The Khmer Rouge who ruled Democratic Kampuchea from 17 April 1975 to 7 January 1979 was significant because, they had established a Communist government, the first of its kind in the history of Cambodia. It had sought to implement radical policies in order to be independent, neutral non-aligned and self-sufficient. However, as a result of the ruthless manner of implementation of these policies one million innocent Khmers lost their lives. The loss of life was due to the shortage of food, lack of medical supplies, heavy-work schedule, victimization of the officials of the Lon Nol regime, attack on the elite and the affluent sections of the society and insufficient ration to the people who were under the control of Lon Nol regime during the Civil War period. In brief, the Khmer Rouge wanted to start with 'Year Zero' by eliminating the people whose thinking was not in tune with the Khmer Rouge. The 'genocide' and the national chauvinist policy followed by the Khmer Rouge gave scope for the rise of the dissidence within the Khmer Rouge ranks. The elements which opposed to the Khmer Rouge policies founded the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation (KNUFNS) on 2 December
1978 by Heng Samrin, Pen Sovan and Hun Sen. The Salvation Front was supported by the Vietnamese troops, which entered into Cambodia on 25 December 1978 and overthrew the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary group within two weeks. On 7 January 1979, the People’s Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) Government was established under the leadership of Heng Samrin favourable to the Vietnamese and the Soviets. In the light of the Khmer Rouge policies, it is very interesting to study the origin, growth and the rule of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia during 1960-1979 period.

The thesis is divided into six Chapters. In the first Chapter an attempt is made to study the historical background of Cambodia. In the second Chapter, the origin and growth of Khmer Communism during 1930-1960, have been discussed. In the third Chapter an attempt is made to study the establishment of the Worker’s Party of Kampuchea in 1960, and subsequently, of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, the new name adopted since 1966. The fourth Chapter discusses the overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk and the Civil War, that followed till the end of the Lon Nol regime in 1975. In the fifth chapter an attempt is made to examine the policies and programmes of the Khmer Rouge during their rule. The sixth and the last chapter is conclusion. Major
findings of the study were incorporated in this Chapter.

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