and home of the gods. Thus the king was identified with the divine world, and could lay claim to universal authority. At the king's death his temple could serve as his mausoleum.

Jayavarman II built several such temples at widely spaced sites in what is now Cambodia. For the next four centuries his successors would build their temple-mausoleums, the successive foci of South-East Asia's greatest state until the 13th century. The temples of the Angkor region are still South-East Asia's most imposing historical remains.

From the mid ninth century, Angkor's heartland became the region along the northern end of the Tonle Sap, near the modern city of Siem Reap. The Tonle Sap ("great lake") floods each year, fed by the rushing waters of the Mekong. Angkor's rulers and people gradually built a system of reservoirs and canals to control the inundation and provide year-round water for multiple rice harvests. The system eventually watered an area of about 5.5 million hectares and supported a large population. A "bureaucracy" of regional magnates and officials harnessed the labour and product of this population for the king's projects and their own—temple-building, the lavish decoration and upkeep of temples and palaces, the expansion and maintenance of the irrigation works, trade with merchants sailing up the Mekong/Tonle Sap, and warfare.

The degree of power personally exercised by the "god-kings" remains uncertain, despite the rich information about Angkor provided by temple inscriptions and bas-reliefs. Modern scholars' characterisations of Angkor's rulers vary from Stalinesque tyrants to ceremonial figureheads always in danger from court rivalries and regional challenges. Two men of immensely strong personality stand out from the long line of monarchs—Suryavarman II (reigned 1113–1150) and Jayavarman VII (reigned 1181–c.1219). The former took the empire which Angkor had been developing to its greatest extent. Under him it encompassed much of modern Thailand and Laos, Cambodia and southern Vietnam. For a time he also held the territory of Champa, today's central Vietnam. Appropriately, Suryavarman II initiated the construction of Angkor Wat, sometimes described as the largest religious building in the world, and Angkor's best known monument.

Jayavarman VII, also a triumphant warrior-king, became the most prolific of all Angkor's royal builders. His greatest monument is the massive Angkor Thom and Bayon, but he also established numerous other temples, all in an apparent attempt to promote a form of Mahayana Buddhism. He also initiated a road-building programme

and other public works such as hospitals and rest-houses. The mobilisation of labour and resources for warfare and building during the reign of Jayavarman VII must have been enormous. Following his death early in the 13th century no more temples were built and the incising of inscriptions also ceased. Most commentators suggest that his fearsome energies brought social exhaustion. Nevertheless the next major insight into Angkor available to us—the account of a Chinese visitor, Chou Ta-kuan, in 1296—suggests a state still of great power and opulence.

By then, however, the principal religious focus of Khmer society had altered. Varieties of Buddhism had long coexisted with the Hindu Devaraj cults but, during the 13th century, Theravada Buddhism won general allegiance. This form of Buddhism, originally defined in Sri Lanka and possibly Burma, was organised by its *sangha* (order of monks) and clear about what constituted Buddhist orthodoxy, while also being able to subsume Hindu and animist elements. It was rapidly becoming the dominant religion in mainland South-East Asia. The concept of Devaraj, celebrated by Brahmanic officiants, would persist in Khmer society, but a godly king would now demonstrate his virtue primarily through patronage of Theravada Buddhist temples, monasteries and schools. As a consequence, perhaps, interest in the temple-mausoleums of former rulers declined.

In the 1440s, the Khmer ruling class abandoned the Angkor region. Besides the impact of Theravada Buddhism there are other possible reasons for this shift. Court factionalism may have weakened the firm government needed for such an intricately connected "hydraulic society" to work, and hastened ecological deterioration of a region which had been intensively exploited for centuries. The general population of the area may have drifted away as the irrigation system silted up. Malaria has also been suggested as a factor in Angkor's abandonment. The best established factor in the transfer of the kingdom is the rise, from 1351, of the ambitious Thai state of Ayudhya. The Thais insistently attacked Angkor, looting it of wealth and people. A Khmer capital to the south-east (variously in later centuries Phnom Penh, Udong and Lovek) may have seemed more defensible than Angkor. Such cities were also nearer the sea and the booming maritime trade of 15th-century South-East Asia.

THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA, 15TH–18TH CENTURIES

Until late in the 16th century the translated Khmer kingdom appears to have been quite strong, an equal of neighbours like Ayudhya, Lan

Xang (Laos) and Vietnam. Intermittent warfare with the Thais continued, but also peaceful trade and cultural exchange. In religion, polity and culture, the Thai and Khmer kingdoms had much in common. In 1593, however, the Thai king Narasuen attacked Cambodia as part of his strategy to reaffirm the power of Ayudhya after a devastating assault on his city by the Burmese. From this time, Cambodia slipped decisively—at least in Thai eyes—to the status of a Thai vassal state.

Shortly after Narasuen's attack, Cambodia demonstrated vividly a feature that would darken its history in the centuries ahead—ruling-class attempts to harness foreign assistance in ruling-class rivalries. In the 1590s, aid was sought from the Spanish, by then ensconced at Manila, against the Thais. Spanish adventurers and missionaries briefly held great influence at the Cambodian court but, in 1599, most were massacred. The king who had favoured them was also assassinated. In 1603, after further upheavals at court, a Cambodian prince aligned with the Thais came to the throne.

Meanwhile, the Vietnamese had long been advancing southwards from their original homeland in the Tonkin delta, overwhelming Champa in the process. In the 1620s, the next Cambodian king turned to the Vietnamese for help against the Thais, permitting the Vietnamese to settle along his kingdom's south-east coast. There the Vietnamese port and stronghold of Saigon would develop. Vietnamese and Chinese adventurers and traders began to dominate other Cambodian ports. European accounts of Cambodia in the late 16th century and first half of the 17th century suggest a cosmopolitan trading life involving Chinese, Japanese, Malay, Arab and other traders, but from the mid-17th century Cambodia became increasingly isolated from the sea, caught in the pincer movement of Thai and Vietnamese expansionism.

The later 17th and 18th centuries saw repeated Thai and Vietnamese incursions, usually connected with rivalries for the throne within the Cambodian ruling class. The 18th century ended with the Thais dominant. From 1771 until the early 19th century the Vietnamese were preoccupied with domestic rebellion and civil war. The Thai general Taksin and the Thai ruler Rama I, the founder of Bangkok, took the opportunity to impose their authority firmly over Cambodia. The north-western provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap were added to Thai territory. The Cambodian kings had their subordinate status made plain by being crowned at Bangkok amidst Thai-dictated ceremonial.

But Thai-Vietnamese rivalry was still to climax. The Cambodian ruler Ang Chan (reigned 1806–35) thought it wise to pay homage not only to the Thais but also to the Vietnamese, by now reunited under a strong new dynasty ruling from the city of Hué. In 1811–12 Thai forces attempted to replace Ang Chan with one of his brothers, but Vietnamese troops repelled the Thais, and Vietnam assumed ascendancy over Cambodia. Ang Chan continued, however, to send tribute to Bangkok as well as to Hué.

In 1833, the Thais staged a major invasion, taking Phnom Penh, but they were again repelled by Vietnamese forces. When Ang Chan died in 1834 the Vietnamese emperor, Minh Mang, decided on a policy of complete absorption of Cambodia within his realm. As a first step, he passed over two male heirs of the late king and appointed their sister, Ang Mei, as a figurehead monarch. Vietnamese officials ran the kingdom, Vietnamese people were encouraged to colonise Cambodia, and Vietnamese language and law, and even Vietnamese costumes and hairstyles, were increasingly insisted upon.

A country-wide rebellion broke out in 1840, and the Thais responded readily to calls for help from Ang Mei's brothers. For five nightmarish years, Thai and Vietnamese forces, and also Cambodian factions, fought an inconclusive war, ravishing the countryside. Finally, in 1845, the Thais and Vietnamese agreed to compromise, placing on the throne Ang Duang, son of Ang Chan, who would pay homage to both Bangkok and Hué. In this uneasy peace, Ang Duang was encouraged by French missions (which had been operating in Cambodia since the previous century) to appeal for French support. In 1853, he sent feelers to the French diplomatic mission in Singapore, but King Mongkut of Thailand made clear his displeasure and the French backed off, for the time being.

THE COLONIAL ERA, 1863–1940

The French began their attack on Vietnam in 1859 and by 1862 had established the colony of Cochin China around Saigon. Cambodia, their new colony's hinterland, naturally interested them. They envisaged the Mekong as a mighty trade route, perhaps even offering access to China. At the same time a new Cambodian king, Norodom (reigned 1860–1904), was seeking allies to support him against the Thais and against domestic rivals for his throne. In August 1863, he signed a treaty of "protection" which established a French Resident at Phnom Penh, gave France control of Cambodia's foreign relations, and opened the country to French commercial interests. King

Mongkut protested but in 1867, reluctantly recognised the French protectorate. The Thais retained Cambodia's north-western provinces, however; these would only be restored to Cambodia in 1907 at the insistence of the French.

For two decades the protectorate meant little change within Cambodia. The French soon realised that the country could offer no rapid economic return, and focussed their development energies on Cochin China. Equally, Norodom proved adept at turning aside French suggestions for administrative or social reform, as he would, throughout his long reign.

In 1884 the French forced Norodom—under threat of being deposed and replaced—to sign an agreement intended to increase the number of French officials in the kingdom, give policy control to the French over all administrative, financial, judicial and commercial matters, initiate a land-titling system, and abolish slavery. The Cambodian ruling class was alarmed at its potential loss of power over taxation, trade, land and labour, and initiated a country-wide revolt. By 1886 the French were willing to acknowledge respect for Cambodian customs and for another two decades change was minimal and cautiously introduced.

At Norodom's death in 1904, however, the French appointed from amongst the possible heirs a king willing to comply with French policies. He was the first of three kings chosen by the French on the basis of their apparent compliancy. The third would be Norodom Sihanouk, who ascended the throne as a shy 19-year-old in 1941. From 1904, therefore, the French were able to establish complete authority over their protectorate. Prior to 1940 they encountered little further opposition. In 1925, the murder of a French official, Felix Bardez, caused a sensation, but only because it seemed an isolated and uncharacteristic challenge to French rule.

Cambodia's economic resources proved to be scanty, even its human resources. In 1921 the population was assessed at about 2.5 million. The main crop was rice, and a Chinese-controlled rice export industry developed, purchasing rice from Khmer farmers, but Cambodian rice was generally considered to be inferior and less efficiently produced than that of Cochin China. Small Chinese timber and pepper industries, and French-financed rubber estates using Vietnamese labour, added to Cambodia's limited exports. Other minor exports included maize, kapok, and dried fish from the Tonle Sap region. The French slowly developed road and rail communications—by 1941 a railway linked Phnom Penh and the Thai border—but the Mekong remained, as it had always been,

Cambodia's main trade route. The port of Saigon dominated this riverine trade.

Around 95 per cent of Khmers remained subsistence farmers. They were characterised by the French—and also by the Chinese, Thais, Vietnamese and often their own elite—as "lazy", "ignorant", "lacking initiative", "fatalistic" and "child-like". Western observers dismissed them as a "decadent race", compared with their ancestors of Angkor. The peasants' options were extremely limited however. French taxation levels were harsh. In addition there is evidence that the peasants' social superiors demand their traditional obligatory dues of product and labour, despite French abolition of formal slavery. In remoter regions, endemic petty violence still made life insecure.

There were further factors deterring any change or development in peasant life. Cambodia was a country where commercial instincts had long been smothered by isolation, war and a ruling class which despised trade, other than as a source of taxation. Under French rule, Chinese and Vietnamese entrepreneurs quickly assumed dominance over trade and money-lending. In colonial Cambodia, no industries of consequence were developed. The country's towns remained small (by the 1930s Phnom Penh's population was about 100,000; Battambang's 20,000) and dominated by aliens—French, Chinese and Vietnamese. Cambodia's elite acquired a French-language education from private tutors or abroad, but for the general population a meagre and essentially traditional education in Buddhist temple schools was all that was available. The first Khmer-language newspaper only appeared in 1938.

Until the 1970s, observers usually saw the lot of Cambodia's peasantry during the colonial era as a relatively happy one. The traumatic events in Cambodia since then have suggested that the countryside harboured much bitter frustration and resentment, waiting to be tapped.

WORLD WAR II, 1940–1945

Such feelings were yet to be coherently expressed, much less given an outlet. In Cambodia politicisation really only began during World War II, and then it was cautious and involved limited numbers. By the 1940s, a tiny Khmer intelligentsia had begun to form, focussed around three institutions—the scholarly Buddhist Institute, Cambodia's sole French-language high school in Phnom Penh, and the Khmer newspaper *Nagara Vatta* (Angkor Wat). Cambodian feelings were outraged in 1940 by the transfer back to Thailand, under

Japanese auspices, of the north-western provinces (these would be returned once more to Cambodia in 1947).

Nationalist stirrings could be tightly controlled by the French, however. The French reached an agreement with the Japanese which allowed them to continue to administer Indochina in exchange for the free movement of Japanese forces. *Nagara Vatta* was strictly censored, and suppressed in mid-1942 following a protest march in Phnom Penh by monks and nationalist-intellectuals over the arrest of a monk implicated in an anti-French plot. A key figure amongst the nationalists, Son Ngoc Thanh, escaped round-up at this point and went to Japan.

The French role in the evolution of Cambodian nationalism was mixed, however. Recognising the need to deflect popular fascination with Japanese power, the French launched a quasi-nationalist movement for young Cambodians, glorifying Cambodia's past and its future "in partnership" with France. They also took steps to raise the status and salaries of Cambodians in government service. Unwittingly, in 1943 they fuelled developing nationalist feelings further by launching a programme to replace Cambodia's Indian-derived form of writing with a roman alphabet. (In Vietnam a comparable reform had been popularly accepted, in the interests of simplicity, efficiency and wider literacy.) The Buddhist *sangha* and the intelligentsia rebelled against what they viewed as an attack on Cambodia's traditional learning and cultural heritage. The Romanisation controversy kept up anti-French feeling until March 1945, when the Japanese seized control of government, interned the French and, amongst other measures, dropped the romanisation programme.

In April 1945 the Japanese, now anxious to harness Cambodian nationalism for themselves, prodded a hesitant Norodom Sihanouk to declare Cambodia "independent'. But when Japan surrendered to the Allies in August 1945, there was no coherent view amongst Cambodia's hereditary or intelligentsia elites about the next step for Cambodia. Cambodia still had no mass anti-colonial movement such as those that emerged in 1945 in Vietnam and Indonesia.

TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE, 1945–1953

After the Japanese surrender, Cambodia drifted. French officials resumed authority and, in October 1945, arrested Son Ngoc Thanh, who had returned to Cambodia in April and had become the main figure trying to organise resistance to the French return. At the same time, the French opened discussions with King Sihanouk about limited Cambodian self-government. Faced with revolution in Vietnam, they recognised that some gesture towards Cambodia's aroused national feelings would be wise. They also needed the collaboration of Cambodia's elite to restore order in the countryside, where armed bands were flourishing. Some of these armed groups affected a degree of nationalism, calling themselves Khmer Issarak (Free Khmer). Both the strongly anti-French Thai government of the day and the Vietnamese communists were lending them tentative support.

The French, while retaining control of finance, defence, foreign affairs and all key instruments of government, announced elections for a new National Assembly and permitted political parties to form. At the elections, held in September 1946, the winning party proved to be the Democratic Party, which took 50 of the Assembly's 67 seats. The Democrats, though headed by a prince, broadly represented Cambodia's "intelligentsia elite"—schoolteachers, minor government officials, politicised monks and the like—and convincingly demonstrated their ability to organise a strong grassroots vote. Cambodia's traditional royal and aristocratic ruling class, headed by the King, was not amused. Subsequent Democrat attempts to win meaningful powers for the National Assembly and achieve independence would be frustrated not only by the French but also by Sihanouk and those who supported the traditional social order.

By the early 1950s, the lack of political progress was producing acute strains. The National Assembly had become a factionalised talkshop. A radical fringe of politicised Cambodians were contemplating revolution, some under Son Ngoc Thanh, who established an insurgent movement in the north-west in 1952, and some under the communist, Vietnamese sponsored, KPRP (Khmer People's Revolutionary Party, founded 1951), which was organising guerilla activity in outlying areas. In January 1953, martial law was declared and Sihanouk dissolved the National Assembly.

Sihanouk now executed a dazzling bid for command of his people. Beginning in February 1953 he toured France, the United States and other countries demanding independence. In October 1953, the French—by this time with their backs to the wall in Vietnam—gave in to Sihanouk's campaign. Sihanouk returned to Cambodia a hero.

CAMBODIA UNDER SIHANOUK, 1953–1970

Independence defused most of the insurgency in the countryside. Son Ngoc Thanh dwindled into irrelevance in exile. The leaders of the KPRP retreated to Vietnam, though the party would continue

surreptitious recruitment in Cambodia. In 1954, Sihanouk and the conservative elite regarded the Democratic Party as their main challenge, especially as they were obliged to hold national elections in September 1955 under agreements reached at the international Geneva Conference on Indochina in 1954.

Sihanouk responded to this challenge with more strategic brilliance. In March 1955, he abdicated (his father became figurehead king but would die in 1960) and established his own political party, Sangkum Reastr Niyum (People's Socialist Community). His newfound, if vague, commitment to socialism was perhaps designed to distance himself from his conservative background and woo the leftist-inclined intelligentsia. In the same vein, he announced that Cambodia would be unaligned with either the communist or anti-communist world blocs, though he continued to accept the United States' military and economic aid to Cambodia which had begun under the French.

Simultaneously, Democrat supporters found themselves facing violent intimidation from Sihanouk's security forces. Voting procedures at the elections were flagrantly fixed. It is debatable who would have won free and fair elections - Sihanouk the national hero and now apparently a political progressive, or the Democrats—but, in the event, Sihanouk's Sangkum won every seat in the Assembly. After continuing harassment, the Democratic Party dissolved in 1957. Sihanouk, though technically no longer king, now truly seemed to be monarch of all he surveyed.

For over a decade after 1955 he continued to show great adroitness and energy. He personally oversaw all facets of government, controlled news and information, and regularly addressed the people. His rhetoric of "Buddhist Socialism", coming from the lips of a man who retained the aura of a semi-divine king, seemed to offer something for everyone. He bemused his critics of both the left and the right, leaving them unsure where he, or they, stood. Sihanouk enjoyed surprising people with sudden switches of policy, though whether these switches arose from calculation or whim was never clear. The sole constant of his rule was intolerance of opposition. Hundreds of dissidents "disappeared" during this period.

Stifling the discord which undoubtedly would have appeared in a more open political system was Sihanouk's main, if dubious, domestic achievement. He gave Cambodia a kind of peace, which, in later years, many Cambodians would remember fondly. Another domestic achievement was the expansion of education, on which Sihanouk spent as much as 20 per cent of the national budget. Large numbers of

secondary- and tertiary-educated young people emerged. Crucially, however, Sihanouk was uninterested in economic matters, and under him the Cambodian economy, after initial growth, went into decline. The combination of stifled political life, an expanding educated class (many of whom were unemployed or underemployed) and a decaying economy would prove disastrous for Sihanouk and Cambodia's domestic peace.

Looming over that peace was the resumed conflict in neighbouring Vietnam. Sihanouk was anxious to save his country from involvement in the conflict, but he also wanted to position Cambodia and himself to be on good terms with the victor. To these ends he proclaimed Cambodia's neutrality but judged it expedient to tilt to the left in foreign and domestic policy. In 1963, he rejected United States aid and nationalised Cambodia's banks and import-export trade in the name of "socialism'. In 1965, he broke off diplomatic relations with the United States. Secretly, meanwhile, he accepted the use of Cambodian territory by North Vietnamese forces and the southern Vietnamese NLF insurgents in their fight against the United States-backed Saigon regime. Openly, he established cordial relations with China, perhaps hoping that China might restrain any larger Vietnamese designs on Cambodia.

The rejection of US aid reduced Cambodia's income significantly and disgruntled Cambodia's conservatives, particularly in the military. Nationalisation disgruntled the business elite, heightened inefficiency and corruption, and led to hard times for the people. Sihanouk's toleration of Vietnamese forces on Cambodian soil (who received supplies via the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville) disturbed patriotic Cambodian sentiment.

Around 1966 Sihanouk seems to have tired of his political juggling. His "hands-on" control diminished and the power of the conservative forces in Sangkum and his administration increased. There was growing popular disillusionment with Sihanouk's policies and style, at least in urban areas. The countryside presented a mixed picture; Sihanouk's reputation remained high with many rural people, but in remoter areas a small but revivified communist insurgency was gaining ground. In 1967–68, government forces brutally crushed a peasant revolt in the north-west to which the communists had given leadership. (The revolt was caused by government seizures of rice at low prices under Sihanouk's nationalisation policies.)

In 1969, Sihanouk cautiously re-opened diplomatic relations with the United States, but this now seemed more a sign of indecisiveness than of his old political skills. In March 1970, while

Sihanouk was overseas, the predominantly conservative National Assembly withdrew confidence in Sihanouk as head of state. The principal force behind the move was Sihanouk's cousin and deputy prime minister Sisowath Sirik Matak. Sihanouk's prime minister and long-time associate, Lon Nol, went along with the move, and became head of the new government of the "Khmer Republic' declared in October 1970.

WAR AND REVOLUTION, 1970–1975

The coup against Sihanouk polarised the population. The Lon Nol government initially enjoyed significant support, but Sihanouk rallied anti-government opinion. In late March 1970, he broadcast from Beijing, appealing to people to "engage in guerilla warfare in the jungles against our enemies". The main beneficiaries of his appeal were the communist insurgents, who now enjoyed Sihanouk's blessing and prestige. Moving swiftly to capitalise on their windfall, by 1972 the communists had effectively ranged the countryside against Phnom Penh and other urban areas. Meanwhile, the Lon Nol government proved tragically inept. A series of drives by government forces against the Vietnamese forces in Cambodia in 1970–71 were repulsed with massive casualties, permanently weakening the government's military capabilities. Ironically, the Vietnamese would withdraw from Cambodia voluntarily in early 1973.

The United States backed the Lon Nol government, but resumed US aid served mainly to foster gross corruption in the administration and the military. Lon Nol suffered a stroke in 1971 and failed thereafter to give strong leadership to his factionalised and increasingly demoralised power base. US bombing of the countryside—massive in intensity and appallingly destructive—probably slowed the communist-led advance on Phnom Penh but also drove many of the population to support the insurgency and to regard the US-aligned urban areas with bitter hatred.

In the United States, dwindling confidence in President Nixon and growing opposition to his handling of the Indochina conflict led the US Congress to end the bombing of Cambodia. Thereafter it was a matter of time before the Lon Nol regime collapsed. The insurgents took Phnom Penh on 17 April, 1975.

'DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA': KHMER ROUGE GOVERNMENT 1975–1979

The name "Khmer Rouge" (strictly "Khmers Rouges"—red Khmers) was popularised by Sihanouk in the 1960s as a term for leftist anti-government forces in the countryside. It has remained the name in general use for the forces who took power in 1975, set up a state they called "Democratic Kampuchea', and who, after their overthrow in 1979, resumed rural-based insurgency. In April 1975, however, these forces called themselves *angkar padevat* ("revolutionary organisation"). Their communist leadership was not made explicit until September 1977, when the existence of the CPK (Communist Party of Kampuchea) was announced.

The CPK had been set up in 1968 to resume the insurgency tactics abandoned by the former Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP) in 1954. In the intervening years the KPRP, based in Vietnam, had continued underground recruitment in Cambodia. Its most famous recruit in retrospect was a young middle-class, Paris-educated schoolteacher, Saloth Sar, who would take the name Pol Pot and rise to leadership of the CPK.

Under Pol Pot the CPK devised a ferociously radical programme of reform for Cambodia. In April 1975, the country was sealed off from the outside world. Phnom Penh and other urban centres were forcefully evacuated and left mostly to decay. All Cambodians were to become farmers under the direction of angkar. Markets, private trade and the use of money were abolished. Professional activity ceased. Books were forbidden and education was abandoned—except for propaganda sessions. Religion was proscribed and the *sangha* dispersed; many former places of worship were levelled. Angkar dictated people's movements, activities, food allowances and dress. Former upper- and middle-class people, former government employees, most professionals and most educated people were treated as expendable labour in the countryside. Many died.

Pol Pot's government glorified ancient Angkor but otherwise almost wholly repudiated Cambodia's past. A totally new "Kampuchea" was going to be built, starting in 1975—"Year Zero". The origins of this apocalyptic programme have been much debated by commentators. Influences on the CPK leadership may have included extreme left-wing theories fashionable in France in the 1950s and 1960s and Mao's "Great Leap Forward" and "Cultural Revolution" in China. But "Pol Potism" was distinctively Cambodian in making popular resentment of Cambodia's humiliating national history the main driving force of revolution. The revolution's enemies were not only the class enemies defined by Marx but any foreign peoples who had degraded Cambodia—led by the Vietnamese, Thais and Americans—and any Cambodians who had colluded with them, which to the CPK meant all city folk. The brutal simplicity of these doctrines,

and the vision of building a new Khmer society untainted by foreigners and the old elite, appealed particularly to youth. The lower echelons of angkar were mainly made up of young people, many still teenagers.

The consequences of the CPK's programme were catastrophic. Conditions of life varied from province to province, but hardship was severe to extreme everywhere. While an estimated 500,000 Cambodians had died during the 1970–75 war, over one million more would die under Khmer Rouge rule, from brutality and callousness, mismanagement, malnutrition, disease and the virtual abolition of medical services.

The CPK leadership's particular hatred of the Vietnamese had several consequences. Firstly, the party began to repudiate its Vietnamese-sponsored background. The repudiation turned into a purge of CPK cadres and members who had been trained in Vietnam or who were thought to sympathise with Vietnam's communist government. Tens of thousands died, often after brutal torture, though some escaped to Vietnam. Secondly, Cambodian forces staged repeated incursions into Vietnam, seeking redefinition of the Viet-Cambodian border. Thirdly, Viet-Cambodian relations came to mirror the great split in the communist world—while Vietnam was closely aligned with the USSR, Cambodia moved under the protection of China.

Vietnam staged a warning offensive into Cambodia in late 1977, but subsequently withdrew its troops, massing them along the border. Provocation continued, however, and on Christmas Day 1978 the Vietnamese again invaded. Khmer Rouge forces collapsed before them and the Vietnamese entered a ghostly Phnom Penh on 7 January, 1979. Soon Vietnamese forces in Cambodia would number 250,000. They failed, however, to capture Pol Pot or his close colleagues.

CAMBODIA AS "VIETNAMESE PROTECTORATE", 1979–1991

Though initially welcomed by most Cambodians, the Vietnamese were aware of the centuries-old fear of Vietnam in the country. They also knew that their invasion of a sovereign nation, however repellent its government, could bring international condemnation. Thus, they rapidly established the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) under a government headed by Cambodians, mostly former CPK members who had fled the party's purges. These included Heng Samrin, head of state, and Hun Sen, who would become premier in 1985. Although another one-party state, the new government was relatively laissez faire in the economic and social fields, dismantling the Khmer Rouge's collective farming and restoring the use of money and private trade.

However, Cambodian society was by now utterly destabilised. Before traditional farming could be restored, Cambodia suffered terrible famine. Only by the mid 1980s would the traditional subsistence economy regain equilibrium and the shops and markets of the towns return to precarious life. Meanwhile the PRK, like Vietnam, became an international pariah, supported only by the Soviet bloc and some neutral nations such as India. The United States, China, Thailand and the other ASEAN nations led international condemnation of the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia and of the PRK "puppet" government. Denied legitimacy, the PRK was also denied much international economic aid and trade.

The pawns in this stand-off, apart from the general Cambodian population, were hundreds of thousands of Cambodian refugees camped along the Thai-Cambodian border, who had fled war, famine, the Khmer Rouge or the Vietnamese occupation. Working amongst them were two Cambodian political organisations—the Khmer Rouge and the KPNLF (Khmer People's National Liberation Front), a non-communist, anti-Vietnamese body headed by Son Sann, a former prime minister. The Khmer Rouge enjoyed the staunch backing of China, then also at loggerheads with Vietnam, and received Chinese military aid funneled through Thailand. Despite its grotesque record, the Khmer Rouge also enjoyed international prestige as Cambodia's "legitimate" government, holding Cambodia's seat at the United Nations. Inside Cambodia the Khmer Rouge maintained a shadowy guerilla presence, despite every effort by Vietnamese and PRK forces to eliminate it.

In the early 1980s, Sihanouk and his son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, also established an anti-PRK organisation, FUNCINPEC (the French acronym for National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia). Sihanouk had survived the years of Khmer Rouge government under virtual house arrest (he lost 14 children and grandchildren in those years) and was now based in Beijing or, sometimes in North Korea. In mid-1982 a shaky coalition was brokered between the three Cambodian anti-PRK organisations. The Khmer Rouge announced the abolition of the CPK and claimed to be abandoning its former policies. Few believed this.

The international impasse continued through the 1980s. In 1989, Vietnam withdrew its troops from Cambodia, partly because the PRK government now appeared self-sustaining but mainly because

of Vietnam's loss of Soviet aid following the collapse of the USSR. In Cambodia, in 1990, the PRK transformed itself into the SOC (State of Cambodia) which effectively committed itself to a private enterprise economy, as Vietnam and China were doing. The SOC government also became active in restoring Cambodian Buddhism.

The ending of the Cold War and the changing economic goals of China and Vietnam opened the possibility of ending the stand-off over Cambodia. After much diplomacy in which Australia played a key role, 20 nations convened in Paris in October 1991. The conference persuaded the SOC government and the three opposition organisations to form a coalition administration pending national elections under United Nations supervision. The inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in this arrangement shocked many people, inside and outside Cambodia, but the move has been defended as the only means of breaking the deadlock, given China's inability to abandon the Khmer Rouge without losing international face. The assumption of responsibility for Cambodia by the UN and the promised elections gave China the chance to discard its ties with the Khmer Rouge.

UNTAC, THE 1993 ELECTIONS AND THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA

The United Nations established UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia), which came to consist of 22,000 personnel, two-thirds of them military, from a number of nations. UNTAC's main tasks were to disarm the forces of all four Cambodian factions, repatriate the refugees, monitor the coalition administration of the country (in practice the SOC administration and security apparatus retained great power) and prepare the planned elections. UNTAC's achievements were mixed. The refugees were repatriated but the disarmament process collapsed in May 1992 when the Khmer Rouge, and then SOC, refused to participate. UNTAC also failed to deal with charges that the SOC security forces were using violence against their coalition partners, especially Sihanouk's FUNCINPEC. Sihanouk himself played an unnerving role in this period, appearing in Cambodia to warm popular acclaim but disappearing back to Beijing or Pyongyang with expressions of displeasure and foreboding.

UNTAC won plaudits, however, for its handling of the elections in May 1993. Nearly 90 per cent of enrolled voters (close to five million people) went to the polls, despite threats of Khmer Rouge violence. The Khmer Rouge had decided to boycott the elections, presumably fearing a dismal rebuff from the people. FUNCINPEC candidates won 58 of the available 120 assembly seats. Candidates from the former SOC government contested the election as the CPP (Cambodian People's Party) and won 51 seats. Son Sann's group, now the BLDP (Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party), took ten seats, and a minor party took the one remaining seat.

Elements of the CPP disputed these results but others manoeuvred to retain a prominent role in government—a role they were virtually guaranteed anyway, given CPP's strength in the bureaucracy, military and police. The following months of deal-making seemed to many observers to decline into a scramble by all parties for the perks of office, a scramble complicated by factionalism within each of the parties. Two months after the election an interim coalition administration was formed which, in September, became the Royal Government of Cambodia—in the same month, the Assembly recognised Sihanouk as Cambodia's King once more. Heading the coalition government were Prince Norodom Ranariddh (FUNCINPEC) as "first" prime minister and Hun Sen (CPP) as "second" prime minister. Similar balances had been constructed throughout the ministry. King Sihanouk—technically now a constitutional monarch presiding over a pluralistic, democratic political system—continued to intervene in policy-making, despite reports that he was now ill with cancer. Some felt his meddling was destabilising while others saw them as constructive attempts to balance the antagonistic forces grouped within the government.

CAMBODIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The coalition between Hun Sen and Ranariddh—fragile and acrimonious at the best of times—ruptured in 1997 following a violent power struggle that saw the latter forced to flee into temporary exile overseas. Following threats by foreign donors to withdraw aid and calls for reconciliation by King Sihanouk, Hun Sen and his CCP agreed to hold fresh elections in July 1998. These were marred by violence and accusations of vote-buying, and resulted in an easy victory for the CCP. Opposition leaders Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy (of the Sam Rainsy Party, formerly the Khmer Nation Party) dismissed the result as a fraud. However, their capacity to do anything about it was circumscribed by Hun Sen's control of the government and military, as well as the official media. In addition, foreign observers reported that although the CCP had marshalled these forces during the election to influence otherwise apathetic villagers in a way its opponents could not match, the poll was generally free and fair nonetheless, and the result an accurate reflection of the majority's wishes. Such was Hun Sen's dominance in the subsequent years that

his party defeated the opposition to claim 47 per cent of all votes cast during general elections in July 2003. FUNCINPEC (which gained 21 per cent) and the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP, which gained 22 per cent) immediately claimed that the ballot was not free and fair and demanded that Hun Sen step down. Since the CCP had failed to obtain a two-thirds majority of National Assembly seats, which would have enabled it to form a single-party government, it was forced to negotiate. It was not until June 2004 that it was able to reach an agreement with FUNCINPEC. In general elections in July 2008, the CCP won a convincing victory with 58 per cent of the vote, entitling Hun Sen's party to 90 seats in the 123 seat National Assembly. This compared with SRP's 22 per cent (26 seats) and other parties, including FUNCINPEC, gaining only 20 per cent (seven seats).

One favourable development for the country lies in the fact that by the late 1990s the Khmer Rouge ceased to exist as a political or military threat. A succession of military defeats and defections due to a withdrawal of aid from their backers in Thailand and China, and a general decline in the organisation's political relevance in the post-Cold War era, all combined to undermine the Khmer Rouge's influence. Pol Pot died on 15 April 1998, and the movement's last commander at large, Ta Mok, was captured in March 1999. Unrepentant to the end, before his death Pol Pot blamed the "Year Zero" disaster on disloyal Cambodians and the Vietnamese.

Many human-rights observers have been critical of the government's seeming reluctance to prosecute those responsible for the killings committed by the Khmer Rouge. Even though King Sihanouk signed a new law in 2001 setting up a tribunal to try those accused, few former Khmer Rouge officials have been sent to trial. Hun Sen himself has been accused by human-rights observers and opposition parties of supporting increased repression against protesters, critics and members of rival political parties, especially in 2003 when he announced the formation of a "Central Bureau for Security" intelligence wing consisting mostly of high ranking CPP officials.

In November 2002, Cambodia hosted the eighth ASEAN Summit and in September 2003 received permission to join the World Trade Organization—the first "least developed" country to be invited to join. In October 2004, King Sihanouk announced he would abdicate, citing ill-health. His son, Prince Norodom Sihamoni, was announced as his successor.

The current government is heavily underwritten by foreign aid donors, especially Japan, the United States, the European Union and Australia. China has also recently emerged as an important aid donor,

lender of "soft" (low or zero interest) loans and foreign investor. As Chinese assistance has tended to be free of the conditions accompanying western aid (especially regarding progress on human rights and corruption), it has been particularly welcomed by Hun Sen. He described China as Cambodia's "most trustworthy friend" during a visit by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in April 2006.

Dependence on foreign aid (which in the period 1993 to 2006 was estimated at over US$6 billion) is likely to lessen in the future as donor countries scale back their largesse and Cambodia develops alternative sources of revenue, such as the booming tourist industry. Indeed, the services sector now accounts for nearly half of GDP. Defence spending has also been pared back from 6.4 per cent of GDP in the mid 1990s to approximately one per cent today, though Cambodia still maintains a large standing army with a top-heavy command structure. International aid projects and foreign and domestic private enterprise have been encouraged by the "technocrats" who hold the economic portfolios, but face an often irresolute government, a still inadequate legal framework, and an unwieldy and often corrupt bureaucracy, customs service and police force. Law and order has also become a concern, with armed robbery and murder all too common occurrences in a society awash with weapons following decades of civil war.

These uncertainties pose many challenges for Cambodia's development. Over the centuries, the country's fortunes have risen and fallen, depending on the policies of its larger and more powerful neighbours. In this century, it is to be hoped that Cambodians may at long last be in command of their own economic and social development against a backdrop of peace, social cohesion and political stability—all elements tragically lacking in much of the last one.