

Name -

Date -

Read the following documents and respond to prompts that follow. Wherever possible, refer to the documents to support your response.

Pol Pot came to power in April 1975. He overthrew Lon Nol in a coup d'état and attempted to create a utopian agrarian society.

...He [Pol Pot] began by declaring, "This is Year Zero," and that society was about to be "purified." Capitalism, Western culture, city life, religion, and all foreign influences were to be extinguished in favor of an extreme form of peasant Communism. All foreigners were thus expelled, embassies closed, and any foreign economic or medical assistance was refused. The use of foreign languages was banned. Newspapers and television stations were shut down, radios and bicycles confiscated, and mail and telephone usage curtailed. Money was forbidden. All businesses were shuttered, religion banned, education halted, health care eliminated, and parental authority revoked. Thus Cambodia was sealed off from the outside world. All of Cambodia's cities were then forcibly evacuated. At Phnom Penh, two million inhabitants were evacuated on foot into the countryside at gunpoint. As many as 20,000 died along the way....

Source: "Genocide in the 20th Century: Pol Pot in Cambodia 1975-1979," *The History Place*

Based on this History Place article, discuss those actions taken by Pol Pot's government that contributed directly to human rights violations against the Cambodian people.

Teeda Butt Mam is a survivor of the Khmer Rouge. This excerpt is an eyewitness account of her experience in Cambodia.

...I traveled with my family from the heart of the country to the border of Thailand. It was devastating to witness the destruction of my homeland that had occurred in only four years. Buddhist temples were turned into prisons. Statues of Buddha and artwork were vandalized. Schools were turned into Khmer Rouge headquarters where people were interrogated, tortured, killed, and buried. School yards were turned into killing fields. Old marketplaces were empty. Books were burned. Factories were left to rust. Plantations were without tending and bore no fruit....

— Teeda Butt Mam

Source: Teeda Butt Mam, "Worms from Our Skin," Children of Cambodia's Killing Fields, Yale University Press

According to this eyewitness account, what were *two* results of Khmer Rouge rule in Cambodia and how do these results help explain the Khmer Rouge Ideology (include principal targets of the regime in this response)?

In 1970, Lon Nol overthrew Prince Norodom Sihanouk and became the leader of Cambodia. The Vietnam War had destabilized Cambodia's government and Lon Nol used this situation to gain power.

...Richard Nixon's May 1970 invasion of Cambodia (undertaken without informing Lon Nol's new government) followed simultaneous invasions by Saigon and Vietnamese Communist forces. It created 130,000 new Khmer [Cambodian mountain people] refugees, according to the Pentagon. By 1971, 60 percent of refugees surveyed in Cambodia's towns gave U.S. bombing as the main cause of their displacement. The U.S. bombardment of the Cambodian countryside continued until 1973, when Congress imposed a halt. Nearly half of the 540,000 tons of bombs were dropped in the last six months.

From the ashes of rural Cambodia arose Pol Pot's Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK). It used the bombing's devastation and massacre of civilians as recruitment propaganda and as an excuse for its brutal, radical policies and its purge of moderate Communists and Sihanoukists. This is clear from contemporary U.S. government documents and from interviews in Cambodia with peasant survivors of the bombing....

Source: Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*, Yale University Press (adapted)

According to Ben Kiernan, in what ways did international involvement contribute to the rise of Pol Pot and the CPK?

In 2006, after 10 years of international negotiations, the United Nations and the Cambodian government set up a unique hybrid tribunal to try the senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge for international crimes. They called the tribunal the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). According to David Scheffer, former U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, the creation of the ECCC took longer than the creation of any other international or hybrid criminal tribunal in the post-Cold War era.

In September 2007, the ECCC ordered the arrest of Nuon Chea. He was charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes. In 2009, the charge of genocide was added to his indictment, as well as to the indictments of three other former senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge. Later in 2009, 30 years after the end of the Khmer Rouge regime, the ECCC processed its first case: the trial of Kaing Guek Eav (more commonly known as Duch), the prison chief at Tuol Sleng (S-21) detention center, who was charged with the deaths of over 10,000 prisoners in Phnom Penh. In July 2010, Duch was sentenced to 35 years in prison (later reduced to 19 years).

Meanwhile, the second preliminary ECCC hearing involving Nuon Chea and three former senior leaders, was held from June 27-30, 2011. A full trial of the four leaders will be held later this year. Nuon Chea walked out of the proceedings on the first day of the hearing saying that he did not believe he would receive a fair hearing. Court prosecutors told reporters that they thought the hearing was a success.

Based on the above document, how successful has the post-genocide quest for justice been in Cambodia? Explain.

President Nixon Defends Invasion of Cambodia

Primary source: President Nixon, "Address to the Nation on the Situation in Southeast Asia," speech, 1970.

Background information: In April 1970, President Nixon (1913–94), in a televised speech to the American public, defended his decision to send U.S. troops into Cambodia. That action would widen the war.

[. . .]

In cooperation with the armed forces of South Vietnam, attacks are being launched this week to clean out major enemy sanctuaries on the Cambodian-Vietnam border.

[. . .]

This is not an invasion of Cambodia. The areas in which these attacks will be launched are completely occupied and controlled by North Vietnamese forces. Our purpose is not to occupy the areas. Once enemy forces are driven out of these sanctuaries and once their military supplies are destroyed, we will withdraw.

[. . .]

Richard M. Nixon, "Address to the Nation on the Situation in Southeast Asia," 30 April 1970, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, 1970* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1971), 405–10.

Columbia American History Online. 2004. 16 Nov 2009 <<http://caho-test.cc.columbia.edu/dbq/11101.html>>.

Why was the US so interested in Cambodia? According to the above documents were their actions justified? Why or why not? How did these actions contribute to the Cambodian genocide?