

Our Legacy

Imperialist Slander Can Never Deface the Revolutionary Image of Comrade Pol Pot

— *by a correspondent*

Comrade Pol Pot — a brave general of the Kampuchean liberation struggle, a founding leader of the Kampuchean Communist Party and an inspiring leader of the Khmer Rouge guerrillas — finally breathed his last on 15th April, 1998.

Incapacitated by his ailing health and unable to pursue an active revolutionary life, he had been leading a secluded, serene and simple life in his thatched hut in the liberated areas of the Khmer Rouge bordering Thailand. However, for the imperialists and their cohorts he was a living terror, haunting them in their sleep. He had proved to be an insurmountable challenge for the vile imperialist ambitions of domination over Kampuchea.

That is why the imperialists gave top priority to demonising and denigrating Comrade Pol Pot, as part of their frenzied world-wide slander campaign against Marxism and socialism. They accuse him of carrying out a genocide of over a million Kampuchean people. In their world-wide media-blast, full of untruths, outright lies and slanders, they tried their utmost to mislead and convince the people about the authenticity of their charges by portraying piles of human skulls and horrific graveyards. The comprador and landlord regime of Kampuchea continued to depict comrade Pol Pot as the main hindrance in the path of the search for peace in Kampuchea. (For these rulers “peace” is a pseudonym for consolidating their own State power.) That is why all the above enemies of the



Com. Pol Pot in his last days

people were after the blood of comrade Pol Pot. They had been resorting to vituperative and slanderous campaigns to liquidate him politically. They had been hatching conspiracies to finish him off physically. They had been wilfully spreading rumours of Pol Pot's death and portraying his arrest and trial in captivity by his erstwhile guerrilla loyalists, in order to sow confusion among the ranks of the Khmer Rouge guerrillas and to dishearten them. Now, finally, with the death of Pol Pot, the imperialists and their stooges have heaved a sigh of relief.

Comrade Pol Pot — a brave revolutionary fighter

The world imperialist press, which vilified comrade Pol Pot as a great despot, an intemperate fascist and a sadist, and accused him of wilfully murdering over a million or two million people, is rejoicing over his death. But the toiling people and the liberation fighters of Kampuchea very well know that comrade Pol Pot was not a despot or a murderer but a very kind-hearted human being. He had immense love in his heart for the toiling people. He had always shared their joys and sorrows. He had been an unflinching and resolute fighter for their interests, for their emancipation from exploitation and oppression, and for the independence and prosperity of Kampuchea. He was a determined communist leader dedicated to the principles of people's democracy and Marxist theory. He nurtured immense class hatred for all sorts of imperialists, compradors, feudals and other reactionaries. That is why he never, even in the most difficult and trying days in his life, capitulated before the imperialists nor ever got entrapped by their conspiratorial games. He remained true to his beliefs and principles to the last days of his life.

Comrade Pol Pot was born in a well-off peasant family in Kompong Thom in 1928. His family name was Saloth Sar. As a child, he was

fascinated by Buddhism. He was by nature very humble and kind-hearted. According to his elder brother, leave alone killing lakhs of people, one could never think of him killing even one person.

During his student life, Sar came under the sway of patriotism. At that time, the whole of Indo-China was struggling under the leadership of comrade Ho Chi Minh against the yoke of French colonialism. The French left Indo-China in 1956 after tasting bitter defeat in North Vietnam. A feudal-monarchist regime led by Prince Sihanouk occupied the Cambodian throne.

Cambodia was a very poor and underdeveloped nation. Industry was negligible, geared to the needs of the international market, and contributed at best 10 per cent of GNP. Such public investment as there was — such as the railway — financed by the colonial ruler France had only helped French industrial products to penetrate the country's market, not helped to develop Khmer industry. Over 80 per cent of the entire population of the country were peasants subjected to intense exploitation and oppression of the feudals, bureaucracy, and merchants. Peasants relied heavily on moneylenders for working capital, and had to pay interest at rates upto 300 per cent per annum. Part of the rent and usurious revenues sucked from the peasantry were drained out in the purchase of luxury goods by the feudals. Luxury goods constituted half of all imports; with American aid, industrial stagnation was being deepened. An unproductive service and commercial class grew in the cities around the import of cars, refrigerators, radios, and the like.

In these conditions, ideas of serving the people and working for their welfare, along with feelings of patriotism, began to take shape in the mind of the youthful Saloth Sar. While in this turmoil, he emigrated to Paris in 1949 to pursue his studies in electronics.

Paris, in those days, was a bastion of the Leftist thinkers of Europe. The Khmer Students' Association in Paris was dominated by the Left. While in Paris, Sar met other Indo-Chinese communists and soon emerged as a staunch communist fighter. In the early fifties, he returned to Cambodia and worked as a teacher of history and geography while persistently continuing his party activities. In this process, he developed himself as a keen reader, a serious analyst, a deep thinker, an effective debater, a capable organiser, and a determined communist leader unflinching in prin-

ciples and theory but still humble and gentle.

By virtue of these qualities, he was elected deputy general secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea in 1962, and, by 1963, general secretary. He remained in this post till 1985.

After the "Great Debate" and "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" in China, he clearly demarcated from Khrushchevite international revisionism and became a firm follower of Mao Tsetung Thought. Pol Pot (Saloth Sar) and other leaders of the Communist Party secretly visited China in 1965. During these very years, the Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea, known later as the Khmer Rouge, was developed under his leadership and the first liberated area was established in western Cambodia. By 1970, the Khmer Rouge claimed a force of 4,000 regular troops and 50,000 guerrillas. They and the Cambodian people faced ferocious attacks from Sihanouk's army and police.

In 1965, the American imperialists invaded Vietnam in order to contain the spread of communism in Indo-China and to stall the advance of national liberation struggles of the Indo-Chinese countries. The imperialists wanted to avail of the territory of Cambodia, along with the territories of Laos and Thailand, as their military base. But, due to the intense mass resistance of the Kampuchean people, Prince Sihanouk did not consent. As a sequel to this, in 1970, the American imperialists engineered a coup d'état using the Cambodian army, installed a puppet regime under the leadership of a renegade army general Lon Nol, and dislodged Prince Sihanouk from the Cambodian throne. The Kampuchean Communist Party, under the leadership of comrade Pol Pot, determinedly opposed this imperialist intervention in the affairs of Kampuchea, and intensified armed struggle against the American imperialists and their puppet regime by forging a patriotic united front with the armed forces of the deposed Prince Sihanouk.

In order to drown in blood the war of resistance and for liberation, the American imperialist forces and their war planes wreaked havoc on the Kampuchean soil between 1970 and 1973. Nevertheless, they miserably failed to contain the advancing Khmer Rouge forces. Finally, in April 1975, the United Front armies, led by the Khmer Rouge, captured Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, overthrew the puppet military regime and established the People's Democratic Government of Kampuchea. Com-

rade Pol Pot became the head of this People's Democratic State.

After the victory of the revolution, Democratic Kampuchea had to grapple with still bigger odds and challenges. The American invasion and the widespread aerial bombing (5,00,000 tonnes of bombs, half of that in 1973 alone) had devastated much of the agricultural and industrial production. Aerial photographs by American reconnaissance planes at the time of the fall of Phnom Penh showed that only 12 per cent of the rice paddies had been planted. The entire infrastructure of transport, communications and health services had crumbled. A large number of professionals, experts and doctors had emigrated from the country. To escape the outrageous and widespread bombings, millions of people -- over half the population -- had sought shelter in the cities, particularly the capital city of Phnom Penh, the seat of power of the reactionary puppet regime. Before leaving, the CIA had set up a city-based network of agents for the future (as mentioned by a former CIA operative in Cambodia, Frank Snapp, in *Decent Interval*). The country was reeling under famine, hunger and epidemics, even as there was an acute shortage of medicines and qualified doctors. Coping with the more than 18 lakh refugees glutting the capital city constituted the biggest problem. According to a USAID estimate, at the time Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, there was only food left for feeding the city's population for *six days*. A U.S. intelligence report of June 1975 claimed that a million people were bound to die of starvation within a year (out of a total population of about seven million) because there was simply no food for them. Arranging adequate rations for such a huge displaced refugee population was a momentous task.

On the other hand, the international situation at the time, too, was not favourable. The victorious Kampuchean revolution could have expected the most resolute moral, material and political support from Mao's socialist China. But by the time the Kampuchean revolution achieved victory, comrade Mao was ailing and grappling with the problems stemming from his old age. With his end nearing, a bitter struggle for power had erupted between the revolutionaries and the revisionists. (A year later, comrade Mao passed away and the revisionists gained the upper hand in the ongoing power struggle. It is noteworthy that when, in early 1976, Deng Xiaoping fell from power and the revolutionary forces in China

were briefly ascendant, the Kampuchean communists hailed this event.)

At that time, too, the two super-powers — the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. — were at the peak of their struggle for hegemony over the world. The ignominious debacle of the American super-power in Indo-China had created a favourable situation for the U.S.S.R. in this region. The Vietnamese Communist Party, which had been waging a valiant struggle against the American imperialists since the days of the liberation war, had come under the ideological-political influence of the U.S.S.R. revisionists. With the connivance of Soviet social-imperialism, it was entertaining ambitions of establishing a federation of Indo-Chinese nations under the tutelage of the Soviet super-power. Laos and Kampuchea were to occupy a subordinate position in this federation. But the consistent and resolute ideological-political positions of the Communist Party of Kampuchea and its general secretary Pol Pot, clearly demarcating from Soviet revisionism and characterising it as social-imperialism, was the main obstacle in the way of the Vietnamese Communist Party its overlord realising their dreams.

Thus the new-born Democratic Kampuchea faced the gigantic task not only of putting the economy on the rails, rehabilitating the refugees, and consolidating the People's Democratic State; it had also to decide whether these tasks were to be accomplished by accepting the hegemony of Soviet social-imperialism and relying on the political and material support of this super-power, or by pursuing a path of building a self-sustaining economy and relying on its own people.

The former course assured greater economic aid in the immediate context but extracted a bigger price in the long run. With the adoption of this course, Kampuchea ran the risk of becoming a neo-colony of Soviet social-imperialism instead of becoming a genuinely independent People's Democratic State.

The second course was fraught with even more difficult problems and challenges. It demanded huge sacrifices and a long-drawn-out struggle. It led to an immediate confrontationist course between the weak and problem-ridden Democratic Kampuchea and the Soviet super-power and its lackey (the Vietnamese regime). However, this course of self-reliance was the only course which, though full of sacrifices, could ensure the development and stability of people's democracy in Kampuchea.

The Kampuchean Communist Party led by comrade Pol Pot, braving the huge dangers and challenges, daringly decided to pursue the correct, second course. Of course they must have committed mistakes while following this correct course. (Apparently, they also managed to restore the devastated agrarian economy, including the irrigation system, at remarkable speed.) Had they been allowed enough time, they would have rectified their mistakes and overcome the gigantic problems by relying on their correct line.

Unfortunately, People's Democratic Kampuchea, under the leadership of comrade Pol Pot, could not get enough time to pursue this correct path. With the active connivance of Soviet social-imperialism, the Vietnamese government invaded Kampuchea in December 1978 with over 2,00,000 troops armed with Soviet weapons, and occupied the capital Phnom Penh. They imposed a puppet regime over Kampuchea. In such a situation, Pol Pot had to retreat to his base area in the forests of Western Kampuchea.

The Soviet imperialist super power and its lackey, the Vietnamese government, in order to justify their reactionary act of blatant aggression over Kampuchea, chimed in with the American imperialists' characterisation of comrade Pol Pot as a great despot and authoritarian ruler. They added their weight to the blatantly fabricated stories of the genocide of lakhs of people.

At that time, the American imperialists, in their own interests and as part of their sharpened contradiction and confrontation with the Soviet super-power, had opposed this act of aggression over Kampuchea by the Vietnamese government. Nevertheless, the American imperialists in their heart of hearts were equally rejoicing over the seeming defeat of Democratic Kampuchea and were assessing the possibilities for their own re-entry into Kampuchea.

Despite pouring in two lakh well-armed troops in combat with relatively small Kampuchean forces, the Vietnamese were unable to stabilise their rule. The Khmer Rouge had faced heavy losses in the first Vietnamese blitz. But by 1980 it was reported that around 55,000 Khmer Rouge guerrillas were active throughout the country, and a population of 1.3 million lived in the liberated areas. Vietnamese-puppet administration did not exist below the district headquarters level. The puppet regime set up

by Vietnam was so weak that it was widely assessed that it would collapse the moment that Vietnam removed its troops.

From then on to this day, the international situation has undergone innumerable unfavourable changes hindering the speedy advance of the Khmer Rouge movement. But the reality remained that the present government of Kampuchea, under imperialist patronage, could not dislodge the Khmer Rouge from their base areas. Though many of his well-known erstwhile comrades parted company with him in the face of the immeasurable hardships in the mosquito- and malaria-infested jungle life, virulent slanderous campaigns on an international scale and the prospects of the war further continuing, yet Pol Pot steadfastly persevered on the path of struggle, remaining ever firm in his ideals, principles and beliefs. To his last, he remained a source of inspiration and guidance to the Kampuchean revolutionary struggle.

But repeated attacks of malaria sapped his vitality. He was thus chronically ill. He therefore voluntarily relinquished all party responsibilities. However, this in no way diminished his authority or influence in the party affairs. The imperialist powers, under the auspices of the United Nations, made umpteen attempts at "restoration of peace" in Kampuchea. But they could not succeed in drawing the Khmer Rouge on to the opportunist parliamentary path and abandoning the path of armed struggle. The imperialists had to reconcile themselves time and again to the harsh reality that no genuine peace in Kampuchea was possible without the involvement of the Khmer Rouge.

With the disintegration of the social imperialist Soviet Union as a State and its decline as a super-power, the ambitions of the American imperialist super-power for establishing world hegemony have grown manifold. The possibilities of getting a foothold in Indo-China thus seemed to it to be brighter. In this changed context, America and the ASEAN countries in 1992, in an attempt to lure and tame the Khmer Rouge, agreed to involve the Khmer Rouge in peace talks to be held under the auspices of the United Nations — mainly an organ of the U.S. super-power. The U.N. proposals urged the Khmer Rouge to opt for a poll process and relinquish the path of armed struggle. This was unequivocally rejected by the Khmer Rouge.

Afterwards, in 1993, the Khmer Rouge boycotted the Kampuchean

elections held under the supervision of the United Nations. From then onwards, the imperialists and their lackeys have been conceiving the Khmer Rouge and its leader comrade Pol Pot as a big hindrance in the path of accomplishing their designs. They have therefore been vociferously trumpeting all the rotten slanderous rubbish that earlier used to be blared by the Soviet social-imperialist super-power and its Vietnamese stooges.

Pol Pot — an admirable personality

Why did the imperialists and their henchmen, despite vicious propaganda campaigns and various intrigues, fail miserably in discrediting Pol Pot in the eyes of the Kampuchean toiling masses and in isolating him from the Khmer Rouge guerrillas? This question has, time and again, eluded and baffled the bourgeois intellectuals and mediemen. The bourgeois journalists, who were quick to denounce him as a despot and murderer, often sought to explain this phenomenon in terms of his individual traits and merits.

When, in 1996, the imperialist press had declared him dead and even published obituary notes on him, an American journalist, Frank Gibbon, while commenting on Pol Pot, in an article entitled "A Murderer of Two Million People", published in the well-known magazine *Time*, began his article by declaring that the "people long acquainted with Saloth Sar (Pol Pot) describe him not only as an admirable human being and a suave teacher but also as an extremely charming and fascinating personality. He has all the ingredients of a charismatic leader." Newsweek, while labelling him as "one of the century's great villains", also admitted that "the few westerners who have met him over the years invariably came away impressed by his relaxed manners, his shy smile, and soft, confident voice. He seemed a very gentle man."

An American author, David Chandler, has written a biography of Pol Pot. This book, entitled *Brother Number One*, was published in 1992. Chandler writes that all Pol Pot's comrades and the peasant masses affectionately and reverently addressed Pol Pot as "Brother", and he cherished it very much. According to the author, Pol Pot had an immense conviction in his theories, principles and beliefs. He had firm faith that the future of Kampuchea lay with the Khmer Rouge. Chandler describes

him as "eloquent but unpretentious, honest, humane, easy to befriend — upto a point — and easy to respect." But Pol Pot was extremely strict in matters of organisational principles and policies. According to Chandler, if after his ouster from Phnom Penh, Pol Pot succeeded in establishing a firm foothold in western Kampuchea, it was because of the importance he gave to the task of consolidating the organisation.

The physical condition of Pol Pot had been deteriorating for the last two years. Due to an arterial contraction, he had also not been mentally alert in his last days. Those were the days when the imperialist press published juicy stories about his arrest and trial in captivity at the hands of a section of Khmer Rouge guerrillas. But the Khmer Rouge radio broadcasts neither confirmed nor contradicted such stories. Nor did the bourgeois mediemen give details of the charges against Pol Pot.

No doubt, the imperialist press flashed such stories with the sole and ulterior motive of character assassination of comrade Pol Pot. He remained firm in his principles and beliefs to the last despite his grave physical and mental health. It seems likely that some section of the Khmer Rouge, by posing as anti-Pol Pot, was attempting some sort of reconciliation with the American imperialists and the comprador Kampuchean regime. With time, the truth will be known.

The slander campaign and the reality

Over the years, the imperialist propaganda machine has been churning out vicious canards about how Pol Pot, during his 'authoritarian' rule of three and a half years, murdered more than a million Kampuchean people. Later this figure was revised to two million. These wild accusations are sought to be corroborated by depicting a heap of human skulls and some horrifying graveyards. (These were collected and arranged by the Vietnamese occupying army over *six months* after its invasion, and displayed to select foreign journalists invited for guided tours by the puppet regime.) The American imperialists have indicted comrade Pol Pot as a war criminal, but they never bothered to corroborate their accusations through an independent and neutral international probe. Actually, they would be scared of any genuinely impartial probe as it would not only expose their lies and concoctions but also their own massive crimes and killings.

Nonetheless, some independent intellectuals tried to dig into these imperialist allegations. One such attempt was made by the well-known American intellectual Noam Chomsky and his associate Michael Vickery.* Chomsky and Vickery tore the imperialist canards to shreds and contended that nobody knew for certain how many people died under the Pol Pot-led regime, as there is no empirical evidence or census data available to date. They further argued that even if the claim of one million people killed were taken at its face value, it was not Pol Pot but the American imperialists and their puppet Lon Nol regime who were to blame for this orgy of mass killing.

From 1970 to 1973, during just three years of the Kampuchean resistance movement, the American imperialists rained five lakh (half a million) tonnes of explosives over the villages, cities and fields of tiny Kampuchea to suppress and crush the resistance. During 1973 itself, American bombers conducted 160 air-raids over the villages and towns of Kampuchea and dropped 240,000 tonnes of bombs and explosives — around 35 kilos of explosives per each Kampuchean man, woman or child. More than five lakh (half a million) people died as a result of this bombardment. The entire infrastructure of agriculture, transport and communications was devastated. More than 18 lakh (1.8 million) terror-stricken villagers (out of a pre-war countrywide population of around seven million) migrated to the capital Phnom Penh to escape these bombing raids. More than three lakh people died of famine, starvation, and the resultant diseases. Hence, subtracting the above, the number of people who died in the civil war before and after the victory of the revolution and as a result of brutal Vietnamese aggression and the Kampuchean resistance struggle against this aggression would be approximately two lakh (2,00,000). Even among these two lakh people, a large number of them died under the tyrannical violence perpetrated by the mercenaries of the puppet Lon Nol regime and the Vietnamese aggressors. And for a

* Also see: *After the Cataclysm* by Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, in which the authors have shown in great detail how faked interviews, faked photographs, and other manipulated evidence were deliberately blared through the Western media to damn Democratic Kampuchea, whereas all positive evidence (eg. accounts of visitors to Kampuchea) was suppressed by the same media.

part of these deaths, the armed forces of Prince Sihanouk, an ally of the Khmer Rouge, would certainly be responsible. So, even if one were to accept the unsubstantiated figure of one million deaths, the number killed by the Khmer Rouge forces would be restricted to a few thousands of people.

So, according to Chomsky and Vickery, the harsh reality is that for the killings of lakhs of people in Kampuchea, the real and main culprit is American imperialism itself. The very American imperialism whose innumerable crimes against humanity, from Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Korea, Indo-China, Mozambique, Somalia, etc are living testimony of imperialist savagery and which, even today, is undoubtedly responsible for the death of six lakh innocent children in Iraq.

The revisionists are not lesser culprits

In their world-wide slanderous campaign against Marxism and socialism, the imperialists and their lackeys have unleashed a propaganda offensive against people's democratic and socialist systems and their creators and leaders. The revisionists, who have got stuck in the bourgeois quagmire of "social-democracy" after deserting the theories of armed revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat (which ensures all-pervasive and broad democracy for the toiling people), often go to the extreme of denouncing all such armed struggles that aim to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat or of the toiling people by smashing the class rule of the landlords and the capitalists. They go to the extreme of denouncing all such activities of the erstwhile socialist countries as were directed against the capitalist-roaders for defending and consolidating the socialist State. That is why the revisionists despise the revolutionary leaders who wage a relentless struggle against the revisionists masquerading as Marxists. That is why comrade Stalin, who inflicted heavy blows on revisionism, was a ruthless dictator in the eyes of these revisionists; and comrade Mao, who during the Cultural Revolution launched severe attacks on revisionism, was denounced by these revisionists as a protagonist of violence. This is all the more true in the case of comrade Pol Pot. The Vietnamese government, which launched an aggression

over People's Democratic Kampuchea and imposed on it a puppet regime, was, in reality, an extension of the bloody clutches of the imperialist super-power, the Soviet Union, wearing the garb of socialism. This imperialist power unleashed an utterly treacherous, concocted and thoroughly slanderous propaganda offensive against comrade Pol Pot in order to justify its unabashed aggression. The other revisionist parties throughout the world followed suit in spreading these canards.

In the changed present world context, the American imperialists and their lackeys are trumpeting the same rubbish more ferociously and loudly. It goes to show that the revisionists and the imperialists have not only a common cause in opposing the communist revolutionaries, people's democracy and proletarian socialism, but they also agree on utilising all conceivable, legitimate or illegitimate, means to denigrate their enemies.

Class angle constitutes the basic demarcating criterion

Whether Pol Pot was a murderer of the people or whether he was their friend and comrade is a question that cannot be settled by some stray facts and figures. It can be resolved only on the basis of a class angle from which these facts and figures are to be ascertained and analysed.

Seen and adjudged with the class angle of the imperialists, capitalists and landlords, Pol Pot would no doubt turn out to be a murderer and a despot because he led a movement which was aimed at confiscating the private property and seizing State power from the imperialist-comprador elements, feudal lords and bureaucrats in Kampuchea. Judged from this class angle, the seizure of private property of a person, however exploiting and anti-people he may be, is considered an act of banditry and high-handedness by the ruling classes. Imbued with this class angle, the imperialists and their lackeys had accused the Bolsheviks in Russia as "red devils" and the soldiers of the red army in China as "red bandits". Likewise, the Naxalite revolutionaries in India are proclaimed to be "dacoits" and "extremists". These very imperialists, on the other hand, have been waging the most horrible and cruel wars and butchering human be-

ings in order to ruthlessly exploit labour, to subjugate the backward countries and defend their own imperialist empires; yet they heralded these wars as just wars in defence of "civilized society" and "democracy".

Quite to the contrary, Pol Pot was a guide and a brother of the labouring people because he fought to his last for their essential interests. In the words of one former Khmer Rouge soldier quoted in *Time* magazine, "The people found him very kind, I mean the poor people." He struggled for emancipating the toiling people from the yoke of exploitation and oppression and for ushering in a life full of dignity and hegemony of the toiling people. He fought for the liberation and the sovereignty of Kampuchea. One of the reasons why he struggled selflessly till his last days was his unbounded love for his people, his immense faith in the people.

Today, when even after the demise of comrade Pol Pot, the imperialist propaganda machine is bent on projecting his highly attractive and revolutionary personality in a distorted manner and is misleading the common people about him, it is the bounden duty of the revolutionary fraternity to project his revolutionary fighting features. They must project his resolute and firm revolutionary conviction which did not crumble in the face of even the reversal of revolution in China; which did not falter even when his erstwhile friend and ally, the Vietnamese Communist Party, betrayed him and stabbed the Kampuchean revolution in the back: which kept him on the correct path when unfavourable factors for the Kampuchean revolution continued to grow and blighted even the international situation; and which did not shake even in the face of highly vituperative and slanderous imperialist campaigns to discredit and denigrate him. Instead, it made him stick to his theories, principles and line and to the path of armed struggle. It was this revolutionary conviction of comrade Pol Pot which in the face of setback to the revolutionary struggle, made him retreat but never yield. And he did not yield till his last.

Today, when the imperialist slanderous propaganda against comrade Pol Pot is going on in full swing, it is not an opportune moment to evaluate and propagate the mistakes committed by comrade Pol Pot. In this context, we should keep in mind the words of comrade

Pol Pot which he addressed to his biographer during an interview. According to his biographer, Chandler, when he asked Pol Pot whether he made any mistakes, Pol Pot's eyes grew wet and, after a pause, he murmured:

"Yes, I did make mistakes.... But I never committed those mistakes which the American imperialists are propagating, nor did I commit those mistakes which the American imperialists wanted me to commit."

The above words of Pol Pot make it amply clear that, in the course of revolutionary practice, he made some mistakes. But he never made those mistakes of which he is accused these days. In the last days of his life, in an interview given to a correspondent, excerpts of which were later broadcast over B.B.C., he said confidently and firmly that his conscience was absolutely clear regarding such accusations. The second important point that he made in the earlier quoted reply to Chandler meant that he never committed the mistake of yielding to imperialist pressure. The entire life of Pol Pot corroborates the truthfulness of these words of his.

In future, when the world revolutionary movement gains ascendance worldwide and as a part of it, the Kampuchean liberation movement surges ahead, then the misty clouds of concocted imperialist propaganda shall disappear. Then the personality and image of comrade Pol Pot as a real revolutionary hero of the people will shine ever more brightly.

Emulate and inculcate the revolutionary virtues of comrade Pol Pot!

[Some of the quotations in the above article have been re-translated into English. Hence there may be slight discrepancies with the original.]



Comrade Po Pot leading a Khmer Rouge column (1979)

