

# THE SLEUK RITH INSTITUTE (SRI)

A Permanent Documentation Center of Cambodia

SCHOOL OF GENOCIDE, CONFLICT AND HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES

## SPEAKER SERIES

### **“Trying to understand the Khmer Rouge thinking and where it went wrong”**

By Gunnar Bergström

**September 12 2016, 2:30pm**

SRI/Building H, National Institute of Education

The Sleuk Rith Institute’s School of Genocide, Conflict and Human Rights Studies is pleased to announce the thirteenth event in its speaker series. **“Trying to understand the Khmer Rouge thinking and where it went wrong”** will be presented by Gunnar Bergström. Students as well as the general public are welcome to attend this event.

Gunnar Bergström will explore the questions of how the Khmer Rouge could justify their killings? What was driving them? Were they all evil? How can you understand the Khmer Rouge revolution without justifying it? How could it happen? In the western world they had a lot of sympathy for a long time - how was that possible?

*In 1978, Gunnar was 27 years old and had two children. He was politically active in the movement against the war in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia for many years. The movement was strong in Sweden, the strongest in the Western World. Thousands of young people devoted all their time to protest the US war. Gunnar was one of those young persons. His whole youth was dominated by this. Later Gunnar, as many others, became attracted to the Maoist communism. They believed the Soviet Union was corrupt and thought China was different. Some of them got more and more interested in the Cambodian revolution which they thought was new and free from corruption. On August 12, 1978, Gunnar and 3 other Swedes delegation landed Pochentong Airport. They were invited to visit Democratic Kampuchea. Very few westerners had been allowed to visit Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge regime. The few let in were diplomats, friendship groups or Maoist communist delegations. Gunnar was a member of that Maoist party until 1979 when he left and at the same time publically rejected his old views on the Khmer Rouge, realizing they had been wrong all the time.(Extracted from Living Hell, 2008, DC-Cam)*

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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