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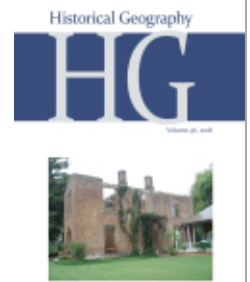
*From Rice Fields to Killing Fields: Nature, Life, and Labor  
under the Khmer Rouge* by James A. Tyner (review)

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“mainstream” versus “the other,” and “historical stereotypes” versus “contemporary norms.” Sandara Quinones, Brian Bailey, Joseph Ehlman, and Daniel Delehanty offer a key example through their project that encourages students to design their own historical films. In their approach, youth collaborate with adults to discuss social issues that have long histories and spark contemporary tensions. These kinds of projects provide multiple opportunities for learning. “Filmmaking can be used as a platform for counter-storytelling, providing voice to the historically marginalized, and for challenging the dominant cultural and historical narrative most common in schools and academic standards” (140).

*Teaching Difficult History through Film* offers much for educators, scholars, and practitioners. Each essay has an abundance of reference material along with techniques and teaching outcomes that can be useful for immediate classroom use. Readers will appreciate the cross-disciplinary approaches and insights used to explore cultural constructions, narrative imagery, and persistent social, cultural, and racial stereotypes in filmmaking. However, the book ends without a conclusion. Most readers will desire an editorial “wrap-up” of themes and recommendations for future scholarship but find none. Overall, this book highlights that “successfully navigating the terrain of teaching difficult history requires not only a sense of civic and pedagogical courage on the part of teachers, but also teachers who are ready, willing, and able to organize experiences and activities that nurture the hard dialogic skills of civility, conversations, and cooperation around the content itself” (14–15).

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*From Rice Fields to Killing Fields: Nature, Life, and Labor under the Khmer Rouge.* James A. Tyner. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2017. Pp. xxv+241, black & white illustrations, notes. \$60.00, hardcover, ISBN 978-0-8156-3556-7. \$29.95, paperback, ISBN 978-0-8156-3541-3.

In any quality-driven human geography study, it is imperative that the researcher suspend the culture-bound logic of his own thought process and strive to become aware, sensitive, and competent toward the target culture. In the Hindu-Theravada Buddhist-inspired psychic of the

Khmer, observing this rule would prove extremely useful in discovering that society's cultural grounding, including the leadership of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK). For example, knowledge based on Cambodia's ancient cosmology-inspired beliefs about "power, hierarchy, and leadership" would be extremely beneficial to the social science researcher.

No doubt, such cosmology-based insight would be useful in guiding human geography research through Cambodia's CPK experience, in no small part a consequence of France's association colonialism, America's domino theory, Sihanouk's modernization theory, Lon Nol's Khmerism, and the Khmer Rouge's Maoism. Understanding each of these past invasive influences is essential to an understanding of the deep structure of the CPK's thoughts and subsequent actions.

Within these parameters, James Tyner provides a unique perspective on one of the most brutal regimes of modern time. Serious political and economic scholars will welcome his solid logic coupled with the in-depth evidence he employs to connect the dots from tragic French colonialism to the atrocities of Democratic Kampuchea. Peering through the lens of state capitalism, Tyner has discovered a bastardized interpretation of Marxism as practiced by the CPK. In doing so, he artfully guides the reader through a minefield of the social and economic evidence that molded and seemingly justified the CPK leadership's peculiar ideology. Tyner then refocuses his lens to dissect the economic policies and practices of the CPK, and in doing so shines light on the economic-philosophical anatomy of that organization.

As the human species seems to be constantly reminded, Tyner moves the reader through the reality of the violent consequences (1.7 million perished out of a population of 7 million) bestowed on the Khmer culture by the CPK's misguided understanding of Marx. According to Tyner, Marxism and genocide as cojoined "engagement" issues have detoured many scholars from the challenge of researching their interrelatedness. Tyner suggests a sampling of four perception factors that may influence modern scholarship's resistance: "Marxist approaches have fallen out of favor," "mass killing tends to draw attention away from the everyday political economy involved in its production," "Marxism is intrinsically violent," and finally, in the case of Cambodia, "Marxist communism was actually a guise for state capitalism" (xvi–xviii).

Specifically, the author strengthens his principal argument by invert-

ing the foundation of Western understanding of Marx and Engels. “It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness” (xi). He posits that the CPK leadership seemed to think that it was the degree of political consciousness that could be jammed into the proletariat that reflected the material success of the revolution. In short, by flipping dialectical materialism on its head, political consciousness determined life and those who were unable or unwilling to submit were disappeared. “Spare them, no profit; remove them, no loss” (*Tuk min chammenh, dah chenh ka min khat*) (xix).

In summary, Tyner’s work provides a thought-provoking point of view for scholars to debate. As urged by the author, Cambodia watchers may also wish to interpret his message as a credible warning that in the kingdom of Cambodia, state capitalism policies and practices are still residing under the thinnest veil of democracy. Both Cambodian and world leaders are well advised to do the needful in avoiding yet another Thucydides’ Trap. As demonstrated during the Khmer Rouge era, dialectic materialism can produce a strong temptation for the super powers to square off using dependent vassal states as their pawns. In exploring CPK revolutionary state capitalism as pure dialectical materialism under the guise of communism, Tyner makes a solid contribution to the canon while giving the critical thinker much to ponder.

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*England’s Maritime Heritage from the Air*. Peter Waller. Swindon, UK: Historic England Publishing, 2017. Pp. xvi+295, black & white and color photographs. \$55.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-84802-298-0.

The economic, cultural, and political standing of the United Kingdom has changed significantly in the past one hundred years. Its physical geography as a small island nation, the land closely connected to the surrounding seas, has of course not. *England’s Maritime Heritage from the Air* by Peter Waller richly illustrates and examines this story of changing human geographies found in more constant physical realities. Using the rich Aerofilms archive—a collection of over a million aerial photographs of the United Kingdom, taken from the early 1920s onward and now held by Historic England—the book is a collection of 150 images