), p 46.
15. Maslyn Williams, *The Land In Between: The Cambodian Dilemma* (Sydney: Collins, 1969).
16. David P. Chandler, *The Land and People of Cambodia* (New York: Lippincott, 1972), p 11.
17. James Fenton, "What about Cambodia?" *New Statesman*, January 6, 1978.
18. Pol Pot claimed the CPK was formed in 1960, the year he was elected to its Central Committee, though the Party had existed since 1951. He similarly ignored Cambodia's 1907–1914 and 1961 territorial gains, preferring to date national progress only from the birth of the Party.
19. Pol Pot's September 27, 1977 speech.
20. For a discussion of the evidence for this, see Ben Kiernan, "The genocide in Cambodia, 1975–1979," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol 22, No 2, 1990, pp 35–40.
21. *Interview of Comrade Pol Pot ... to the Delegation of Yugoslav Journalists in Visit to Democratic Kampuchea* (Phnom Penh, Democratic Kampuchea, March, 1978), p 5. See also Slavko Stanic, "Kampuchea–socialism without a model," *Socialist Thought and Practice* (Belgrade), Vol XVIII, No 10, 1978, pp 67–84.
22. Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power* (London, 1985), pp 30–32, 121, quoting Pol Pot in *Khemara Nisit*, Paris, Vol 14, August, 1952.
23. Democratic Kampuchea press release, January 5, 1979.
24. Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War: Indochina since the Fall of Saigon* (London, Verso, 1984).
25. Kiernan, "Pol Pot and the Kampuchean Communist movement," quoted on p 233.
26. Ben Kiernan, "New light on the origins of the Vietnam—Kampuchea conflict," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol 12, No 4, 1980, pp 61–65.

27. Author's interview with Kong Aun, Minister of Refugee Affairs in the Khmer Republic, Phnom Penh, February, 1975.
28. Chanthou Boua *et al.*, *Pol Pot Plans the Future*, pp 45–46.
29. Kiernan, "New light on the origins of the Vietnam—Kampuchea conflict," p 61, quoting *Tung Padevat* (*Revolutionary Flags*), 1976, p 21. Note that "we" are never "weak."
30. In Tram Kak district of the Southwest Zone, heartland of DK, local officials proclaimed in late 1978: "If the Vietnamese are all gone, the Khmer remain; if the Khmer are all gone, the Vietnamese remain."
31. The full broadcast can be found in British Broadcasting Corporation, summary of World Broadcasts, FE/5813/A3/1–4, esp pp 2, 4.
32. Ben Kiernan, "Orphans of genocide: the Cham Muslims of Kampuchea under Pol Pot," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol 20, No 4, 1988, pp 2–33; "Kampuchea's ethnic Chinese under Pol Pot: a case of systematic social discrimination," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol 16, No 1, 1986, pp 18–29. See also Ben Kiernan, "The survival of Cambodia's ethnic minorities," *Cultural Survival*, Vol 14, No 3, 1990, pp 64–66.
33. Ben Kiernan, *Cambodia: The Eastern Zone Massacres* (Columbia University New York: Center for the Study of Human Rights, 1986).
34. See Ben Kiernan, "Kampuchea and Stalinism," in Colin Mackerras and Nick Knight, eds, *Marxism in Asia* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp 232–250, quotation at p 246.
35. See Chanthou Boua, David P. Chandler and Ben Kiernan, eds, *Pol Pot Plans the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea, 1976–77* (New Haven: Yale Southeast Asia Council, Monograph No 33, 1988), p 219.
36. For the impact of the bombing, see Ben Kiernan, "The American bombardment of Kampuchea, 1969–1973," *Vietnam Generation*, Vol 1, No 1, 1989, pp 4–41.
37. For the argument that Democratic Kampuchea was "a victorious peasant revolution, perhaps the first real one in modern times," see Michael Vickery, *Cambodia 1975–1982* (Boston: South End, 1984).
38. See Ben Kiernan, "Pol Pot and the Kampuchean Communist movement," in Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, eds, *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942–1981* (London: Zed Books, 1982), pp 227–317, full quotation at p 242.
39. See Ben Kiernan, "Maoism and Cambodia," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, New Orleans, April 14, 1991.
40. See Ben Kiernan, "Wild chickens, farm chickens and cormorants: Kampuchea's Eastern Zone under Pol Pot," in David P. Chandler and Ben Kiernan, eds, *Revolution and its Aftermath in Kampuchea: Eight Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Council, 1983), pp 136–211.
41. David P. Chandler, "The assassination of resident Bardez: a premonition of revolt in colonial Cambodia," *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol 70, 1982, pp 35–49.
42. *Pol Pot Plans the Future*, p 47.
43. See Kiernan, "Wild chickens, farm chickens and cormorants," pp 182ff.
44 Anthony Barnett, Chanthou Boua and Ben Kiernan, "Bureaucracy of death: documents from inside Pol Pot's torture machine," *New Statesman*, May 2, 1980; and "Planning the past: the forced confessions of Hu Nim," in *Pol Pot Plans the Future*, pp 227–317. There is no evidence of any CPK Central Committee meetings taking place in the DK period.
45 See David P. Chandler, "Seeing red: perceptions of Cambodian history in democratic Kampuchea," in *Revolution and its Aftermath in Kampuchea*, pp 34–56.
46. Phnom Penh Radio, April 10, 1978. Emphasis added.
47. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp 8, 77, 14, 141.
48. Benedict R. O'Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). Anderson suggests the same for the early nineteenth century name for "Vietnam," Dai Nam, which means "Great South" in Chinese. In this case the argument is weaker because, as Hue Tam Ho Tai has pointed out, the ethnic name "Viet" did appear in previous names for the country. It may be worth considering a possible implication of this: that vernacular nationalism appeared early in Vietnam, because of a high degree of cultural literacy, among other factors.
49. Benedict R. O'Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*.
50. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp 29, 31.
51. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp 18, 72.
52. Gellner, p 127.
53. Anderson, pp 38, 122.
54. Anderson, p 132.
55. Anderson, pp 127, 104.
56. Tom Nairn, "Cleaning up," *London Review of Books*, October 3, 1996, pp 11–14; review of Ben Kiernan,

The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975–1979 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).

57. See this usage in *Vietnam News Service*, No 14, April 10, 1953, p 5. Prior to this the Vietnamese allies of the Issaraks had used the English term "Cambodia."
58. Bernard Funck provides an interesting comparison with Laos, noting that the popular name of the ruling party, *Pathet Lao* ("Lao country"), "first appeared as the name of a nationalist publication sponsored by the French during the Second World War and to which Prince Souphanouvong was an occasional contributor." In this case, the French reinforced Lao ethnic nationalism against Thai irredentism.
59. Anderson, p 111.
60. This is not to understate the revolutionary impact of those roads and travel opportunities that did come into existence under the French.
61. Anderson, p 106.
62. Such clerks were often trilingual–in French, Vietnamese and Khmer–while other participants in the new colonial economy of Cambodia, such as the indentured ethnic Vietnamese rubber plantation workers, also learned Khmer though rarely French.
63. Anderson, p 116. His implication is that the French administrative truncation of Indochina conflicted with its unitary educational system, frustrating educated Khmer who could not rise beyond the Cambodian administration despite Indochinese educational qualifications (e.g. from Hanoi University), and that this explains Khmer anti-Vietnamese nationalism. The problem with this is that the generation who had to face this problem were not anti-Vietnamese in their nationalism, as Michael Vickery has shown. Son Ngoc Thanh was a good example of a non-communist nationalist who was anti-French for these reasons, not anti-Vietnamese. Cambodia's founding communists were of the same anti-colonial ilk. It was the *next* generation of Khmer nationalism, educated in isolation from its Vietnamese equivalent, that adopted an anti-Vietnamese posture.
64. Although Sihanouk maintained an enlightened neutral policy during the Vietnam War, he never shook off his traditional ideological disposition to see Cambodia and Vietnam forever at loggerheads. Even at the height of his neutralism, in the 1960s, he stated several times that the Vietnamese killing each other in civil war was good for Cambodia, and he signaled his interest in better US relations by remarking that all Vietnamese would always be Cambodia's chief enemies, and that the US role in Vietnam "was good since it got rid of so many hereditary enemies." See Michael Vickery, "Looking back at Cambodia," in Kiernan and Boua, eds, *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942–1981* (London, 1982), p 107.
65. Quoted in Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p 92.
66. *Tung Padevat* (*Revolutionary Flags*), p 21.
67. Anderson, pp 131–132.
68. For the text, see *Democratic Kampuchea is Moving Forward* (Phnom Penh: Democratic Kampuchea, 1977), p 2. It begins: "Bright red blood which covers towns and plains, of Kampuchea, our Motherland, Sublime blood of workers and peasants, Sublime blood of revolutionary men and women fighters! The blood changing into unrelenting hatred …"
69. Charles Meyer, *Derrière le sourire khmer* (Paris: Plon, 1971), p 181: "no serious work of history, politics, economics or literature has been written and published in the Khmer language over the past fifteen years." One exception is Hou Yuon, *Pahnyaha Sahakor* (*The Cooperative Question*) (Phnom Penh, 1956) (republished 1964), translated under the title "Solving rural problems," in Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, eds, *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942–1981* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1982), pp 134–165. Another is a book of poems by Keng Vannsak, entitled *Chett Kromum* (*Virgin Heart*), published in 1954 before the first of two stints in Sihanouk's political prisons, and republished in 1963, before the second. Another is Eng Sut, *Aekasar Mahaboros Khmaer* (*Documents on Khmer Heroes*) (Phnom Penh, 1969).
70. Given the dynastic overtones of the name "Kampuchea," the new name "Democratic Kampuchea" also proclaimed a "democratic" monarchy, in Pol Pot's communist sense of a collective, not a personalized institution. It would be the monarchy of the educated elite which Sihanouk's monarchy had spurned.
71. U. Mahajani, *Philippine Nationalism*, p 200.
72. Gellner, p 107.
73. Quoted in Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines* (1979), pp 102–106.
74. Robert G. Castle and Jim Hagan, "Aboriginal labour in the white economy–the first century," paper presented to the *Peripheral Visions* conference, Townsville, Australia, July, 1989, p 3: "For the first 30 years of settlement the government did not provide shelter for convicts, so a system arose whereby convicts worked part of the day for the government and had time free to work on their own account after 3 p.m., so that they could obtain shelter and extra rations. This system evolved into one in which convicts could have the rest of the week free once they had accomplished their specific tasks." The authors cite J. B. Hirst, *Convict Society and its Enemies* (Allen and Unwin, 1983), p 36.