

Would the international community let Kampuchea experience the same fate as that of the Baltic states?

but single socio-economic frame embracing Laos and Kampuchea. Indeed, the concept of "gradual implementation of labour distribution, ensuring an effective use of labour and land potentials of the three countries", put forward by Vo Van Kiet at the First Indochinese Planning Conference in February 1984, constitutes the new rationale for the socio-economic integration among the Indochinese countries.¹⁰⁶ A Vietnamese dissident source reported that in October 1982, Vietnamese demographers and settlement planners in Hanoi have been ordered by the party leadership to project "a comprehensive scheme of transborder migrations within the new frame of Indochina."¹⁰⁷ Consisting of different progressive phases, the programme would affect some 7 million Vietnamese to be resettled within a period of 20 years. If confirmed, the current migration trends of Vietnamese settlers into Kampuchea constitute merely the floating tip of the iceberg. As a Khmer scholar, Lao Mong Hay, pessimistically projected: "If such possibilities materialize, then there might no longer be ethnic Vietnamese civilians, but an ethnic Cambodian minority in Kampuchea instead."¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

Nearly six years after the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, the Vietnamisation process is now well under way. The First Indochinese Culture Conference, convened in Phnom Penh in April 1984, concluded with a statement projecting "the establishment — an important objective — of a new culture, which must be popularized in all localities of each country."¹⁰⁹ In fact, the Vietnamisation of schooling is accelerating, while the Vietnamese advisors are encouraged to take Khmer wives. Regular pools of young Khmers, as well as young Vietnamese, aged from 14 to 20, are being given six-months of indoctrination training, in order to propagate all over Kampuchea the new ideological mould, based on the cult of Ho Chi Minh, the defence and promotion of the so-called collective mastery, the Indochinese solidarity and socialist internationalism.

The Vietnamisation of education and culture in Kampuchea constitutes only the most visible aspect of the process. In fact, the Phnom Penh regime is today locked, completely, within an integrated system of domination that the VCP has constantly learnt and improved upon through its experience in South Vietnam and in Laos. Furthermore, the fascination that the Soviet expansionist pattern has for long exerted on the Hanoi leadership has been such that, as good disciples of Stalin, they have transposed and adapted somehow or other, the Soviet model in Indochina. At best, Kampuchea as well as Laos, are becoming satellites of a new kind. At worse, Kampuchea and Laos are destined to experience the fate of the forgotten Baltic countries: Lithuania, Letonia, Estonia.

This is the perspective from Hanoi. Any assessment of the situation in Kampuchea must be based on an in-depth knowledge of how the Vietnamese domination system works and what are the basic trends at work within this country. In Hanoi's view, the Vietnamisation of Kampuchea, as well as that of Laos, constitutes undoubtedly the last phase of a strategy which would assure the VCP the final victory: the total domination of Indochina. And as long as the current leadership runs Vietnam — almost the same leaders who have drawn and carried on the Great Design of an Indochinese federation — most probably, there will be no change in Hanoi's perspective and no slight hope for a compromise in the Kampuchean crisis.

However, this doesn't mean that there is not hope for Kampuchea and its people. This is because of two major reasons: Firstly, it is predictable that the Vietnamisation process is also producing its own "perverse effects", thus creating a generalised enmity against the Vietnamese occupying forces. The status of "liberators" the Khmer people were inclined in the beginning of 1979 to accord to the Vietnamese would not have lasted very long. Secondly, since the formation of the Coalition

Part II: The Vietnamization Process

At the beginning, the Vietnamese and the PRK were greeted as liberators. The Vietnamese invasion had indeed contributed to deliver the Khmers from a genocidal regime. A few years later, however, the oft-repeated joke in Phnom Penh was: "We thought things would change. But we realize we are in the same car; we have only changed the driver".

(A) Administrative and Political Organization

In order to understand the present regime better, it would be useful to recall that most of the PRK leaders are former KR leaders. Except for a few of them, most were early

companions of Pol Pot, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary, and other representatives of the former Democratic Kampuchea government. Many of today's cadres come from the same mold, and have the same background as those men.⁷ Their official biographies often mention that they had been followers of the revolution from the early days until they became aware of the "true nature" of Pol Pot who had turned into a "traitor to the revolution". Once they realized the mistakes of the "Angkar", they escaped to Vietnam, at the end of 1978, to create the National Liberation Front.

The Cambodians were subjected to heavy doses of political education in the form of radio propaganda and regular political meetings, seminars and courses

The presence of many former KR leaders, not only at the government level but also at the local level, surprised me at first. In many instances, when I singled out someone upcountry and queried him about the background of the chairman of his revolutionary committee, the answer would be that he had been the chief of the cooperative under the KR.

The continuity between the previous regime and the present one explained some major aspects of the ideology. The language used in official speeches or on radio, in schools and in text books closely resembled that used in the radio broadcasts or other propaganda media during the Democratic Kampuchea period. The themes espoused were also identical. The population was constantly exhorted over loud-speakers to fight for the revolution and against enemies manipulated from outside. "Revolutionary" qualities were exalted. Food production was presented as a heroic struggle against "sabotage". References to the splendor of the former Khmer civilization of Angkor were repeated daily.

After a while, when I was able to win the confidence of the people around me, I began to get confessions of how crucial it was for civil servants or cadres to prove that they were active supporters of the politics of the regime. Besides attendance at political meetings and the various military duties incumbent on the entire population, people had to also undertake responsibilities within the *snaul* ("core") and later within the party. The *snaul* is an organization aimed at preparing potential candidates for membership of the party. It stands below the party and represents the first step for a cadre who is looking forward to any position of responsibility within the system.

Every family was expected to attend political meetings once or twice a week, to provide one or two of its members for mandatory labor duties, and to pay heavy taxes such as the "patriotic contribution to the defense of the Fatherland" (in the shape of the K5 plan). People watched over each other and did not trust anyone else — their former friends, colleagues, and even their own family members.

A great deal of time in hospitals, schools, ministries or other public services was devoted to political meetings and seminars. During these sessions, the technical staff had to discuss events such as the official visit of a representative of some "brother country", the last speech of Fidel Castro, the yearly international festival of the Communist Youth ... Full-time seminars were also held occasionally. Following the Fifth Congress of the party in October 1985, for instance, the whole medical staff of my hospital had to attend a one-month seminar to study the resolutions of the Congress. As a result, the outpatient clinic had to be closed for several days.

In addition to these sessions, higher ranking civil servants were obliged to attend a six-month course at one of the city political education centers in Ho Chi Minh City. Some 300-400 persons were trained there every year. During this period, the "trainees" endured 8-10 hours of lectures on marxism, discussions, and self-criticism sessions. They were not allowed to leave the education center, except to visit model factories. This occurred once every two or three months and the trainees went as a group. Evenings were devoted to learning Vietnamese, and Sundays to doing manual labor.

Routine political training sessions for civil servants were organized two or three times a week. In addition, once every two or three years, every civil servant had to "go to

Control over the population was tight, leading to widespread fear and distrust

the base", which meant he had to spend a few months living in a village and working as a peasant. For most of my Cambodian counterparts, "going to the base" reminded them of the years spent toiling in the rice fields under the KR. "Going to the base" also involved behaving and dressing as the villagers did in order to show that they were "close to the masses" and eager to imitate them.

At the hospital where I was working, weekly meetings were devoted to criticism and self-criticism. Doctors and nurses were supposed to report the "mistakes" and "counter-revolutionary" attitudes of their colleagues. This practice made the political organization of society under the PRK not significantly different from KR rule. The staff had to fill out "biographies" on a regular basis, usually two or three times a year. These biographies had to include extensive information on the social class of the individual and his or her relatives, his or her activities during the previous regimes, whether the person in question had relatives abroad and whether he had participated in the Lon Nol administration. Doctors had to fill out a complete notebook containing every detail of their lives. Any lie in a biography could raise suspicions of the person in question being an enemy.

The political pressure was greater upon civil servants and cadres than upon the rest of the population. Nevertheless, everyone was subjected to political constraints and severe control by the party. The entire population was organized into groups of 10 families (*krom*), reunited into sections (*knum*) in the countryside, *mondul* in the cities) and districts (*srok* in the countryside, *sangkhat* in the cities).⁸ The districts were run by a revolutionary committee with extensive powers over the population. The committees were responsible for security, political education and drafting men for the army and for the K5 plan. Curfews were still in force, from 8.00 or 9.00 pm to 5.00 am. They were more or less strictly enforced, depending on the region and on political or military events.

As a rule, any person entering a village or a city needed a permit, regardless of whether he was planning to stay just for a few days or to settle there permanently. Group leaders and neighbors were supposed to report any new arrival in their building or their section. It was usually possible to avoid such reporting by giving money or gifts to the group leader, but discoveries eventually resulted in arrests.

Fear and distrust were widespread and maintained by stories and rumors of arrests and detentions. This atmosphere of distrust permeated the hospital where I worked. Most of the staff and patients seemed to share the same distrust of the regime but never expressed it unless they were alone with a foreigner. "The party has 'pineapple eyes' and can see everything", the Khmers used to say. People were frightened of the political police and terrified by accounts of "T3", the Phnom Penh central jail, now used to detain political prisoners. Recent reports from human rights organizations confirm that there is practically no judicial system in the PRK and that arbitrary arrests and detentions are still the rule.⁹

Detention conditions were said to be appalling. Many former prisoners reported consistent stories of people being chained up in dark cells, completely isolated for months and barely surviving on famine rations. Torture was systematically used as a means to obtain confessions or just as a punishment. After years of detention, political prisoners were submitted to lengthy periods of reeducation in labor camps such as T5, in Kompong Cham province. Further, families had no way of communicating with the prisoners or even of obtaining information about their fates. Very often relatives forgot whether the prisoner was still alive or not. Extrajudicial executions were often reported.

Years after the fall of the KR regime, the human rights situation in Cambodia remained bleak. There was no right of association or expression, no press freedom

and no freedom of movement within the country. Everyone seemed to dislike the regime but any kind of open discontent was inconceivable.

*Every ministry,
public service,
school and hospital
had several Viet-
namese "experts"*

Government of Democratic Kampuchea, the Khmer people have shown their preference, thus creating the conditions for a steady development of the Khmer resistance movement.

Finally, the fate of Kampuchea will depend on the capacity of resistance of its people, the will to fight of its nationalist leadership, as well as the degree of support the Kampuchean people deserve from the international community and on the unity of the Asean countries. □

Footnotes

1. SPK, Phnom Penh, 20 Feb 84, *FBIS*, IV, 23 Feb 84, H4
2. To Quyen "Dang Nhan Dan Cach Mang Cam-Pu-Chia", *Tap Chi Cong San*, Part III, Dec 83, p. 71
3. *Ibid.*, p. 80
4. *Ibid.*, Part II, Nov 83, p. 58. It is commonly believed that the Khmer Vietminh regroupes in 1954 number 5,000 Norodom Sihanouk, *War and Hope*, NY, Pantheon Books, 1980, p. 15
5. Lucy Dumas-Soula, *La Troisième Guerre d'Indochine*, Paris, Institut d'Etudes de Defense Nationale, 1982, unpublished paper, p. 122
6. *Idem*
7. To Quyen, *op cit.* p. 68 in 16 & 17
8. Paul Quinn-Judge, "Too Few Communists", *FEER*, 16 Feb 84, pp. 20-22
9. Data collected from Pham Van Ba, former NLF-PRG official in Phnom Penh and Paris, May 83 HCM city
10. Paul Quinn-Judge, *op cit.* p. 20, Norodom Sihanouk, *op cit.* p. 23
11. Elizabeth Becker, "Kampuchea in 1983 Further From Peace", *Asian Survey*, Jan 84, p. 44
12. Nayan Chanda, "Now a Non-Person", *FEER*, 18 Dec 81
13. T. Carney, "Kampuchea in 1981 Fragile Stalemate", *Asian Survey*, Jan 82, pp. 81-82
14. Nayan Chanda, *op cit.* & "The Indochina Linchpin", *FEER*, 1 Jan 82
15. T. Carney, *op cit.* p. 82
16. The Economist Intelligence Unit (hereafter EIU) *Indochina*, No 1, 84, p. 17
17. *Idem*
18. To Quyen, *op cit.* Part III, p. 79
19. T. Carney, *op cit.* p. 82
20. Paul Quinn-Judge, "Too Few Communists", *op cit.* p. 22
21. Radio Phnom Penh, Domestic Service (DS), 9 Mar 84, *FBIS*, IV, 12 Mar 84, H1
22. Data given by a Vietnamese dissident source close to Truong Nhu Tang, former PRG Justice Minister, Paris, Jun 84, a Thai source put the figure at 5,000-7,000, see Dr. Khien Theeravit, "Asean-Vietnam dialogue Don't fall for the trap", *The Nation Review*, 12 Sep 84
23. Ben Kiernan, "Kampuchea 1979-81", *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1982, p. 194
24. After extensive interviewing of Khmer refugees, conclusion reached by Marie Alexandrine Martin, "Le processus de Vietnamisation au Cambodge", *Politique Internationale*, etc 84, pp. 177-191
25. Radio Phnom Penh DS, 17 Feb 84, *FBIS*, IV, 22 Feb 84, H5
26. Quang Vinh has been officially mentioned as Chief expert accredited to Kampuchea by Radio Phnom Penh DS, 27 Jan 84, *FBIS*, IV, 1 Feb 84, H12
27. John McBeth, "Bureaucrats From B68", *FEER*, 15 Oct 1982, pp. 16-17
28. EIU, *Indochina*, No 2, 84, p. 16, *The Nation Review*, 14 Apr 84
29. Ly Binh, "Ke Hoach Thuc Hien Viet Nam Hoa o Kampuchia", *Tin Viet Nam*, Sep 83, pp. 28-29, *Bangkok Post* 20 Jun 83
30. Data collected from an official of CGDK, Bangkok, Sep 84
31. Information about the COKA is given by a Vietnamese dissident source close to Truong Nhu Tang, Paris, Jun 84. As for B68, A50 & A40, Thai intelligence sources reported by John McBeth, "Bureaucrats from B68", *op cit.*, see also T. Carney, *op cit.* p. 82