

## **Resources on Cambodia during the Pol Pot Regime**

Becker, Elizabeth: **When the War Was Over: The Voices of Cambodia's Revolution and Its People**

A heart-rending history of modern Cambodia - a state whose people have, in the last 30 years, endured war, political upheaval, international betrayal, and genocide. Beginning with the Khmer Rouge overthrow of the U.S.-backed Lon Nol regime in 1975, Becker examines the historical patterns of violence and authority within Cambodian culture that made the Khmer Rouge's slaughter of close to 2 million people possible.

Bekaert, Jacques: **Kampuchean Diary 1983-1986**

A collection of Bekaert's articles from the *Bangkok Post*. The book details a period of Cambodian history that is rarely discussed.

Chanda, Nayan: **Brother Enemy: The War After the War, a History of Indochina since the Fall of Saigon**

It is an amazing piece of historical reporting, thoroughly researched and extremely readable. The author puts together the pieces of the puzzle to explain the wars between Vietnam-Cambodia and Vietnam-China, after the American retreat in 1975. The rise and fall of the notorious, murderous Khmer Rouge, the flamboyant Prince Sihanouk, the struggles of the Vietnamese, Chinese power plays, all of this weaved into a thrilling book of history. This book also contains comprehensive chronologies and clear maps.

Chandler, David P.: **Brother Number One: A Political Biography**

In Cambodia's recent, tragic past, no figure looms larger or more ominously than that of Pol Pot. Yet information about his life and career is largely inaccessible. In this first book-length study of the man, the historian David P. Chandler casts light on the shadowy figure of Pol Pot, illuminating the ideas and behavior of this enigmatic man and his entourage against the background of post-World War II events, providing a key to understanding this horrific, pivotal period of Cambodian history. In this revised edition, Chandler provides new information on the state of Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge following the death of Pol Pot in 1997.

Crew, Linda: **Children of the River**

Sundara fled Cambodia with her aunt's family to escape the Khmer Rouge army when she was thirteen, leaving behind her parents, her brother and sister, and the boy she had loved since she was a child. Now, four years later, she struggles to fit in at her Oregon high school and to be "a good Cambodian girl" at home. A good Cambodian girl never dates; she waits for her family to arrange her marriage to a Cambodian boy. Yet Sundara and Jonathan, an extraordinary American boy, are powerfully drawn to each other. Haunted by grief for her lost family and for the life left behind, Sundara longs to be with him. At the same time

she wonders, are her hopes for happiness and new life in America disloyal to her past and her people?

Criddle, Joan: **To Destroy You Is No Loss**

Criddle tells the story of Teeda Butt and her family from April 1975 and describes the emptying of Phnom Penh by the Khmer Rouge. She details the family's four years of forced labor, their escape to Thailand, and eventual arrival in America.

Fifield, Adam: **A Blessing Over Ashes**

A wonderful account of a Vermont family who opens their home to a Cambodian refugee. A cross-cultural meeting between Middle America and Cambodia, *A Blessing Over Ashes* is an unusual story that combines classic coming-of-age events with the sad history of a young refugee from the devastated Cambodia of the last decades.

Fox-Martin, Stuart and Bunhaeng Ung: **The Murderous Revolution: Life and Death in Pol Pot's Kampuchea**

An intriguing combination of biography and history, this book is distinguished by Ung's unsettling illustrations of life under the Khmer Rouge.

Him, Chanrithy: **When Broken Glass Floats: Growing Up Under the Khmer Rouge**

A true story of the tragic demise of a Cambodian family told through the eyes of an adolescent girl coming of age under the infamous Khmer Rouge regime. This is a story of a girl whose day to day struggle is to stay alive. And yet imbedded in the everyday battery that Chan writes about, are full fledged stories about discovering the sweet taste of grass, learning how to catch fish while simultaneously outsmarting slave drivers, and befriending a girl whose courage makes way for an escape.

Ho, Minfong: **The Clay Marble**

Written for young readers, Ho's novel gives children who are unfamiliar with Cambodia a window into a refugee's life. Drawing on her experience with a relief organization on the Thai border, Ho tells the story of a Cambodian family that flees the rival factions in Cambodia in the 1980's while hoping to gather resources to return to farming in their homeland. Ho skillfully shapes her story to dramatize political and humanitarian issues.

Jackson, Karl D.: **Cambodia 1975-1978**

A collection of articles about the Khmer Rouge reign, written by some of the leading scholars in the field.

Kamm, Henry: **Cambodia: Report From a Stricken Land**

South East Asia correspondent and Pulitzer Prize winner Henry Kamm recalls 30 years of revolution and genocide in *Cambodia*. He begins with the establishment of the Khmer Rouge, detailing the vicious Communist occupation that took place

from 1975 to 1979, then moves on to the Vietnamese invasion, the 1991 Paris peace settlement, and the demise of Pol Pot. Kamm pays special attention to the foreign influences that played a significant role in crippling the evolution of the Cambodian people.

May, Someth: **Cambodian Witness**

A well-written memoir, worth noting in particular for its descriptions of life before the fall of Phnom Penh.

Ngor, Haing S.: **Haing Ngor: A Cambodian Odyssey**

This is an outstanding portrait of a man who survived the barbaric reign of terror of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. In this book Dr. Ngor relates his horrifying experiences of life under the Khmer Rouge in detail and in the process educates the reader as to just how horrible an existence it really was. Dr. Ngor effectively puts the period of Khmer Rouge rule in historical context by explaining the historical events and forces which led to their capture of the country.

Ponchaud, Francois: **Cambodia: Year Zero**

Possibly the first serious study of the Khmer Rouge regime, Ponchaud's book is well-written, well-documented, and highly accurate.

Schanberg, Sydney: **The Death and Life of Dith Pran**

An account of the April 17, 1975 events in Phnom Penh witnessed by American correspondent Sydney Schanberg and his Cambodia Assistant Dith Pran. The Killing Fields is based on this book.

Shawcross, William: **Sideshow**

Shawcross describes the war in Cambodia that occurred during, and which was largely caused by, America's intervention in Vietnam. The actions of the CIA and the US military under the direction of the Nixon administration set the stage for tragedy by overthrowing Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk and then intervening in Cambodia on a massive scale first through land invasion in April 1970 and continuing with a massive bombing campaign which did not cease even after Congress expressly prohibited it, but went on secretly on a wide scale. This policy created a chain reaction of events that propelled the Khmer Rouge from the margins of society to center stage as millions were dislocated from the land and agricultural production collapsed. Nixon's role in these events was the subject of one of the impeachment articles against him that was not passed by the House Judiciary Committee in 1974 although it received over a dozen votes in its favor.

Sloan Fiffer, Sharon: **Imagining America**

Based on the experiences of Paul Thai, a refugee who arrived in the U.S. in 1981, this book is noteworthy for its detailed description of the culture shock that greets many immigrants and refugees.

Swain, Jon: **River of Time**

Jon Swain's book is a wonderful memoir of Indochina, expressing beautifully the powerful, inexplicable hold that Asia holds for those who love her. Swain was one of the few Western journalists who remained in Phnom Penh as the city fell to the Khmer Rouge. His descriptions of the siege and its immediate aftermath are terrifying and haunting.

Szymusiak, Molyda: **The Stones Cry Out: A Cambodian Childhood, 1975-1980**

In 1975, Molyda Szymusiak (her adoptive name), the daughter of a high Cambodian official, was twelve years old and leading a relatively peaceful life in Phnom Penh. Suddenly, on April 17, Khmer Rouge radicals seized the capital and drove all its inhabitants into the countryside. The chaos that followed has been widely publicized, most notably in the movie *The Killing Fields*. Murderous brutality coupled with raging famine caused the death of more than two million people, nearly a third of the population. This powerful memoir documents the horror Cambodians experienced in daily life.

Ung, Loung: **First They Killed my Father**

Covering the years from 1975 to 1979, the story moves from the deaths of multiple family members to the forced separation of the survivors, leading ultimately to the reuniting of much of the family, followed by marriages and immigrations. The brutality seems unending - beatings, starvation, attempted rape, mental cruelty - and yet the narrator (a young girl) never stops fighting for escape and survival. Sad and courageous, her life, and the lives of her young siblings, provide quite a powerful example of how war can so deeply affect children - especially a war in which they are trained to be an integral part of the armed forces.

Wagner, Carol: **Soul Survivors: Stories of Women and Children in Cambodia**

Wagner tells the story of women and children who endured the Cambodian genocide of the 1970s and managed to rebuild their lives afterward. It includes the stories of two refugees who came to the United States as orphans, returning as young adults to help their country. In a series of personal narratives, the author lets these survivors tell their own stories in their own words, and there are accompanying photographs that give a wonderful added glimpse at their lives. Wagner also provides some brief but helpful political context for the suffering in Cambodia.

Williams, T. Jeff and Kurt Volkert: **A Cambodian Odyssey and the Deaths of 25 Journalists**

Part history, part mystery, *Odyssey* tells the story of a group of journalists killed in Cambodia in 1970, and the story of an effort to find their bodies more than 20 years later.

Yathay, Pin: **Stay Alive, My Son**

This tragic biography traces the story of an educated man and his family in Phnom Penh. Subjected to the indescribable barbaric cruelty that the Khmer Rouge inflicted on its own countrymen, the writer provides the reader with a sense of hopelessness that gripped their nation less than 30 years ago. His hardship and ultimate triumph is the very definition of human survival and the will to survive.