Cambodia- Church text (6th edition)

P12

Small country but great power struggles between elites and grossly affected by global ideological struggles: a victim of Cold War rivalries

P19

Under French colony rule the peasantry were given few opportunities as there was limited education. The elite were French educated, the peasants were not at all. Taxes were high and there were no incentives for trade. Frustration and resentment seemed to be building even though the Europeans dismissed the locals as lazy and decadent.

P20

By 1945, no nationalist movement had really arisen, unlike in Indochina and Indonesia.

P23

In 1953, Sihanouk toured Europe agitating and winning independence from the French. Returned a hero. There was no real opposition options to a monarchy, as the Vietnamese sponsored communist party was small.

P24

Sihanouk abdicated in 1955 and established his political party: People’s Socialist Community. Said he was unaligned to either the communist or anti-communist bloc, though he received economic and military aid from the USA. Rigged elections to destroy Democratic Party which dissolved in 1957.

Next decade saw him rule with “Buddhist Socialism”. Offered something for everyone but dissidents “disappeared”.

He promoted education (spent 20% of national budget on it) but not interested in economics, so an educated population saw economic issues as a problem as time went on.

P25

Sihanouk saw what was happening in Vietnam and wanted to stay out of it, but positioned himself to get on with victor. Tended slightly to the left, but proclaimed neutrality.

In 1963, rejected the USA and nationalized the banks and trade. Broke off diplomatic relations with the USA in 1965. Reopened in 1970.

Secretly allowed North Vietnam and NLF to use Cambodian land for access and openly courted China.

Around 1966, Sihanouk seemed to lose interest and as people became disillusioned with him, communist insurgency rose in remote areas.

P26

Sihanouk deposed in 1970 by his cousin and the “Khmer Republic” declared in October, under Lon Nol, the former PM.

The coup polarized the population. Communists now backed by Sihanouk against Lon Nol and encouraged to undertake guerilla warfare.

The USA backed Lon Nol. USA bombed countryside during Vietnam war and this led to hatred of USA but also slowed Communist advances on Phnom Penh. They did take the capital though in April, 1975.

P27

“Khmer Rouge” were originally leftist anti-government forces in the 1960s.They set up “Democratic Kampuchea” in 1975. AKA “angkar padevat”.

Communist leadership made explicit in September, 1977 with the announcement of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK).

Pol Pot (formerly Saloth Sar) was a French educated schoolteacher. Decreed Kampuchea would be cut off from the outside world and all foreign influences rejected. Urban areas were evacuated and all Cambodians had to become farmers. Year Zero set to 1975.

Pol Pot may have been influenced by French leftwing theories of the 1950s and 1960s, but essentially this was a Cambodian policy. His policy of anti-foreign influence was brutal and simple. Supported by young people.

P28

Consequences were terrible. 500,000 died during 1970-75 war. Over a million died under Khmer Rouge rule from mismanagement, brutality, lack of medical services and malnutrition.

CPK really hated Vietnam. They purged Vietnamese trained cadres, attempted to redefine the shared border and Viet-Cambodian relations reflected world communist split. Vietnam was USSR backed and Cambodia, China backed.

Vietnamese invaded a “ghostly” Phnom Penh in January, 1979. Failed to capture Pol Pot or his cronies.

This period went from 1979 to 1991.

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The Vietnamese knew their invasion of a sovereign nation could cause international criticism.

They established the “People’s Republic of Kampuchea” under the puppet government led by, mostly, purged CPK cadres. Still a one-party state, but at least money usage and trade were restored.

Cambodia was destabilized. Famine ensued. The traditional subsistence economy didn’t regenerate until the mid 1980s.

Cambodia (the PRK), was an “international pariah” along with Vietnam. Only supported by the Soviet bloc and some non-aligned countries like India.

PRK didn’t have much international trade or aid because it wasn’t seen as a legitimate government. Shunned by USA, Thailand, China, and other ASEAN nations.

The general populace and the refugees camped along the Thai-Cambodian border, having fled Cambodia, were caught in the political melee.

Working in this border area were the Khmer Rouge and a group called the Khmer People’s National Liberation Front (the KPNLF) who was non-Communist and anti-Vietnamese. The Khmer Rouge was still backed by China and despite its record, had the UN seat for Cambodia. It still led some guerilla raids despite PRK and Vietnam trying to destroy it.

In the 1980s, Sihanouk and his son Prince Norodom Ranariddh, established an anti PRK organization, the FUNCINPEC (a French acronym for National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Co-operative Cambodia)

The FUNCINPEC, KPNLF and Khmer Rouge had a shaky coalition to try and oust the PRK.

P30

In 1989, Vietnam withdrew troops from Cambodia, saying the PRK seemed to be established but mostly because Vietnam had lost Soviet aid as a result of the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

In 1990, the PRK transformed into the State of Cambodia (SOC) and adpted a more private-enterprise economy like Vietnam and China and restored Cambodian Buddhism.