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NINE MONTHS WITH THE MAQUIS

*(Translation from the
French by U.S. Embassy,
Phnom Penh, May 1973.)*En Route

On April 19, 1972, at Tonle Bati, we were received by officers of a Khmer Rouge battalion commanded by a former primary schoolteacher who had disappeared from Phnom Penh in 1970.

On April 20, at Basset (Kg. Speu) we were presented to the President of the Srok Committee (the equivalent of the Aphibalsrok) named HAM (a revolutionary name). He was a former primary teacher at the primary school of Santhor Mok, disappeared from Phnom Penh in 1966. He was about 40 robust, short, stocky, bald and taciturn.

On May 6, at Veal Loveang, in Phong District (Kg. Speu) we received a visit from NONG SUON (called Chamroeun Chey), Political Commissar of the Saang-Koh Thom Region (Damban No. 25). He was about 40, tall, with a sonorous voice, bronze complexion and one broken tooth.

On May 10: a meeting in the grounds of the primary school of Kat Phlounk which grouped more than 10 thousand men. Khmer Rouge cadres of the province and the srok were present. Mr. HAING RIM (called On), a former Professor of the Deuxième Cycle was president of the organizing committee. Mr. HOU YON [usually spelled HOU YUON] gave a two-hour speech which was much applauded.

At the Headquarters of the Khmer Rouge Special Region (Tactical Region
No. 305). District of Peam Pram Bei Mom (Srok of Kg. Tralach)

On May 14, around 1700, at Taing Khmau, we were received by Mr. SIENG PO SE in person, at the time he was Chief of the Regional Supply and a Finance Service. His Deputy Mr. MEN NITHO (called Dan), a former Electrical Engineer was with him. Mr. Sieng Po Se (called Neak) was about 40, average height, yellow complexion almost Chinese. As for his number two, Men Nitho was about 30, average height, bronze complexion, and purely Khmer.

On May 15 at Sieng Po Se's camp, we were visited by a number of people: CHHUN SOK NGUON (called Som) former engineer of public works, accompanied by SIENG TEK CHHAY (ex-professor of ESPC)¹ and by DIEN PHIKAR (former primary teacher). All were in the regional service of Information and Propaganda.

SOK THUOK (called Vorn) Chief of the Khmer Rouge Special Region and Vice-Minister of Security in the SROK. Mr. Sok Thuok, known under the revolutionary name of Vorn, was thin, feeble, average height, copper complexion, open utterer of tightly delivered

¹Enseignement secondaire du premier cycle, a secondary school teacher.

words. He was about 40 and was a member of the Central Committee of the Khmer Communist Party [PKK]. Within the Party he held a higher rank than Hou Yuon and Hou Nim.

HOU YUON coming on a tour of inspection in the region: He was named Minister of the Interior, charged with Community Development and Cooperatives. Hou Yuon was about 40, robust, solid, tall, copper complected, of a jovial temperament, very open but close and combative, deeply cultured and politicized. A good leader of men, he was uncontested. It was to exploit this popularity and his political credit to the maximum that NUFK and the Party Central Committee offered him the honorific portfolio of the Interior. Actually, Hou Yuon has no real authority within the Party. His party comrades tended to accuse him of revisionism because his materialistic revolutionary concepts were less rigid, more supple, and more liberal.

THUCH RIN (called Krin), former professor, member of the Party, Director of the regional service of Information and Propaganda for the Nirdey Teus² Region. He was Director and Editor in Chief of the information newspaper *Pracheachon Padevat* [Revolutionary People]. He is one of the more important political personalities of the Nirdey Teus Region. Aged about 30, round, shorter than average height, with a wide forehead and copper complexion, he was open and affable.

On 21 May, during a dinner organized in honor of Hou Yuon, we met: NGUON ENG (called Ny) Sethakech Pet [a member of the hospital team], former engineer, member of the Party. He was about 40, copper complexion, taciturn, and about the same height as Hou Yuon.

Mr. HANG (revolutionary name): small, active, open, eloquent, he was about 30 and about 1.59 meters tall. A member of the Party, he was the Deputy to Sok Thuk and the only person of importance in the region whom we could not identify. His wife was a schoolteacher.

KOY OUM (called T.P. [sic])³ from the Railway Service at Phnom Penh, he rallied to the Khmer Rouge movement in February 1972. He was in the Khmer Rouge supply service for the Red Armies of Nirdey Teus. He was about 40, bald, plump, courteous, affable, and jovial.

ROS CHETHO (called Cheat) was about 1.66 or 1.67 meters tall, with round piercing eyes, bulging forehead, receding hairline, and a pensive air. He was a slow and sonorous speaker and was about 38 or 39. He was the third-ranking political personality of the Special Region after Mr. Hang. He was a Party member and Director of the Information and Propaganda Service for the Special Region.

From 26 May to 3 June 1972: A political meeting of intellectuals of the Special Region was held. It was organized by the Phnom Penh NUFK Committee and presided over by Prince Phurissara and Hou Yuon. Some 60 intellectuals attended.

The Phnom Penh Committee is thusly constituted:

Prince PHURISSARA (called Kem)
Doctor CHUON CHOEUN (called Pen)
ROS CHETHO

President
Vice President
Member, Charged with
Press and Information

²Southwest.

³Koy Oum's revolutionary name is Tip in *Sranah Pralung Khmer*, p. 28.

PHOK CHHAY⁴
Mme. KHIEU PONNARY

Member, Charged with Trade Unions
Member, representing the
Association of Patriotic Women⁵

Only Mme. Khieu Ponnary was missing from this meeting.

Besides the members of the Phnom Penh NUFK Committee the following people attended the meeting:

DY PHON (called Thuk), dentist. Nyopic, jovial, and a talker. Yellow complexion, about 40 and plump.

HANG (deputy to Sok Thuok)

CHEY CHUM (High Functionary) recently come from Phnom Penh. He joined the meeting May 27 and probably had left Phnom Penh the 26th May 1972. Thin, sickly, tall, he was almost 50. In his black outfit he looked Vietnamese, a PHAN VAN DONG!

SIENG PO SE

MEN NITHO

THUCH RIN

CHHUN SOK NGUON (called Som), a young engineer, aged 32, member of the Party.

CHAN BOPHA (called Khom), holds a *Licence* in law, former magistrate. Responsible for the Office of Sale of Imported Goods. He is about 30, tall and slim.

Miss KUN (revolutionary name), a former professor of the Second Cycle. Age: 28 or 29, petite, modest and discreet. A member of the Party, she will have increasing influence.

KAING KEK IEV (former professor ESPC), small, thin, ill.

KHIEK VANTHA (former Controller of Finance) died of illness toward the end of June.

YOU THAN (called Phal), former professor ESPC, member of the Party.

SIEK TEK CHHAY (called Than)

SREY DAUNG (called Khe), former dam engineer, more than 27 years old, good-looking, intelligent and eloquent.

DIEN PHIKAN (former schoolteacher)

Mrs. CHUON CHOEUN and her daughter

KHIENG KAON (professor)

⁴*Sranaoh Pralung Khmer*, p. 31, puts Nguon Eng in charge of Trade Unions, and makes Phok Chhay the representative of Students and Intellectuals.

⁵Association of Democratic Women in *Sranaoh Pralung Khmer*, p. 31.

PHOK CHHAY, member of the Party, thin, about 38 or 39 years old. He was in fragile health and of average height, a good orator with a very good memory.

CHUON CHOEUN, About 48 or 49, bald, sparse hair, plump.

Prince PHURISSARA, age about 40, bronze complexion, average height; wide, bulging forehead; modest, simple, and courteous.

On 12 November 1972, we made a furtive visit to newcomers Mr. SO MERAM, naval captain (*capitaine de vaisseau*) and his two Lieutenants. It is to be noted that officers who rally to NUFK such as Messrs SO MERAM, MAING MARINEL and CHENG SAYUMBAUN are viewed with a jaundiced eye.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF KAMPUCHEA

Party veterans pretended that their revolutionary movement was born in 1951, at first under the name of the People's Party (*Kanapak Pracheachon*). It was only later (we forget the date) that the Pracheachon was called the "Communist Party of Kampuchea." In the beginning of 1972, the Central Committee of the Party published the history of 21 years of struggle of their party, a struggle which was fought from 1951 to 1972. Tactically, this struggle went on in three steps:

- (1) From 1951 to 1954 (until the general peace treaty of Geneva), the Cambodian Communists conducted a joint political and armed struggle (according to their words, alas!). They claimed that their Party controlled 2/5 of the land and two million people at that time. But the Treaty of Geneva obliged them to hand in their arms and cede the conquered lands to neutralist forces, to cooperate with the regime in power, and to limit their activities solely to the political struggle. Mr. Hou Yuon, during the 26 May meeting remarked:

"The socialist powers of Europe, bloodied by the Second World War, and the Asian socialists, much weakened by the Chinese and Korean wars, overestimated the strength of the imperialists at that moment and pressured the all-consuming Indochinese revolutionary forces to end the fighting and accept the peace treaty with the imperialist forces." Hou Yuon saw in this a calculated tactical maneuver by the socialists.

- (2) From 1954 to 1967, the political struggle: by means of the press, in Parliament, in the various quasi-governmental institutions. In continuing its political struggle, the PKK launched preparations for another armed struggle. Intellectual cadre were repeatedly sent to the maquis to form combat cells. The clandestine disappearance of young intellectuals explains this tactic of the party.
- (3) From 1967, the Party resumed the armed struggle. The events at Samlaut were prepared in advance and gave new impulse to the struggle.

The Khmer Communist Party, which had disguised itself for long years, showed its true face from 30 September 1972. It proclaimed its existence from 1951 and its rights of leadership through all vicissitudes of the struggle. It took the direction of the struggle in the framework of the NUFK. The open inauguration of the 21st anniversary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, which took place 30 September 1972, gave the first public view of the party flag which has as emblems a hammer and sickle in the center of a blood-red field.

Mr. SALOTH SAR was Secretary-General of the Party. After came IENG SARY, KHIEU SAMPHAN, SON SEN. We were unable to secure a list of members of the Party Central Committee.⁶ What we know is that Hou Yuon and Hu Nim were second-rank personages in the Central Committee of the Party. All the Chiefs of the five tactical Regions (Nirdey Teus, Special Region, Bopea Teus, Oddor Teus, Central Region)⁷ were both Vice-Ministers and members of the Party Central Committee.

ORGANIZATION ** PROGRAM

The former administrative structure has been modified. The administrative hierarchy was as follows: the Phum, the Khum, the Srok, the Damban, the Region, the Central Committee. Each zone is administered by a committee assisted by various associations: Patriotic Youth Association, Association of Young Democrats (molding the cells of the party), Association of Patriotic Women. . . . The number of members of the committee varies with the importance of the zone. The committee is composed of a President, a Vice-President, members charged with supply and the economy, instruction and education, health services, etc. All the Presidents of the NUFK Committees for Sroks, Damban, and Regions are members of the Party and cell-leaders; so are most of the leaders of NUFK Committees for Khums. The Khum Committees which do not have the Party's trust are flanked by one or two representatives of the Party. Such is the case for the Khum Committee of Tbeng Khpos.⁸ As for Phums, the party leaves them to the desires of pro-Sihanouk elements.

The forces are arranged in three categories: village guerrilla (*Kang Chhlop*), the regional army (*Kang Damban*), and the regular army (*Kang Sruoch*). Regular cadre are picked from Party cells.

From company level, the commander of each unit is helped by a Political Commissar whose authority over combatants is indisputable. The Party seeks to give command over each unit to sons of peasants, sympathizers and faithful to the movement.

The Communist Party of Kampuchea published the political program of the NUFK which it elaborated together with Sihanouk's team in Peking. The major political lines followed by Sihanouk when he was in power remain almost the same. There are some modifications regarding internal policies. As for foreign policy, there is no change: Cambodia is to be neutral, independent, non-aligned, territorial integrity, cooperation internationally on terms of equality with all countries regardless of regime.

One feels Sihanouk's political world in this program; however, the term "monarchy" has passed into silence.

One could say that the political program of the NUFK is far from being advantageous for the PKK. There is only mentioned in detail an enlarged action plan to improve the life of little people, peasants and workers: intensified rural development, more rational agricultural policy, workers' salaries, social insurance, farming policy, war policy, etc. . . .

⁶*Sramaoh Pralung Khmer*, p. 43, adds the following: Koy Thuon, Deputy Finance Minister; Hu Nim, Minister of Information; Tiv Ol, Deputy Minister of Information; Hou Yuon, Minister of Interior; Khieu Ponnary, Deputy Minister of Education, etc.; Chou Chet, Deputy Minister of Health; Sok Thuok, Deputy Minister of Security; Pok Doeuskomar, Deputy Foreign Minister.

⁷*Teus* means "direction" and the word preceding is a compass point.

⁸A *srok* of Oudong Meanchey Province.

This NUFK political program was elaborated in Peking toward the middle of 1970 at the time when the Khmer Communist Party had to cut its fingers to exploit Sihanouk's political credit. This is nothing but a communist trick. Now, in the internal areas, this plan is a dead letter. The Khmer Communist Party, in methodically getting rid of pro-Sihanouk cadres, has *carte blanche* over the direction of the country. Under the veil of NUFK and with the complicity of the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist parties, it has followed and respected only its own program not as yet revealed to the public.

In accelerating the development of its cadres, the Party has undertaken efforts at collectivization at its rear bases: common storehouses, paddies, small groups of villagers living in collectivity. All these actions try to awaken a socialist consciousness among the peasants.

But the peasants remain passive, very attached to their habits and customs. The new collective life being imposed on them frightens them. Most keep secret their attachment to Sihanouk and his regime.

Sihanouk has practically no power. All power is and will be in the hands of the Party. If Sihanouk wishes to cling to power and his former regime, he will be simply eliminated. The Sihanouk-KR⁹ coalition is clearly a fraud. NUFK is nonsense because of its deep and irreconcilable contradictions. Now, the first task of the PKK consists of indoctrinating and assimilating pro-Sihanouk forces. An accelerated formation of cadres so requires.

Vis-à-vis North Vietnam, the PKK is in close cooperation, but less favorable than with Red China. There is also distrust of North Vietnamese unstated intentions. Hou Yuon said that the PKK has foreseen all in preparing for danger from the VC/NVA. Certain Party cadres declare unceasingly that the key to the Vietnamese problem (the victory of Vietnamese socialism, reunification) can be found in Cambodia. It is therefore in the interest of the VC/NVA (interest of all sorts, moreover!) that they support the PKK. Alas! The PKK brags of being up to its mission; it is absolutely not under the guidance of the Vietnamese Communist Party; it is equal to all fraternal Communist parties and independent.

The PKK seems to have control over all activities in its zones. The VC/NVA are far from being the masters.

The PKK tends to sympathize more with Red China. It sees there a constant support, efficacious and disinterested. It has modeled its leadership after the Chinese. It should likewise be noted that most of the higher cadres of the Party are pro-Chinese socialists. The Party also sees in China a counterweight to the Vietnamese danger.

Unlike China, the PKK does not deal gently with the Soviet Communists. Like China, it has accused the USSR of revisionism.

It has kept a mortal hate for the Republican Government of Phnom Penh. It accuses it of being the valet of American imperialists, of being puppets, of being reactionary, of corruption.

It has tried to instill a bloody hate against our regime among the masses (meetings, artistic seances, popular gatherings).

⁹Khmer Rouge.

In my opinion, we have very little chance in appealing for the collaboration of the KR with our regime.

PARTY CADRES, CRITICISM, SELF-CRITICISM, DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

The development of Party cadres is an almost continuous process (at school, in daily life, in meetings and informal lectures).

At school there are debates and conferences on the contents of various documents recommended by the Party Central Committee, for example:

- Revolutionary discipline
- The National Revolution
- Social Classes in Cambodian Society
- Class Struggle. Antagonistic Contradictions
- Popular Conception [*"la conception populaire"*]
- The Directing Role of the Working Class in the Revolutionary Struggle
- Revolutionary Hate
- The Proletarianization of Cadres: The Qualities of a Revolutionary Cadre
- How to Fight Individualism, Liberalism, Dogmatism, Opportunism, Sectarianism, etc.
- The Price of a Revolutionary
- Collectivism, Criticism, Self-Criticism, etc.

Practically and in daily life, each member has the duty of checking on his fellow man. This duty is reciprocal. All which is not revolutionary or which is harmful to the revolution (socialist revolution) is condemnable, forbidden (listening to broadcasts of songs from Phnom Penh is forbidden). Each member is required to undergo manual tests like workers or peasants (digging, wood-cutting, vegetable growing, rice-milling, transplanting, etc.). . . . These manual tests are an integral part of the formation of revolutionary cadres. In short, each member should be like the people, with the people, for the people. . . .

Cadres in training must have two meetings each week, the first in a small group of which they are members, the other in the group as a whole. In the closed group, one practices criticism and self-criticism directly. In turn, each member examines himself, his own activities and his errors in the past week before passing under the criticism of his comrades. The criticisms and self-criticisms ought to be done on the five following recommended principles:

- manual activities
- state of morale, feelings
- instructions given by higher-ranking chiefs
- personal position regarding policy and the Party
- revolutionary solidarity

Criticism and self-criticism are practiced at all echelons and social strata.

In the group as a whole, one criticizes the group's collective activities without alluding to individual activities. Afterwards the group develops a program of collective work for the forthcoming week.

The PKK seems faithful to the chief Marxist-Leninist lines. Certain concrete realities of Cambodian society have been voluntarily forgotten. For example, Khmer individualism is solidly rooted in Khmer society and forms the base of the national

personality. Buddhism (combated by the spirit of Khmer Marxist materialism) is similarly inseparable from the social and national life of the Khmer.

The collectivization preached by the KR will be checked when confronted with the instinctive individualism of the Khmer. The proof is that the peasants in the KR rear base at Peam Pram Bei Mom are successively withdrawing from the collective life imposed on them.

Vis-à-vis the movement of international peace, the PKK has kept its intransigent position: no negotiations, no peaceful political settlement. They have fought to the bitter end the possibility of peace negotiations with our government, with our regime. They have unceasingly proclaimed control over 8/10ths of the territory and five million people. Their decisive victories are just in sight. They reject any peaceful political settlement.

As for general elections, they have no ideas.

But, personally, I think that in case of inevitable general elections, imposed by the great powers, including China, the PKK already has its knight: Sihanouk. But this is only an illusion. I think that, even under the pressure of great powers, the PKK will continue the fight, will reject the general election because it will be more advantageous for our regime or for Sihanouk than for them.

CONCLUSION

1. I believe that the people, peasants living under enemy control, do not want the socialist regime, nor the presence of VC/NVA. Loving their land and village, they wish ardently for the return of peace.

The greater part of those attached to Sihanouk have more and more lost hope in his return to power and are turning to our regime. All in continuing the fight against the Communists, we should, in our opinion, expose actively the deep contradictions between Sihanouk and the PKK. We have every chance to attract to our cause the Sihanoukists who tremble before the weight of the red regime.

2. To carry on the war against the Communists, the best tactic consists, I think, in rationalizing and cleaning up our own administration, in resolving the major immediate internal problems (the economy for example), in restoring discipline and the revolutionary ardor of March 18. Because Communism is recognized by the masses as a regime both inconceivable and incompatible with the national society, there is still time for our regime to reexamine frankly, with no suspicious passions, our past errors, errors which cost our regime, however much still applauded and loved, dear.

Done at Phnom Penh, 7 May 1973

Mr. Ith Sarin, ex-Inspector of
Primary Schools