

Duch: S-21 turned "innocent people into cruel people"

Written by
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Questioning of Duch continued Monday in relation to the establishment of S-21. The defendant spent a good part of the day taking the judges through annotated confessions he had worked on while head of the detention center. Throughout the testimony, he sought to minimize his responsibility, highlighting how he had passed the confessions on to Son Sen, who gave them to Pol Pot. (Apparently, as Duch showed the court, a red check mark indicated that Pol Pot had read the document.) At the end of the day, Duch told judges that he was faithful and obedient to Khmer Rouge leaders, "like their dog."

A few other highlights from the testimony, which was relatively scattered in terms of subject matter:

* Judges questioned Duch about internal purges at S-21 and which groups had been most affected. Staffers at the detention center were recruited from three main sources: Phnom Penh city, Security Division 703 and M-13, Duch's former detention center. Duch said staffers in the first two groups were purged, but not in the third. In my opinion, this seems to contradict Duch's claim that he had little influence or input regarding who was "smashed" at S-21. Is it really just coincidence that staffers who came from the detention center Duch previously ran were also most likely to be spared?

* Duch explained to judges that Takmao prison had been a psychiatric hospital before it was turned into a Khmer Rouge detention facility. Judge Silvia Cartwright then asked Duch what became of the patients after the Khmer Rouge came to power. Duch said he did not know for sure, but believed they were probably "smashed." He compared the psychiatric patients to people who had contracted leprosy; apparently *Angkar* ordered that they all be killed.

* Comparing M-13 and S-21, Duch said a primary goal of both facilities was to indoctrinate young recruits in Khmer Rouge ideology. He said he taught the "gentle," young villagers "class anger" and "turned innocent people into cruel people."

* Duch told judges that a sign listing regulations in the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum was [fabricated by the Vietnamese](#)

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