

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

Sironi, Françoise ⁰

⁰ Université Paris 8 Saint-Denis, France

TO CITE

Sironi, F. (2022). How Does one Become a Torturer? The Case of Duch in Cambodia. In *Proceedings of the Paris Institute for Advanced Study*. https://paris.pias.science/articles/SynE3_2017_05_how-does-one-become-a-torturer

PUBLICATION DATE

10/05/2017

ABSTRACT

The Brains that pull the Triggers. 3rd Conference on Syndrome E, Paris IAS, 10-12 May 2017 - Session 1 - Heart of Darkness: Ordinary and Extraordinary Perpetrators

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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https://paris.pias.science/articles/SynE3_2017_05_how-does-one-become-a-torturer

2017/18 - brains-that-pull-the-triggers - Article No.13. Freely available at https://paris.pias.science/articles/SynE3_2017_05_how-does-one-become-a-torturer - 2826-2832/©
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