

Khmer Rouge

Nationalism and Mass Killing: Perception of The Vietnamese



KHMER ROUGE NATIONALISM AND MASS KILLING:
PERCEPTION OF THE VIETNAMESE

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Abstract

Talking about Pol Pot as a regime as well as Pol Pot as a person, most people in Cambodia would start with the atrocity of the regime under which about 1.7 million people perished from mid-1975 to early 1979. Yet, Pol Pot and his followers claimed that what they did was to protect the nation; their crimes were partly hidden under the banner of their nationalism. This research book argues that the nationalism of Pol Pot during Democratic Kampuchea was an extreme form of Cambodian nationalism which resulted from the imagine threat of enemies, particularly Vietnam, leading to mass killing in the name of defending the nation. “Yvon Invader” was historically defined by the Khmer Rouge group as well as Lon Nol group to be one element of this kind of nationalism. The interviews with former Khmer Rouge cadres, especially those who had worked closely with Pol Pot, reveal part of the factors behind the mass killing during Democratic Kampuchea, particularly, the Vietnamese civilians and their Khmer associates. Moreover, party documents, like the Revolutionary Flag, has been used to feature Cambodian nationalism during Democratic Kampuchea against the Vietnamese. Going back to the colonial period, Nagara Vatta newspaper did prove the nationalist idea against Vietnamese. Additionally, during the first half of the 1970s, a strong nationalist sentiment against Vietnamese can be found in several publications and historical events. In this research book, I firstly review the historical background of Cambodian nationalism. This is followed by a discussion of a form of nationalism against

Vietnam during Democratic Kampuchea. Finally, the consequences of the nationalism against Vietnam are analyzed. The study suggests that the form of nationalism during Democratic Kampuchea was dangerous for humanity. In current political arena in Cambodia, the term “Yuon Invader” still exist and it somehow follow the same pattern of perceiving the Vietnamese.

Contents

Foreword	i
Preface by Henry Locard	ii
Preface by Peter Manning	vii
Abstract	x
Acknowledgements	xii
Chapter I Introduction1	1
Background.....	1
Objectives	11
Definition of Nationalism	15
Nationalism during Democratic Kampuchea.....	17
Arguments.....	18
Chapter II Historical Background of Cambodian Nationalism ...21	
Cambodia-Vietnam Relations from 17 th to 19 th Century	21
Perception of Vietnamese during the French Colonial Period.....	27
Perceived National Traitors during Sangkum Reastr Niyum.....	30
Cambodian Nationalism during Khmer Republic (1970-75).....	37
Chapter III Nationalism during the Khmer Rouge Regime54	
Pol Pot’s Nationalism Credential in the Eyes of His Supporters	55
Anti-Vietnamese Nationalism and Chauvinism: “Yuon Invader” ...	63
Chapter IV Nationalism of the Khmer Rouge and Mass Killing ..87	
Elimination of Vietnamese Civilians in Cambodia.....	88
War against Vietnam	98
Associate Enemies in the East Zone	109
Chapter V Conclusion	123
References	132
The author	141