

Similarly, the various stories can be seen to 'migrate', and to appear in other modifications and guises, yet always with the core mix one of wonder, danger, rescue, beauty, apparent tragedy, and then after much travail, the coming of salvation and spiritual and worldly rescue for the pure in heart, the bewildered, and the lonely. Although prayer is not quite presented as such, the emphasis is on hope, faith, and the last, a form of human compassion towards and of a selfless love for one's fellows.

The volume is one containing hundreds, as from postcards, details of small sections from larger paintings, with, as from the last, vignettes of fear, tenderness, and haunting beauty from beloved gallery pieces, and sensitively placed in relation to the flowing text. Quite *sui generis*, the whole is, simply, a masterpiece, and justifies the publisher's claim that we have here 'another story - of the remarkable range of interpretations and re-imaginings that these tales have inspired, captured and conveyed, picture by picture, in this singular form'.

In short, the collection as a whole gives us a myriad of shapes from the imaginative world of rural folk at the onset of urbanization and industrialism, and so the loosing of a daily and ever-present wonder at fate, the darkness, the stranger, and the cottage glimpsed ahead in the woods. And we are given a wondrous collage of the shapes, fears, beauty, and of the fearful imaginings that have befallen us all in times of loneliness, doubt, guilt, and temptation to wrong doing.

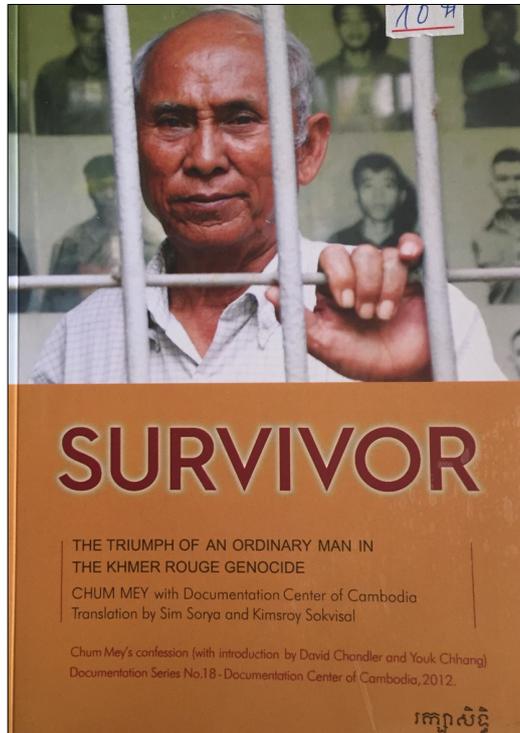
As Marina Warner puts it so well, in the 'Foreword', 'The speaking pictures he has archived here will never be repeated in this form again, as the stories migrate and come to inhabit new technologies of enchantment.'

Much like E.M.W. Tillyard's treatment of 'the Great Chain of Being', this work is a timeless classic of the mind and spirit for all who are heirs to the great cultural tapestry to flesh out what is best known as 'the European Tradition'.

J.S. Ryan

Chum Mey, *Survivor: The Triumph of An Ordinary Man in the Khmer Rouge Genocide*, translated by Sim Sorya and Kimsroy Sokvisal (Phnom Penh: Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2012). Paperback with black and white and colour illustrations, ISBN 9789995060244. 110 pages. USD \$10.

Tales of tragic events from the history of nations, such as the trenches of Gallipoli and the Kokoda Trail for Australia, are often embedded in public memory, and over time, are transformed and negotiated into a grander form of lore as elements of the collective identity of nations. In Cambodia, public memory of the twentieth century's Pol Pot and Khmer Rouge regime is a strong and identity shaping element. The Khmer Rouge inflicted a period of horrific suffering upon the nation and former French Indochina region.



Chum Mey's *Survivor: The Triumph of an Ordinary Man in the Khmer Rouge Genocide* tells the story of his own experiences during that period, and documents, both in terms of history and living memory, the events which took place at the notorious Toul Sleng prison in Phnom Penh (the capital city of Cambodia). Today, Toul Sleng has been transformed into a respectful heritage tourism site of national and international significance, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. The Genocide Museum now functions as a monument to the memory of those who were tortured and murdered within its walls, and a stark reminder of the evils of a not-so-distant past.

The volume's tale begins with the chilling statement:

I am Chum Mey. I am one of only a handful of prisoners who survived Toul Sleng prison, where more than 12,000 people were tortured and sent to a killing field by the Khmer Rouge regime. (p. 7)

In fact, only seven survived. Mey goes on to recount the horrific facts of life in Tuol Sleng under the Khmer Rouge.

We were like animals, not human beings. They gave us ammunition boxes to defecate, and plastic boxes for prisoners to urinate. If any of our waste leaked onto the floor, we had to lick it up. That's how we cleaned the floor for them. If we made a sound by moving our legs, and the chain rattled, they would come and give us 200 lashes. (p. 36)

His narrative explains that in the end he

started telling them what they wanted to hear. At that point, I couldn't tell what was right or wrong. I was so afraid they would electrocute me again, so I made up stories about serving the CIA, paying homage to their flag,

and doing destructive things like pouring acid on the clothes we were making and breaking sewing needles. (p. 36)

The life experiences that Mey records represents living memory of the Khmer Rouge as it has been imprinted within the Cambodian psyche. His book would make valuable addition to most collections, and documents the region's memory of a period that has shaped the lives of millions.

Mey attends the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum each day, recounting his story to visitors through translators and showing some of the more obvious injuries that he suffered (to his hands) at the whims of his torturers. Mey is a slightly built gentleman of short stature, but the humility and dignity of his written narrative, and reinforced in his attending the former prison and torture site each day to speak out about those atrocities, is overwhelming. Mey often brings his visitors to tears with a few simple words.

This volume includes a range of helpful appendices for those with an interest in further unpacking the events of the Khmer Rouge period. That material includes:

- A list of the forces involved in the historical narratives that he presents.
- A detailed fact sheet for the 'S-21' Tuol Sleng Prison.
- A copy of the 'Confession' that he made under the torture of the Khmer Rouge Regime. That document is supplemented with an expert critical introduction by David Chandler and Youk Chhang.
- Notes on Khmer spellings.
- Lists of books, films and dramas about the Khmer Rouge and Tuol Sleng.

The story of the Khmer Rouge, and Tuol Sleng prison, is one that has touched Australian lives. Australians, David Lloyd Scott and Ronald Dean fell into the hands of the Khmer Rouge after their sailing into Cambodian waters by mistake, and like Mey, were tortured at Tuol Sleng until they confessed to involvement with the CIA. Similar tales exist, of citizens of Canada, America and Britain's encounters with that regime. The Australian media has discussed those events over the past few years, reminding readers and listeners just how close to home these terrible events were.

*Survivor* tells a harrowing tale, but it is a book that should be read. It includes many colour plates and a detailed bibliography. Youk Chhang, the Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia has stated that

A society cannot know itself if it does not have an accurate memory of its own history.

These events influenced the politics of many nations. Citizens of Australia (and other both Eastern and Western nations) were caught up in the story that Mey records, falling victim to the same torturers and guards. These events, through those interactions, are part of the Australian story that intertwines with the

region's and globe's history shared human history and experience. I strongly recommend this book.

A. Asbjørn Jøn



*Steel bed that prisoners were shackled to, and, ammunition box toilet. Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Photograph taken by A. Asbjørn Jøn, September 2017.*

*The Conscription Conflict and the Great War*, edited by Robin Archer, Joy Damousi, Murray Goot and Sean Scalmer (Clayton, Vic: Monash University Publishing, 2016). HC, ISBN 9789995060244. 110 pp., 9781925377224. 16 black and white plates, index. \$34.95.

The value of a centenary anniversary is that one is sufficiently distant in time to permit a sustained analysis—and such is the case with this scholarly and insightful work. Its core question might be posed as ‘When all other First World War combatant nations implemented conscription, why was it that Australia rejected it, and not once but twice?’ The received wisdom is surveyed—the role of pacifists, of unionized labour, of Catholics, and of women voters. Even the scholarship since the 1960s which has assumed that the anti-conscription rhetoric was merely a mask over ‘layers of economic interest and industrial motive’ is countered as missing ‘the intense intellectual and emotional attachment to freedom... which lent the campaigns much of their passion.’ (p. 91)

Several approaches to the topic herein are both new and sustained to effective conclusions in ways that were unlikely in anything other than a scholarly centenary book. Whatever one’s current beliefs or political commitments, everyone who has a serious interest in the Conscription referenda will find their assumptions challenged through this rigorous work.

First it takes a near global view of the then contemporary context. The Australian debate is placed within the traditions of individualism in British liberalism as opposed to the despotism of what became the European foe. This is