

How Does one Become a Torturer? The Case of Duch in Cambodia

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ABSTRACT

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Duch, chief of S-21, a center of torture and death during the Khmer rouge regime, has been judged by the Special International Court for the Khmers rouges in Cambodia in 2009. I was appointed by the Court to analyze the psychology of Duch.

Therefore, I met him 16 times in detention. Articulating individual and geopolitical factors are fundamental in order to understand the making of a torturer. The role of traumatic initiations, as well as the way of becoming desensitized are central. We will also see if it is possible to come out of desensitization, and how?

In conclusion we will examine the nature of the psychologist's counter-transference in front of criminals against humanity. It is an additional reliable inner captor that informs us of the unconscious mind of perpetrators.

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