

David Chandler has immersed himself in a unique and largely unexplored collection of primary sources from hell.

CRAIG ETCHESON, FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE CAMBODIAN GENOCIDE PROGRAM, YALE UNIVERSITY

[Chandler] has situated his analysis within a knowledge of Khmer history that is unparalleled. Impressive also is his use of works from a diverse range of fields—social psychology, Hobbesian studies, religion, anthropology and Soviet history.

CHARLES KEYES, PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

In January 1979, at the end of their two-year war against Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge, Vietnamese troops captured the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. As they entered the city, they came upon the grounds of a former high school where they discovered the bodies of several recently murdered men and a huge, hastily abandoned archive.

The site had been a prison, code-named S-21, where in just under 4 years, some 14,000 men, women and children had been incarcerated, interrogated, tortured and killed by the Khmer Rouge in a demented effort to cleanse the country of its perceived political enemies. Only seven prisoners who entered S-21 emerged alive. The archives of S-21 held stacks of administrative records documenting daily life, interrogations and tortures. There were also 4000 'confessions' extracted from prisoners.

How could a place like S-21 happen? By analysing the mass of documents, supplemented by interviews with survivors and former workers, and then examining this alongside such horrific twentieth-century phenomena as the Holocaust, the Moscow Show Trials and Argentina's 'Dirty War' in the 1970s, Chandler looks at what was uniquely Cambodian and what was universal about what happened at S-21.

David Chandler is Professor Emeritus of History at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. He is the author of *A History of Cambodia: Facing the Cambodian Past: Selected Essays*, and the definitive *Brother Number One: A Political Biography of Pol Pot*.

Cover design: Lisa



SILKWORM BOOKS

VOICES FROM
S-21

VOICES FROM S-21 DAVID CHANDLER

David Chandler
AUTHOR OF
'BROTHER NUMBER ONE'

TERROR AND HISTORY IN POL POT'S SECRET PRISON



Copyright © by the Regents of the University of California, 1999

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 974-7551-15-2

This Thailand and Indochina edition published by
Silkworm Books in 2000

Silkworm Books
Suriwong Book Centre Building, 54/1 Sridonchai Road,
Chiang Mai 50100, Thailand
E-mail address: silkworm@pobox.com
website: <http://www.silkwormbooks.com>

Printed and bound by SRM Production Services Sdn Bhd, Malaysia.

Contents

Preface

1. Discovering S-21	1
2. S-21: A Total Institution	14
3. Choosing the Enemies	41
4. Framing the Questions	77
5. Forcing the Answers	110
6. Explaining S-21	143
Appendix. Siet Chhe's Denial of Incest	157
Notes	161
Bibliography	207
Index	233

Photographs follow page 76