



Khieu Samphan (middle) listens to the testimony of expert witness Philip Short at the ECCC on Tuesday.

“People Became Expendable”: Philip Short Describes Khmer Rouge Rule

By Mary Kozlovski¹

British author and journalist Philip Short, 68, continued to testify as an expert witness² in Case 002 at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) on Tuesday, May 7, 2013, responding to questions from prosecutors. Mr. Short’s biography *Pol Pot: The History of a Nightmare*³ features interviews with Khmer Rouge officials, including defendants Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary, who died in March this year at the age of 87. Mr. Short currently lives in France, and his testimony was delayed earlier in the year due to Ieng Sary’s illness prior to his death.

Today, 278 villagers from Prey Veng province attended the tribunal in the morning, and 150 residents of Takeo province arrived at midday. Khieu Samphan was present in court, while his co-defendant Nuon Chea observed proceedings remotely due to his health problems.

Prosecution Initiates Questioning of Philip Short

Leading the prosecution’s examination of Mr. Short, National Senior Assistant Co-Prosecutor Veng Huot quoted two passages from the witness’ book, one of which describes decisions made at a May 1975 meeting of leaders of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) at the Silver Pagoda.⁴ Firstly, the prosecutor requested that Mr. Short expand on his characterization of “the world’s most radical revolution.” Mr. Short asserted that no other communist party attempted to move so quickly and completely toward a communist state as defined by Marx. Under

¹ Cambodia Tribunal Monitor’s daily blog posts on the ECCC are written according to the personal observations of the writer and do not constitute a transcript of the proceedings. Official court transcripts for the ECCC’s hearings may be accessed at <http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/case/topic/2>.

² For more information on expert witnesses at the ECCC, see ECCC Internal Rule 31. The ECCC Internal Rules can be accessed at <http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/document/legal/internal-rules-rev8>.

³ There are several editions of Mr. Short’s biography of Pol Pot, which was also published with the title *Pol Pot: Anatomy of a Nightmare*. According to Mr. Short, the book was published in Britain and the US in 2004, and later published in other languages.

⁴ The Silver Pagoda is located within the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh.

Democratic Kampuchea (DK) the government and party apparatus were minimized, Mr. Short affirmed, and there was no compromise on the road to creating an equal polity devoid of private property. “In that sense, Pol Pot and the CPK pushed the logic of communism to its extreme, and the result ... was a terrible catastrophe,” he said.

Elaborating further, Mr. Short stated that after 1949 in China, Mao initiated a new stage called “new democracy” where the Chinese Communist Party cooperated with non-communist elements – including private business – resulting in a moderate form of communism for five or six years before it became radical and extreme. However, he believed such gradual development was not considered a serious option in Cambodia as in the provinces there were already examples of transition into a society free of property and use of the currency of the Lon Nol government was discontinued. The May meeting determined that the leap into “pure communism” should be direct and immediate, Mr. Short concluded. He confirmed that there was a relationship between events after April 1975, including decisions made at the Silver Pagoda, and what had occurred earlier.

Mr. Huot queried the implications of, in Mr. Short’s words in his book, everything outside the revolution becoming “a legitimate and necessary target.” Mr. Short replied that the decisions made in May 1975 meant that the front⁵ was no longer useful and the question centered on how the CPK would end that stage of the revolution and start the “pure DK system,” as it did in 1976. Prince Norodom Sihanouk represented those outside the revolution, the members of the front who did not form the CPK’s core, the expert witness asserted. “The decision to leap towards a radical communist state meant that that would all have to come to an end,” he said. Mr. Short described the decisions in May 1975 as altering the relationship between non-communist elements in the front and the CPK – which no longer needed to be “dressed up” – leading to the promulgation of a new constitution at the end of 1975, Sihanouk’s resignation and the end of the front. When asked about the CPK’s policy “to smash,” Mr. Short commented:

Individualism, asking questions about the regime, was a form of mental private property, because it meant you had your own personal ideas which were different from those of the organization, different from those of *Angkar*, and private property whether mental or material was a sign of potential opposition, of being outside the revolution, of being part of ‘them’ – those outside – rather than ‘us’ within ... because this was a revolution which refused to admit doubt or uncertainty, those who showed different views, private views, as against the collective view were liable in the end to be smashed.

Asked to elaborate on a comment in his book that individual rights were extinguished under the Khmer Rouge, the witness responded that individual rights – like opinions or property – meant that people were not equal. He recalled a senior official in the present government telling him in an earlier interview that Khieu Samphan once said at a seminar that if one person had a little more and another a little less, that was not communism. Mr. Short said the implication was that communism required everyone to have the same, meaning no private property.

Family, Law and Money under the Khmer Rouge

When queried on the Khmer Rouge’s approach to family life, Mr. Short told the court that, fundamentally, the true family was the organization, not the nuclear family. While emphasizing

⁵ The ‘front’ is believed to refer to the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK).

that such policies varied depending on the region in which people lived in DK and local officials, Mr. Short asserted that under the Khmer Rouge, families could not be permitted to interfere with people's loyalty to *Angkar*. Thus, the expert witness continued, little weight was placed on family relations, and marriages were often for practical reasons, such as producing children. "The romantic attachment between a couple was something that the Khmer Rouge had very little time for," Mr. Short said.



In response to questions about the abolition of the legal system and systems of justice under DK, Mr. Short remarked that the removal of courts was internally logical because their purpose was to provide independent judgment and the CPK did not agree with any mechanism being independent of the party. He testified that the use of the word "justice" was difficult to apply. In some cases, people suspected of disloyalty were denounced to village or collective leaders, taken to the district prison and either released later or killed, Mr. Short told the court. In other cases, he added, the collective would make a decision, and a person could be killed without being sent to the prison or could be sent to S-21 in Phnom Penh to be interrogated and killed. "It was a system of elimination of those on whom suspicion had fallen but no more than that," Mr. Short testified. "You had a system where there was considerable arbitrariness at the lower levels, in the provinces, but where all decision-making regarding the country as a whole was taken by a very small group of people in the Standing Committee, and essentially by Pol Pot himself, Nuon Chea and one or two others depending on the subject."

Mr. Huot pressed the expert witness for detail on the ideological underpinning of the abolition of money and the establishment of cooperatives and enforced collectivization. Mr. Short distinguished between the two issues, arguing that while collectivization occurred in all communist countries to some degree, it did not necessarily follow that money would be abolished. While there was a brief discussion of eliminating money in China during the Great Leap Forward at the end of the 1950s, it was ruled out and money was used in that and other communist regimes, Mr. Short told the court. He added that he believed the Khmer Rouge did away with money because any private property was considered a source of inequality, and it was done at the cost of "enormous suffering" as people could not lead normal lives.

Additionally, Mr. Short testified that in communist systems, collectively owned property was felt to be more just than private ownership – "the exploitation of man by man as in a 'capitalist' system." Through collectivization the Khmer Rouge wished to control the rice supply and prevent it from being available to the Vietnamese, Mr. Short emphasized, but, ideologically speaking, they desired a system within which everybody was equal. The expert witness averred that this ideological motive was "worthy," in the sense of wanting to raise the poor peasantry, and that agricultural production was how DK planned to become stronger and more prosperous. Mr. Short added that it was possible to imagine this could have been carried out fairly and achieved many of its goals but this was not done. In response to a final query from Mr. Huot, the expert witness said mass population movements and collectivization occurred immediately after

the Khmer Rouge's victory in April 1975, so it was difficult to place the precise timing of the abolition of money in DK, though the decision was made at the Silver Padoga in May 1975.

Prosecution Travels Back in Time to 1950 and Onwards

Taking over for the prosecution, International Senior Assistant Co-Prosecutor Tarik Abdulhak touched on the DK period only briefly before jumping back to the 1950s. He initially questioned Mr. Short on why Khieu Samphan told new arrivals in DK at a seminar in late 1975 that they had to keep their ideas and knowledge secret. Mr. Short responded that secrecy was a guiding principle of the CPK, and knowledge was “only for those who needed to have it.”

Moving onto an examination of the pre-1975 period, Mr. Abdulhak quoted Mr. Short as saying in his book that from about 1950 onwards a communist movement developed within Cambodia under Vietnam's sponsorship, with various city committees throughout the 1950s, which Pol Pot and Nuon Chea joined in 1955.

Citing a 1960 congress that Mr. Short described as significant, Mr. Abdulhak asked him to elaborate on its importance and Hanoi's position regarding Sihanouk. Mr. Short testified that starting with the Issarak rebellion against the French in the late 1940s through to the late 1960s, the Cambodian communists gradually disengaged from the Vietnamese, partly because Vietnam regarded itself as an “elder brother” to its younger Cambodian brothers. The 1960 congress, which was held without informing the Vietnamese party or inviting delegates, was a “crucial step” towards the Cambodian Communist Party's independence, Mr. Short asserted. Secondly, he added, the two parties had different interests, with the Vietnamese considering Sihanouk a sympathetic neutralist and “objectively, an ally,” who at various points believed the Vietnamese communists would defeat the US and adjusted his policies accordingly. Contrastingly, the Cambodian communists considered Sihanouk and his government – which increasingly restricted any possible legitimate opposition – the enemy, Mr. Short concluded.

Mr. Abdulhak read an excerpt from Mr. Short's book describing the election of a new party leadership with Tou Samouth as secretary, Nuon Chea as deputy, Saloth Sar in the third position, and Ieng Sary – former head of the *Cercle Marxiste* in Paris – ranked fourth, which demonstrated “the growing power of the returned students.” Mr. Short testified that in the 1950s the party was still comprised mostly of former Issarak like Tou Samouth, Ke Pauk, and So Phim, whereas in 1960, some full members of the Standing Committee were not Issarak, such as Nuon Chea, who came from a small group of Thai-trained Cambodian communists. The balance would alter, Mr. Short said, but there would remain two main groups – urban returned students and Issarak from the countryside – along with Nuon Chea and one or two others from the Thai-trained group.

After Mr. Abdulhak inquired about Khieu Samphan's connection with the underground Phnom Penh committee in the early 1960s, Mr. Short confirmed that Khieu Samphan was assigned to rally intellectual support and reach out to potential sympathizers, but it was unclear whom he had contact with, how and if it was direct. He stated that in the “Sihanoukist weekly” *Réalités Cambodgiennes* at the time there was a description of how the communist city committee, in particular Vorn Vet, disguised contacts through large numbers of intermediaries. Mr. Short commented that Khieu Samphan was “rigid, doctrinaire, but very consistent” and was at the time an upright man who held to what he believed in without asking himself many questions.

Mr. Short confirmed to Mr. Abdulhak that the CPK moved another step towards independence from Vietnamese control after Central Committee meetings in 1964 and then in 1965, during which a resolution endorsing all forms of struggle against imperialism, including armed violence, was finalized – as detailed in Mr. Short’s book. The expert witness said the party discussed forms of struggle earlier, though the statement about violence was more explicit. “To some extent they were forced into using violence because that was the only option available,” Mr. Short said, stating that Sihanouk did not permit any space for a political opposition. In reply to Mr. Abdulhak, Mr. Short testified that the Cambodian communists during the 1960s and after taking power in 1975 did not ask themselves why things went wrong but put failure down to sabotage from outside, assuming that their principles were correct. Mr. Short told the court it was unclear how Khieu Samphan, Hou Yuon, and Hu Nim collaborated with the CPK core.

When asked about a possible dilemma posed by Vietnamese battlefield victories in Cambodia after the 1970 coup – which gave the Khmer Rouge more areas to administer – and the CPK’s fear of Vietnamese domination, Mr. Short concurred and replied that such fear was important. There were then only about 2,000 Cambodian guerrillas⁶ fighting Lon Nol forces and there was an imbalance between the small, untrained Khmer Rouge forces and the well-trained Vietnamese, Mr. Short said, which posed a problem for the Cambodian communists. Mr. Abdulhak read an excerpt from Mr. Short’s book describing the capture and killing of foreigners, including Western journalists, by the Khmer Rouge after 1970. “After 1966, after the Lon Nol government came to power, the Khmer Rouge or the CPK increasingly took the view all who were not with us are against us [which] ... means a clear line between the enemy and ourselves,” Mr. Short testified. However, he remarked that the idea of “with us or against us” did not appear to have been meted out to individual cadres, who told him in interviews that they simply did what they knew the party would want them to do. The expert witness said these were not the first occasions when the Khmer Rouge executed people, a process that began in Ratanakkiri province after the Samlaut uprising when government soldiers were captured and killed if they were unknown. Mr. Short added that some might be released if they were locals. He told the court he had seen no general evidence that the leadership curtailed such practices, except the very specific case of François Bizot, who was released allegedly on Pol Pot’s orders after Duch’s recommendation.⁷

Expert Witness Describes Party Membership

In response to queries from Mr. Abdulhak about the CPK’s membership criteria, Mr. Short asserted that as the party became part of the FUNK, it was necessary to tighten the links within the CPK as well as entry qualifications to ensure that it was not corrupted by the larger organization. “You ensure that only those people who have class origins which are supposed to guarantee their outlook will be members,” Mr. Short said, adding that in 1970 the Vietcong were in Cambodia, which was another reason to guarantee that Khmers remained loyal to the Cambodian Communist Party.

⁶ Mr. Short emphasized that even this number might be too optimistic.

⁷ François Bizot is the author of *The Gate*. Kaing Guek Eav, *alias* Duch, was the sole defendant in Case 001 at the ECCC. More information about Case 001 can be found here: <http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/case/topic/1>.

The prosecutor noted that Mr. Short described in his book the establishment of a Central Committee area known as S-71 and an information section under an office known as S-31, along with the presence of intellectuals. Mr. Short testified that intellectuals were necessary to run the propaganda apparatus and to interface with the front and were kept apart from the rest of the party at the time. Mr. Abdulhak asked for sources behind Mr. Short's comments in his book that Khieu Samphan moved to a compound nearer Pol Pot's headquarters, after spending time at S-31 from where he liaised with Sihanouk. Mr. Short replied that the information came from an interview with Ping Say and confessions of Tiv Ol and Hu Nim held in the archives of DC-Cam.⁸ The expert witness further explained that he concluded Khieu Samphan was the most trusted among himself, Hou Yuon, and Hu Nim because he was moved closer to Pol Pot and remained so from that time onward, while the others were not. Mr. Short said Pol Pot singled out Khieu Samphan, such as through encouraging Khieu Samphan's marriage.



Hu Nim, Hou Youn and Khieu Samphan eat together in the jungle in the early 1970s during the civil war in Cambodia.(Source: Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives)

Mr. Short confirmed to Mr. Abdulhak the importance of administrative decisions made during a Central Committee meeting,⁹ including the development of zone boundaries that were divided into regions – both with new code numbers - a special zone around Phnom Penh and three sets of military forces on the Viet Minh model. He averred that as larger parts of the country came under communist control, the Khmer Rouge had to build a structure capable of taking the place of the Vietnamese once they went.

Mr. Abdulhak inquired if it was significant that none of Hu Youn, Hu Nim, Norn Suon, or any of the Hanoi group were chosen as Central Committee members at an August 1971 congress. Mr. Short said it reflected that people who came to the party from different backgrounds were considered untrustworthy, noting that Hanoi returnees were Khmers who were part of the

⁸ DC-Cam refers to the Documentation Center of Cambodia, a Phnom Penh-based NGO that sponsors Cambodia Tribunal Monitor. Its director, Youk Chhang, serves as co-managing editor.

⁹ The date of this meeting is unclear.

Vietnamese-affiliated communist movement in the 1950s and later travelled to Vietnam. When they returned from Hanoi they were not trusted and regarded as contaminated, Mr. Short told the court. Meanwhile, people in the Pracheachon group who had tried to be a legitimate opposition to Sihanouk were not trusted because they had taken a different path than the core of the CPK, he stated.

When asked why he described a 1972 Central Committee meeting as a “turning point,” Mr. Short replied that Pol Pot returned from a three-month-long trip in the provinces feeling that things were moving too slowly and it was possible to go further. “The Cambodian forces had been built up to a level where they were maybe not completely able to hold their own vis-à-vis the Vietnamese, but they were able to take over a growing part of the struggle and that in the countryside the time had come to start collectivizing, to start applying the CPK policies,” Mr. Short said. “The growth in Khmer forces had reached a point where it was no longer quite so necessary to win over the peasantry, to win over support by gentle means. The Khmer Rouge were better able to force people into the mould which they wished them to have.” He added that he would interpret “oppressive classes” as referring to merchants, wealthier families, and those associated with the Lon Nol regime at the time.

Replying to Mr. Abdulhak, Mr. Short described criticism and self-criticism under the Khmer Rouge as being implemented right up to Central Committee level, with one source commenting that such study meetings preceded the actual work session. Mr. Short said he understood the meetings and sessions to have the purpose of looking into oneself and criticizing oneself, while broader party principles would have been discussed at Central Committee or party branch meetings.

Still referring to 1972, Mr. Abdulhak noted a section in Mr. Short’s book detailing the CPK’s opposition to the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia. Mr. Short told the court that the Cambodian communists were happy to have Vietnam assist them in their struggle to liberate Cambodia, but they wished to be in charge of the struggle.

Mr. Abdulhak cited Khieu Samphan’s 2007 description of the relationship between the CPK and Vietnamese forces and the role of the Khmer Rumdoh – “Sihanoukist troops” – and comments that Mr. Short had “provided clear evidence” that the Vietnamese created the Khmer Rumdoh and “stuck their hands deeply into internal CPK affairs since 1973.”¹⁰ When asked if he agreed with Khieu Samphan’s assessment, Mr. Short replied that Khieu Samphan had put the issue more strongly than he did. While the Vietnamese undeniably had an interest in CPK affairs and principally armed and trained the Khmer Rumdoh, Mr. Short told the court, he was unsure if one was evidence of the other.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk’s Role in FUNK

When Mr. Abdulhak inquired if there was little pretense on Sihanouk’s part that the front was a true coalition, Mr. Short replied that Sihanouk was lucid and knew the score, and the operation from Beijing was the “public face,” which had no control over what occurred internally. The expert witness asserted that the Khmer Rouge and the party leadership wanted to keep Sihanouk

¹⁰ This text written by Khieu Samphan was not named in court, but is believed to be *Considerations on the history of Cambodia from the early stage to the period of Democratic Kampuchea*.

happy enough that he would remain with them, but were concerned about his immense popularity among the Cambodian peasantry. “One of the reasons that the Khmer Rouge obtained recruits so easily after 1970-71 was because Sihanouk was seen as being with the Khmer Rouge and they went for Sihanouk,” Mr. Short said, adding that the party feared over-publicizing his return and drawing support away from the CPK.

Continuing his testimony, Mr. Short reflected that the effect of the US bombing was controversial and though he believed it speeded up the radicalization of the Khmer Rouge, the direction had already been set. “The CPK was in many ways like a monastic sect, with the same rituals with the same abnegation of material things, the same embrace of hardship and suffering, the same self-sacrifice, the idea that you should sacrifice everything for the revolution,” he said, adding that he believed this was one of the keys to Khieu Samphan’s behavior. When asked to elaborate on his comment that there were more systematic executions by the Khmer Rouge after 1973, Mr. Short remarked that he was told this by rank and file soldiers then in the army:

After 1973 the same behavior was treated differently, so it’s a statement of fact, but it ties in with this tightening of discipline within the party, within the armed forces, throughout the Khmer Rouge system, which came when they felt they were ready to move on to the next stage, when victory was approaching, the Vietnamese were playing a smaller role – all these things tied in together.

Next, the prosecutor inquired about a Khmer Rouge offensive recorded by Mr. Short, to round up Hanoi returnees – bar a loyal minority – and take them to a detention facility as “suspected Vietnamese agents,” after which most were killed. Mr. Short told the court the Hanoi returnees were a couple of thousand people who had been in the Khmer Vietminh during the war against the French in the 1950s, and were sent by boat to North Vietnam in 1954. They returned to Cambodia in the early 1970s and were suspected of strongly sympathizing with Vietnam, he said, adding that suspicion increased as the relationship between the CPK and Vietnam grew tenuous in 1973. “It was part of the overall tightening of control as they were getting closer to victory,” Mr. Short asserted. The expert witness told the prosecutor that the establishment of prisons and security centers within the special zone in late 1973 was the “early signs of an administration.”

Shelling of Phnom Penh in the Pre-1975 Period

Referencing a July 1973 edition of *Revolutionary Flag* that was republished in the Eastern Zone in June 1974, Mr. Abdulhak asked if an apparent instruction on how to carry out executions was consistent with the expert witness’s findings on the development of attitudes about enemies, arrests and executions. Mr. Short responded that the Khmer Rouge dealt at various points with how to carry out executions and who could authorize them. He commented:

The guiding principle behind all of them was executing people is right when they are counter-revolutionary, when they are against the revolution but it must be done in a way which does not harm the revolution’s goals. This is an example - you don’t execute people in front of others and that, through the Khmer Rouge period, was pretty general. People disappeared. They were taken away and didn’t come back. It wasn’t that they were killed in front of the others.

Mr. Short testified that Khmer Rouge shelling of Phnom Penh was “psychological warfare” to show people that the Lon Nol regime was incapable of defending anyone. “The fact that the

shelling was indiscriminate and therefore, given the range of the artillery, was going to fall very often on the poorer suburbs, that was acceptable because those people had chosen to be with Lon Nol rather than staying with the revolutionaries,” he said, telling Mr. Abdulhak that no attempts were made to avoid casualties in the city.

Sources on Evacuation of Udong Probed

The expert witness confirmed to Mr. Abdulhak that his sources for information about the fall and evacuation of Udong were his interview with Phy Phuon,¹¹ conversations with at least one or two villagers who had seen or experienced the events, *Réalités Cambodgiennes*, and a book by an American military historian. In response to Mr. Abdulhak’s question, Mr. Short said uniformed soldiers and officials being separated from the larger group and killed was consistent with earlier and later events.

Referring to a 1974 Central Committee described by Mr. Short and sourced from his interview with Phy Phuon, Mr. Abdulhak asked the expert witness to assess whether a June 1974 Central Committee meeting mentioned in a September 1977 edition of *Revolutionary Flag* – at which the committee resolved on the “decisive offensive to liberate Phnom Penh and the entire country” – referred to the same event. Mr. Short concurred, saying he missed the reference in the magazine when writing the book. The prosecutor asked Mr. Short to comment on the significance of a decision at the meeting to execute a Central Committee member named Praseth. The expert witness replied that it was extremely important, as it was the first case in Cambodia of purging within the leadership, a phenomenon of other communist systems. “Once you have accepted that ‘counter-revolutionaries’ can worm their way into the leadership, as the consecrated phraseology has it, then you’re opening the door to endless purges,” Mr. Short remarked.

When asked by Mr. Abdulhak about the phrase “seizing the people,” written in a December 1976/January 1977 edition of *Revolutionary Flag*, Mr. Short commented that it meant controlling people rather than territory, a method employed by Chinese communists. As questioning reverted briefly back to the evacuation of Udong, Mr. Short said Phy Phuon was adamant that the successful evacuation of Udong convinced the leadership that they should repeat the process in Phnom Penh and the sequence of events is consonant with that interpretation. The prosecutor pressed Mr. Short on how he concluded in his book that Khieu Samphan’s two-month tour with Sihanouk of GRUNK (Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea) allies in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe after visiting Mao in China was partly to ensure that Sihanouk’s commitment did not waver. Mr. Short said it was his own interpretation.

Prosecution Questions about April 17, 1975, and Onwards

In response to queries about Khmer Rouge orders during the evacuation, Mr. Short remarked that descriptions from sources of the evacuation of Phnom Penh concur that individual zones had considerable latitude in how they carried out the evacuation. As an example, Mr. Short stated, soldiers from the Eastern Zone were said to be more lenient than those from the South – Ta Mok’s region. “Certainly that was the pattern right the way through, different zones, different

¹¹ Phy Phuon, also known as Rochoem Ton, testified in Case 002 at the ECCC in July and August 2012. Cambodia Tribunal Monitor’s detailed accounts of his testimony can be accessed at: <http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/blog/archive/201207> and <http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/blog/archive/201208>.

policies, different individual[s] ... behaved in really significantly different ways,” he said. “The policy was the same, the implementation was different.”

Mr. Short commented that the decision to send former premier Hang Thun Tak and ex-minister Pan Sothi back to Phnom Penh after they reached a Northern Zone checkpoint – they were later killed – came from the highest level. One can assume the move to send back other former officials above a certain level was based on a central instruction but implemented by the zones, he averred. The expert witness testified that there was a nationwide pattern of killing formal Lon Nol officers of any level and government officials above a certain level, though the killing of military officers appeared to be more systematic. Mr. Short remarked that there were many cases of former civil servants – some high-ranking – escaping and in some cases surviving the entire period. “If it was systematic there were gaps in the system,” he added. The expert witness commented that different zone commanders had never worked together because their zones were separate and when they joined in Phnom Penh and rules were swiftly laid down on how they would cooperate. “You can see that as certainly the beginning of a harmonization ...and the beginning of a unification of the policy towards those being evacuated,” he said.



In response to a query from Mr. Abdulhak about a comment in his book quoting Khieu Samphan as saying with satisfaction that the few belongings carried by deportees would “be worn out or used up” within two or three years, the expert witness said the logic was that once the items wore out everybody would have the same. He elaborated:

This was part of the program to separate people from their belongings so that everybody became equal because if everybody has nothing of their own possession, then they are all the same. And indeed, very short notice to leave, they couldn't take that much with them anyway. So it's all completely consistent.

When asked about a comment in his book that lies became an instrument of Khmer Rouge rule, Mr. Short replied that he stood by the judgment. “It was a deliberate decision, quite consciously to portray the world of DK other than as it really was,” he said, recalling an incident when Pol Pot said in a speech on his first official visit to Beijing that all Cambodians had 312 kilograms of rice per person per year. “Sometimes there was a reason, sometimes the reason was simply not comprehensible, but lies were in the very fabric of everything the regime did,” he said.

Broader Reflections on the Khmer Rouge Regime

Mr. Abdulhak requested that Mr. Short elaborate on comments in his book that the evacuation and its immediate consequences were “an almost perfect paradigm” for the regime that followed. Mr. Short testified:

The basis of that thought is the ruthlessness and single-mindedness and the lack of concern for human values, for human suffering, for individual values that was shown during the evacuation. Later on in the collectives exactly the same attitude prevailed. What the Khmer Rouge wished to do was achieve a given goal. ... In everything the same approach and in many cases the same

finalities, that is large numbers of dead along the way, were how those programs were characterized and you find all of that in the very first step, which was the evacuation of the cities.

Mr. Short reaffirmed an observation in his book that ordinary people were “expendable” and remarked that there were times between 1973 and 1974 when the Khmer Rouge were struggling for power and understood that they needed the people with them. “For reasons which are very difficult to understand, the moment they were in a position to actually gain power and they had power, they lost interest in retaining the people; the people became expendable,” he added. “They got what they wanted, and people were no longer the concern in the same way as they had been earlier.”

The prosecutor asked Mr. Short to expand on a comment in his book that the events of mid-April 1975 were “the fruits of policies that had been in gestation” since the 1960s and even earlier. The expert witness replied that he was referring to the Issarak, as there were similarities in the way the Issarak and Khmer Rouge operated. Flagging Mr. Short’s use of the term “slave state” to describe DK, Mr. Abdulhak inquired if he was describing a system that emanated from the top. Mr. Short replied that the system could only have emanated from the top because the underlying principles were identical everywhere:

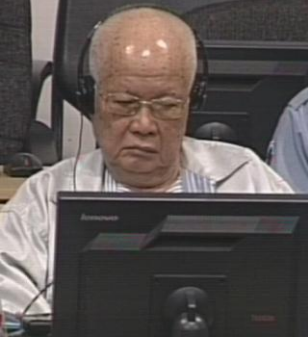
The overwhelming majority, because there was always a tiny group who were exceptions for one reason or another ... were all slaves in the sense that they had no choice over any aspect of their lives. Now if everyone is a slave, some may have good masters who are a little bit more kind, some may have particularly harsh masters and that corresponded to the leaderships in the different collectives. It wasn’t zone by zone, or even region by region; you could have villagers, collectives, five kilometers apart in the same zone, the same region, where conditions were very, very different. It really did stem from individual leaders, but whether the leaders were lenient or harsh, the fundamentals, the existence as slaves, were the same.

In response to a separate question, Mr. Short testified that there are precedents for communist regimes growing paranoid when they feel under intense external pressure – which DK did from Vietnam and, to a lesser extent, Thailand – and allowing the ends to justify the means. However, Mr. Short argued that the Khmer Rouge were inflated after their victory, believed they could do impossible things, and therefore pushed the population to do the impossible. When asked if fear of Vietnamese domination figured in policy implementation, Mr. Short responded that it was crucial and was the justification for moving rapidly so that Vietnam could not catch up.

Witness Questioned about the “Seven Traitors”

Mr. Abdulhak quoted an excerpt from a FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information Service) transcript of a broadcast by *Voice of NUFC* on February 26, 1975 – of a communiqué which included Khieu Samphan’s name in the title – stating that the national congress had decided the “seven traitors” in Phnom Penh¹² were ringleaders of the 1970 coup and it was necessary to kill them for treason and criminal acts. The prosecutor noted that Mr. Short wrote in his book he did not think the congress took place. Mr. Short affirmed that there was no evidence apart from the aforementioned broadcast that such a congress occurred, commenting that the communiqué reflected a decision by the CPK Standing Committee or Pol Pot to reassure others that only those

¹² The so-called “seven traitors” are Lon Nol, Sirik Matak, Son Ngoc Thanh, Cheng Heng, In Tam, Long Boret, and Sosthene Fernandez.



seven – though he believed others were later added – would face death when the Khmer Rouge took over.¹³ However, he added that it was unclear who approved the document. “I’m sure he [Khieu Samphan] was in agreement with it and with the policies which were connected with it,” Mr. Short said, adding that there was no evidence of Khmer Republic officials being welcomed under DK.

Moving onto an excerpt from an August 1975 edition of *Revolutionary Flag*, Mr. Abdulhak inquired if Mr. Short could opine on a statement that while the class and economic foundations of feudalists, capitalists, imperialists, and petty bourgeoisie had been overthrown their views and desires were the same, and they continued to be “in conflict with the revolution.” Mr. Short remarked that the aforementioned passage reflected the reason why the above groups were sent to the countryside to reform themselves. “Although the decision, the announcement, that only the seven traitors would be killed and others not would be read as a reassurance, the last line... says that others will be welcomed, provided they immediately cease their cooperation with the old regime,” he added.

Mr. Abdulhak sought Mr. Short’s views on why a July 1976 edition of *Revolutionary Flag* still focused on enemies attacking if there was not a struggle between the workers and other classes. Mr. Short asserted that in Maoist China, especially from the 1950s until Mao’s death, there was a basic idea that class struggle was permanent and bourgeois elements would continue to emerge and would need to be fought. While a student in Paris, Pol Pot became acquainted with Stalin’s idea that a fortress is most easily taken from within, meaning that the greatest danger to a communist party was from elements burrowing into its leadership, Mr. Short said. He recalled talks with Khieu Samphan about how one could have a proletarian class stance when everyone was a peasant and remarked that the CPK “was essentially an alliance of intellectuals and peasants who thought, who claimed, that they had forged intellectually this worker class consciousness which would allow them to exercise hegemony over others, and thereby repress all those bourgeois tendencies that would emerge spontaneously unless they were clamped down.”

“New” People and “Old” People

Turning to the hierarchy between new and base people, Mr. Abdulhak queried whether there was a connection between so-called class enemies and the killing of supposed bad elements. Mr. Short commented one justified the other, as someone who behaved badly in a cooperative – such as by picking up a mango even if it had fallen on the ground – was regarded as a manifestation of individualism rather than collective thinking. In turn, Mr. Short testified, this was seen as a bourgeois tendency and the person risked the appropriate retribution:

Where this system was different from almost every other communist systems that the appropriate retribution here was death, whereas in China and elsewhere it would have been reeducation through labor, it would have been something to enable you to redeem yourself by work and then rejoin the community.

¹³ This response from Mr. Short was slightly unclear.

Additionally Mr. Short said, such actions were rooted in earlier policies and occurred in liberated areas before 1975, stating that in certain areas the pressure on cadres became more intense and their actions were thereby fiercer. “It was different in different locations,” he said.

Mr. Abdulhak referred to Mr. Short’s book as describing a double standard whereby Khmer Rouge leaders grew fat in contrast with a ban of foraging that worsened matters for those in the countryside, including the prohibition on picking up fruit from the ground. The expert witness testified that “double standard” did not go far enough because while the people of DK had nothing or extremely little, those in other communist countries under the same kind of system at least had access to something. While DK leaders did not have absolute luxury and were roughly on par with other communist leaders, in other communist countries ordinary people had more, Mr. Short remarked. “It’s made more flagrant by this preaching of abstinence,” he added.

Philip Short Asked to Detail Communication Structures

Responding to the prosecutor’s question about DK reporting mechanism, Mr. Short said copies of telegrams were sent from zones to the center, which would not speak of difficulties caused by policy, but of sabotage and natural difficulties that would make clear things were not proceeding well in some areas. Ieng Thirith¹⁴ travelled to the northwest and related that what she saw was appalling, though it was attributed to Vietnamese sabotage, Mr. Short added. The prosecutor asked Mr. Short to elaborate on his comment that when ideological principle and practical benefit came into conflict, principle won out regardless of the cost. The expert witness replied that if people had been allowed to forage and have small plots to grow vegetables, there would have been better health and a lower mortality rate and people would have been able to work more. He continued:

Even at its most extreme, the Chinese never went to that extent. It was not permitted in DK because of ideological principle and there are many other examples of a similar kind where the regime did itself immense, unnecessary damage and the people unnecessary damage because they were wedded to iron principles.

Further Population Movements Explored

With some confusion from Mr. Short over locations in a specific document he used – which the court had apparently retranslated¹⁵ – Mr. Abdulhak quoted Mr. Short’s book as saying that Pol Pot was concerned a lack of food in the southwest would affect people’s ability to work and decided to redistribute the labor force, signaling another population movement. The prosecutor cited the passage as saying that more than 1 million people were moved and the regime “cloaked its intentions in a lie.” Mr. Short testified that the lie was that people would be permitted to return to their homes, when they were actually going to a new collective in the northwest where labor was needed. He told the court there were indications that people sent to the northwest had a difficult time and a Chinese interpreter in Beijing who had been in DK at the time described seeing “endless trails of people” marching on the roads from the south to north. Thus, Mr. Short said, witnesses could testify to the mass movement of people.

¹⁴ More information about Ieng Thirith is available at: <http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/indicted-person/ieng-thirith>.

¹⁵ It appeared the court’s translation described a visit to the northwest, not the southwest as Mr. Short wrote in his book. However, both documents appeared to have the same dates – August 20-24, 1975.

In response to a question about the party leadership's views of evacuees, Mr. Short asserted that one of the characteristics of the CPK was a complete lack of trust in all those outside the party, and even suspicion of those who were within, culminating in the purges. "Lack of trust was fundamental to this regime," he said. Quoting from an October/November 1975 edition of *Revolutionary Flag*, Mr. Abdulhak inquired about the introduction of the concept of enemies burrowing within the party and the need for revolutionary vigilance. Mr. Short responded that the text was written at a time when, even to the regime, the burrowing in of enemies of the revolution was not a very obvious problem. There were precursors to the document from before 1975 as it was a consistent standpoint and when the relationship with Vietnam became more difficult from 1976 onwards the theoretical became more practical, he added.

Mr. Abdulhak cited an early 1976 incident mentioned in Mr. Short's book of an explosion in Siem Reap after which Hu Nim informed Pol Pot of a scandal involving Koy Thuon, the former Northern Zone secretary and then minister of commerce. According to Mr. Short's book, Koy Thuon was placed under house arrest on April 8 at K-1, while Doeun was appointed to act in his place before later being implicated in covering up Koy Thuon's activities. After the prosecutor pressed for details on the significance of the developments, Mr. Short stated that it was unclear whether the center uncovered precisely what occurred in Siem Reap, though something serious happened, which bothered them. The expert witness testified that Ieng Sary told him it was an uprising. Mr. Short elaborated:

For a regime which was very prone to paranoia, it was easily depicted as a conspiracy, and if there's a conspiracy, how far do its ramifications reach? This was the first incidence of its kind, so it was, if you like, the trigger for the theoretical vigilance which we looked at in November 1975 and went back earlier, to start to become a necessary attitude. Necessary because there was apparently evidence of attacks, conspiracies against the regime, therefore you start looking at that, therefore you start looking at other possible conspiracies.

At this point, Mr. Abdulhak mentioned a meeting on "base work" on March 8, 1976, attended by Comrade Secretary, Comrade Deputy Secretary, Comrade Hem and Comrade Doeun, identified by Mr. Short as Pol Pot, Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan and Doeun, whom he described as head of the Central Committee general office – a key position. The prosecutor noted that the document appeared to contain reports by three individuals named Shreng, Soth, and Hang¹⁶ from sectors 303, 106, and 103. Looking at Shreng's report in relation to sector 303, Mr. Abdulhak said it described 34 people arrested by the zone military attempting to flee to South Vietnam, while Hang's report on Sector 103 details people fleeing from locations like 303 or Kampong Chhnang – "since January almost 100 have been arrested." Finally, the prosecutor inquired if the reports reflected a general practice of reporting to the leadership, to which Mr. Short responded that they appeared typical of the documents of the period, whether telegrams or Standing Committee meeting minutes. Details of base area conditions and disruptions were standard material, he added.

With this response, Trial Chamber President Nil Nonn concluded the hearing for the day. Proceedings are set to resume at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, May 8, 2013, with further questioning of expert witness Philip Short.

¹⁶ These spellings of the three names was unclear.