

KAMPUCHEA : VIETNAM'S 'VIETNAM'

ANSWERING THE LIE MACHINE

Distributed by: BRITISH KAMPUCHEA SUPPORT CAMPAIGN
c/o 61 Rectory Road
London N 16

PRICE 25p



MALAYA NEWS SERVICE

P.O. Box 164 Fitzroy Victoria 3065 Australia
Telephone: (03)3753773 (Melbourne)

of the situation, past and present, in Kampuchea is most important. Towards this end Malaya News Service publishes this reply to the Pilger articles.

STARVATION IN KAMPUCHEA: A DELIBERATE POLICY OF THE SOVIET/VIETNAMESE INVADERS

A REPLY TO JOHN PILGER

On September 13 and 14 1979 and then again on September 27, the Melbourne "Herald" published articles by a London-based Australian journalist, John Pilger, about Kampuchea. These or similar articles have also appeared in other newspapers in Australia and in other countries. Pilger who is a special writer for the London Daily Mirror visited parts of the Vietnamese-occupied areas of Kampuchea in the first half of September. He was accompanied by a British ATV crew and an English photographer, Eric Porter. The visit was arranged by the Hanoi regime.

Seldom in recent memory has the public had to endure reporting about an overseas matter which was quite so misleading and quite so calculated and so cynical in its exploitation of human suffering. Consider the context of the Pilger reports.

They are the work of a man who has gone to a country--Kampuchea--which is ravaged by foreign aggression and is partly under a cruel foreign occupation. He has gone to that country as a guest of the foreign invader--the Vietnamese. He has had the audacity to repeat to the world the thin concoctions thrown up by his hosts to cover their rape of Kampuchea. When he has encountered the starving Kampuchean victims of the Vietnamese invasion he has blamed this terrible suffering not on the brutal invader but on the legitimate government of Democratic Kampuchea, headed by Kampuchea's leader, Pol Pot. Aggressor is portrayed as liberator by Mr. Pilger while those who have led the Kampuchean nation through the most difficult ten years of its long history are ridiculously slandered as the oppressor.

The Pilger reports can only be likened to a journalist visiting Poland in 1940 as the guest of the Third Reich, reporting that the Polish Government, now in exile, had nearly destroyed Poland and its people in the late 30's, thanking God that Adolf Hitler had dispatched a vast army to fix up the mess and urging the international community to get behind the noble efforts of the German Nazi administration in Warsaw!

Because the Soviet-backed Vietnamese invasion and attempted occupation of Democratic Kampuchea pose a grave threat to the security of S.E. Asia and Oceania a truthful presentation and accurate public understanding

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO KAMPUCHEA

Kampuchea is one of the oldest nations in Asia. In feudal times the Khmer Empire was extensive and powerful, reaching its zenith in the thirteenth century. Through subsequent centuries Thai and Vietnamese invasions weakened its might and eroded its territory but never destroyed its independence. Then, like the rest of Asia, Kampuchea became subject to European imperialist domination and interference. In the 1850's France began its penetration of Kampuchea, bringing the country under its direct administration in 1887. Kampuchea was robbed of its independence, its people and its resources were ruthlessly exploited and life for the commonfolk became even more difficult than before.

When World War 2 came, Japan did not initially invade Kampuchea directly, preferring to leave it under the administration of the pro-fascist Vichy French. As the fall of fascism in Europe became evident in early 1945 the Japanese militarists took direct control of Kampuchea in March. This lasted until their own downfall six months later. Forces of the new French Republic then entered the country but the old colonial order was never to be fully re-established. The spirit of national independence was stirring amongst the people as it was throughout the colonised countries.

A measure of independence was won in 1953. Norodom Sihanouk, then King, headed the regime of the independent state. Later he was to step down from the monarchy and become Prime Minister. Kampuchea remained a semi-feudal country with little improvement in the livelihood of the ordinary people. More and more the Kampuchean masses searched for a way forward from poverty and oppression. In 1960 the Communist Party of Kampuchea was founded and Pol Pot emerged in 1962 as the man who would head the Kampuchean Revolution to victory in the mid 1970's.

Before that was to come about the country was to go through another period of barbarous foreign aggression. In the late 60's the U.S. imperialists sought more and more to bring Kampuchea under their control. Unwilling to meet their demands, Sihanouk became a target and was toppled in a U.S.-run coup on March 18 1970. Five days later the National United Front of Kampuchea and the People's National Liberation Armed Forces of Kampuchea were set up. The Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea was established on May 5 1970. The people rose across Kampuchea and soon a large part of the country was liberated.

The U.S. imperialists replied by directly invading Kampuchea from South Vietnam and by subjecting the country to the most intense aerial

bombardment in history. 800,000 Kampuchean were to die in this blitz.

While locked in this fierce battle against the U.S. aggression, the Kampuchean had to face an excruciatingly complex development in the whole struggle. The Hanoi regime decided to turn its guns and its intrigue on the Kampuchean communists. By military intervention inside the liberated zones of Kampuchea, by political conspiracy, by hit-squads and poison plots Hanoi tried to eliminate the leadership of the Communist Party of Kampuchea. The reason? Vietnam intended, as it had for more than two decades, to bring Kampuchea under its rule; to reduce Kampuchea to a province of Vietnam in the way that has now been done to Laos. The Soviet expansionists, who now had considerable influence in Hanoi, urged on the subjugation of Kampuchea. They were determined that Kampuchea would not emerge from the anti-U.S. struggle as an independent country.

The Kampuchean were thus fighting in a most complicated situation. They had to look out front for the U.S.-backed ground invaders and puppet troops of Lon Nol, look up for the U.S. warplanes raining death from the skies and look behind for their Vietnamese 'comrades' trying to stab them in the back.

Despite these difficulties the Kampuchean National United Front went on to a spectacular victory on April 17 1975--a victory whose speed shocked Hanoi, Moscow and Washington alike. Subsequently, the new state of Democratic Kampuchea was proclaimed and the people set about building their country and society anew. But with the defeat of one enemy--the U.S. aggressors--Kampuchea immediately had to face intensified attacks from Vietnam, now more and more under the control of the Soviet expansionists.

WHAT JOHN PILGER DOES AND DOES NOT SAY

Pilger, like the other slanderers of Kampuchea, never stop to analyse the background of the current situation in the country. They do not tell their readers that there is a mountain of evidence to show that Vietnam has long harboured expansionist ambitions towards Laos and Kampuchea. Nor do they analyse how Vietnamese regional expansionism has matched up with Soviet global expansionism. They divert attention from the grave danger posed to S.E. Asia and the South Pacific by Soviet/Vietnamese designs. They scarcely even mention that Kampuchea has 200,000 foreign troops in it, including advisors and technicians from the Soviet Union, East Germany and Cuba. They do not explain what another 40,000 Vietnamese and Warsaw Pact forces are doing in Laos.

They say that the Pol Pot leadership never had more than 10% support of the population--that Pol Pot even is a psychopath. Yet they do not explain how such a leadership could topple the might of U.S. imperialism in the past or wage nationwide resistance to Soviet/Vietnamese aggression at present. The truth is that the Pol Pot leadership has long had deep support amongst the mass of the people. That is why past and present aggressors both reached the conclusion that the only way to destroy

the leadership was to try and destroy the people.

Pilger has either behaved with extraordinary naivete in Phnom Penh or he is an active supporter of Soviet/Vietnamese aggression. He is at least honest on one point. He does not bother to perpetuate the myth that there was an "indigenous uprising" in Kampuchea late last year that "overthrew" the Government. He admits quite clearly that it is a Vietnamese administration in Phnom Penh; that the Heng Samrin "regime" is a joke. He tells us quite baldly that in a country where people are dying of disease and starvation the "Health Ministry" consists of a Minister, a Deputy Minister, an interpreter and a Renault car.

John Pilger's story is that Vietnam did invade Kampuchea. But this invasion was an act of decency against the Pol Pot Government which was allegedly responsible for mass starvation and murder, was allegedly Neanderthal in its outlook and virtually wanted to take human society back before the invention of the wheel. Let us deal with Mr. Pilger's major fantasies point by point.

THE STARVATION: WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

Kampuchea has been stalked by starvation twice in its recent history. In 1974-75 following the U.S. intervention and assault on the country and now in 1979 following the Soviet/Vietnamese aggression and occupation. Before the CIA coup in 1970 rice production was at a high of 3.8 million tons per year. In 1968 Kampuchea exported 230,000 tons of rice. By 1974, after four years of U.S. aggression, there had been an 87% decline in rice production to only half a million tons. A quarter of a million tons was also being imported. Starvation and disease were rampant throughout U.S. controlled areas of Kampuchea and especially around the capital to which millions had fled as a result of U.S. bombing. Studies by the World Health Organisation, the U.S. State Department, Boston University, Catholic Relief Services and many others all showed that several million people in Kampuchea were starving to death around late 1974 into 1975.

In the already liberated zones the situation was generally much better. The Pol Pot leadership had placed great emphasis on agricultural reorganisation and sufficiency within the zones under their control. This policy sustained the population in these areas despite B 52's dropping defoliants, firebombs and the like on the crops.

After total liberation in April 1975 the government and people of Democratic Kampuchea took up the enormous challenge of food production and averted, without foreign assistance, further mass starvation. By mid-1978 Kampuchea's rice production was about 3.4 million tons--around what it was in 1969. Production of supplementary crops, fruits, vegetable poultry and livestock had recovered and in many cases expanded beyond levels that had ever existed. Kampuchea was exporting rice and a bumper crop, beyond all previous achievements, was expected in 1979. This was despite looting and burning of crops by Vietnamese raiding parties in eastern Kampuchea which had been going on for two years and the first large scale Vietnamese invasion which had occurred in late 1977.

There was simply no starvation or significant food problem in Kampuchea until the Vietnamese army stormed its way across the country around New Year 1979.

Contrary to Mr. Pilger's claims to be lifting the veil after 4½ years on the "mysteries" of Kampuchea, the country was never really closed to the outside world. Journalists, TV crews, diplomats and foreign communists were in and out of Kampuchea, especially from 1977 onwards. They came from socialist and third world countries and also from capitalist countries. They included government officials from Japan and Sweden. None of these reported any sign of mass starvation or even hunger on a smaller scale. Nor did the two American reporters, Richard Dudman of the St. Louis Post Dispatch or Elizabeth Becker of the Washington Post, who toured through the country just days before the Soviet-backed Vietnamese forces made their big push on Kampuchea in late December last year.

VIETNAM IS TRYING TO STARVE AND TERRORISE THE POPULATION INTO SUBMISSION

It is obvious what has happened to Kampuchea over the past nine months. Vietnam seeks to annex the country. This fits into Soviet global strategy and thus receives the backing of Moscow. The Kampuchean people, like all people, want to be independent. They are fighting back. The 50,000 guerillas of the government of Democratic Kampuchea can hardly be described as "remnants". They embody the aspirations of the vast majority of Kampucheans to be independent and to control their own destiny.

What have invaders invariably done to try and break the back of such resistance? They try to kill, terrorise and starve the people into submission. This is what Vietnam is doing in Kampuchea today. They have burned crops, they have prevented crops from being planted and they have looted crops and storehouses to feed the army of occupation or have had the stolen grain sent back to Vietnam. Only 5%-10% of the land that would have brought forth abundant crops this season is now producing. The Vietnamese army has seen to that.

Western and ASEAN intelligence organisations know in detail what has happened inside Kampuchea over the past nine months. U.S. spy-in-the-sky satellites have recorded the agricultural annihilation of the country day by day. This contradicts Mr. Pilger's assertion that the starvation is attributed to the Pol Pot government. But even if his assertion is taken at face value and analysed in its own terms it does not stand up. If the starvation is a legacy of the Pol Pot government then what have the so-called "liberators" from Vietnam, Russia, East Germany and Cuba been doing these past nine months? Why is the starvation getting worse? Why is Moscow capable of flying in planeloads of military supplies almost everyday yet is apparently incapable of doing anything about the starvation crisis? The answer is simple. The invaders and aggressors against Kampuchea have no intention whatsoever of saving the Kampucheans from starvation. They intend to kill them off for as long as the Kampucheans fight to be independent and free.

Kampuchean President, Khieu Samphan, summed up the situation well in his speech on National Day, April 17, this year. He said:

It is already four months since the Vietnamese enemy aggressed on and invaded the territory of our Democratic Kampuchea in the most arrogant and savage manner, after having mobilized more than 100,000 troops flanked by a very great number of tanks and covered by numerous artillery and Soviet Aircraft. During these four months, the enemy massacred our population and children with no distinction, plundered property, cattle and rice, destroyed fields and ricefields, villages and houses of our people systematically and wherever it set its foot on our territory. It has done its utmost to destroy unscrupulously, resevoirs, dams and irrigation canals which we have built with great efforts during the past three years. This extreme barbarity of the Vietnamese enemy is dictated by its black design to destroy totally our Democratic Kampuchea, to seize all our territory, to subjugate all our people, to create a Vietmanese state power in our country, to monopolize entirely our economy and to bring about wholly its strategy of Khmerization of the war, in order to occupy our territory indefinitely.

THE EVACUATION OF PHNOM PENH IN 1975

Pilger's articles promote the fiction that the Pol Pot leadership ascribes to some kind of dark and twisted social theory, a perverse agrarian puritanism, that is hateful of science, technology, learning and machines. Pilger describes the Kampuchean leadership as Luddites-- machine smashers. He thinks that Pol Pot wants to end the modern world and aspires to be a tenth century Khmer emperor. The starting point for this line of attack is usually the evacuation of Phnom Penh just after the liberation in 1975. From Henry Kissinger to Radio Moscow this action of the Kampuchean Government has been portrayed as "an atrocity"-- an indication of crazed social surgery "practised by Pol Pot". What are the facts and reasons surrounding this event?

What must first be grasped is that Kampuchea at the fall of Lon Nol in 1975 was a decimated land. In 1970 Phnom Penh had a population of less than 600,000. Of these 100,000-150,000 were Vietnamese who were driven out or deported by Lon Nol just after the CIA installed him in power. By 1975 the population of Phnom Penh had swollen to over 3 million. The vast majority of these were peasant refugees driven from their land by U.S. bombing. Once peace came these people would of course have returned to their lands. When the war ended Phnom Penh had food to last only a few days. Starvation and disease were everywhere in the city.

U.S. backed commandos had sabotaged major installations in the last hours of the regime. The water filtration plant, the electric power plant,

the National Bank, communications systems, the airport, the docks, the lighthouse and other port facilities had all been put out of action so as not to fall into the hands of the National United Front led by Pol Pot.

The CIA and the Hanoi regime were both waiting and watching, hoping that the new Kampuchean regime would be unable to handle the crisis and that this would provide an opportunity to topple it.

The Americans had left behind a large network of saboteurs and agents who hoped to hide behind and take advantage of the swollen, chaotic population of the capital. The new liberation government was faced with a life and death challenge from the outset. One third to one half of the entire population of Kampuchea faced starvation within days. An epidemic could break out at any time and spread throughout the whole land. Food production in the earlier liberated countryside was quite inadequate to keep the urban populations for very long. Medical supplies, basic equipment, even petrol, were very scarce. Appeals for international aid would produce nothing substantial in time, if at all. Two sets of powerful enemies--in essence the two superpowers themselves--were waiting in the wings eager to make a move in what they thought would be an insoluble tangle of human misery and death.

The new government came to the conclusion that Phnom Penh must be quickly evacuated of the bulk of its population. This would return two million or more peasants to their lands, it would put an additional half million or so into agricultural production, it would curb the threat of epidemic and it would undermine the extensive sabotage plans of the enemy. This way Kampuchea might live, grow and ultimately thrive. This way there was a fighting chance.

These are the practical, worldly reasons why Phnom Penh was evacuated. It was a question of survival not of bizarre social experimentation. What followed was an evacuation planned in detail to ease the hardship of the move, to care for the people, to feed them, to give them rest and shelter along the way. It was not a death march at gunpoint. Various foreigners who were on the spot have attested to this. Their reports have been largely buried and lost. To say that there were no deaths during the evacuation of this war-torn population would be absurd. Even if the evacuees had not been through war and starvation there would have been daily deaths. After all the number of people involved was about equivalent to the population of Melbourne or Sydney.

The move was radical. It was unorthodox. But so were the times and the situation. Major catastrophe was averted. As so often happens in the portrayal of history, it is those who hoped like hell that the Kampuchean would starve to death in 1975 who have subsequently been most vociferous in their feigned allegations of "atrocities". The vehemence of their condemnations is only a reflection of their bitterness that a small nation had triumphed over its aggressors.

WHAT IS THE OUTLOOK OF THE POL POT LEADERSHIP?

If Mr. Pilger had wanted to understand the philosophy of the Kampuchean leadership he could have at least turned to their writings and statements rather than rely on the nonsense of the Western imperialists, embellished and re-broadcast of late by the Soviet/Vietnamese propaganda machine. He could have examined the national crest of Democratic Kampuchea--sheaths of rice framing well ordered paddy, a mighty canal running through the centre, a dam and sluice gates and astride all a heavy industrial factory.

The outlook of Pol Pot is not that of a 10th. century feudal Khmer king. It is the outlook of scientific socialism that stands for the emancipation of man from social and natural oppression, the unleashing of the productive capacities, aided fully by science and technology, so as to guarantee an abundant and secure life for all. From an agricultural base, industry--light, medium and heavy--would be built, along with a modern infrastructure.

After liberation the Kampuchean people built a system of dams, reservoirs and canals capable of irrigating 700,000 hectares of land. Big and small factories were opened, town life was gradually built up as a genuine town economy grew, railways and roads were repaired, ports re-re-opened, malaria and other diseases of epidemic potential were all but eradicated and basic literacy amongst most of the population was achieved.

All this by a regime which is supposed to have despised machines, medicine, science and technology.

If Mr. Pilger wants to know about machine-smashing we suggest he ask the Vietnamese who have torn up the irrigation system and many factories throughout the country. If he wants to know about burning and looting of houses and schools we suggest he ask the Vietnamese who have razed district after district to the ground. If he wants to know about mass murder we suggest he ask the Vietnamese who have machine-gunned their way into village after village.

TWO ACCOUNTS OF THE INVADERS' BRUTALITY

Many accounts of Vietnamese brutality against the Kampuchean nation are beginning to reach the outside world. Two are recounted here. The first is from Sam Em whose home is in Takhmao, Kampuchea. After the Vietnamese invasion he was press-ganged into the Vietnamese army. On August 6 1979, along with twenty other young Kampuchean conscripts, he managed to break free of the Vietnamese. Three of the twenty were killed in the escape but Sam Em was amongst those who successfully made it to a base area of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea. This is an extract from his story:

Upon their arrival, the Vietnamese killed the disabled fighters and all people in the hospital of Takhmao at Prek Haur. After that they turned this hospital into a jail for people they

arrested in Phnom Penh, Saang, Koh Thom, Kien Svay and Kandal Stung. They savagely tortured them and raped the women before shooting them. The cries of the prisoners could be heard as far as the University of Takhmao. The Vietnamese spread the slander that the hospital was now a psychiatric hospital and that these cries were coming from the patients.

The second account is from Chan Poun, a comrade of Sam Em. Chan Poun made a successful escape from the Vietnamese in the same incident. As he spoke he showed the scars of nylon rope on his arms and of sticks on his back. He said:

I am a worker in the pneumatic factory. I am a storeman there. When the Vietnamese arrived, they forcibly enlisted me as a soldier to work in the factory stockstore. Not long after that they went and stole all of the machines from the factory to send them back to Vietnam. I merely asked where the machines were being sent. They replied that I was a fool. They tied had me bound and sent to the hospital where they tortured me for more than a month. They wanted to shoot me but they were short of men to dig graves for the people they shot at Prek Haur. I was used, together with some others, to dig graves everyday.

THE PILGER REPORTS : SOME AMAZING ABSURDITIES

There are many other points from John Pilger that could be taken up and refuted detail by detail. He says that there was no coined or printed currency under Pol Pot. This is true but again it is not an indication of any sort of cave man ideology. The decision not to issue a new currency was made after a thorough examination of the actual conditions that prevailed after liberation. Would the issue of currency aid the development of the economy, of the people's standard of living, at that stage? Would it assist the consolidation of the new state's control over the economy? It was decided that it would not. But the decision was not a dogma, as Pol Pot himself pointed out to a Yugoslav journalist in March 1978. He said that if the situation required the introduction of a currency, if the people's interests demanded it, then there would be a currency. The international controversy over there being "no money" in Democratic Kampuchea again reflects the bitterness of imperialist interests that a small, third world country dared to find its own way to economic development in accord with its own conditions and behaved to no one. Of course the implication is that if there is "no money" there can be no prosperity. This was not the picture presented by Democratic Kampuchea's "moneyless" economy. Economic growth, capital accumulation, a vigorous exchange of goods and services and rising living standards were all in evidence. Kampuchean Deputy P.M., Ieng Sary, made an interesting quip on the subject recently. In an interview with an American journalist he pointed out the irony of some interests in the West being so worried about Kampuchea having "no money" while promotion of the credit card cult was rampant!

Some of John Pilger's "reporting" is truly absurd. He tells us that

Pol Pot did not believe in schools and that paper and pencils were banned. Yet, Time magazine on January 8 1979 printed a picture of a classroom in Democratic Kampuchea full of schoolgirls. They were writing on paper with pencils--or with pens! The photograph was taken by Richard Dudman during his visit to Democratic Kampuchea and is copyright to the St. Louis Post Dispatch, Missouri, U.S.A.

Pilger tells us that music was no more under Pol Pot. Yet cassette tapes of modern and traditional Kampuchean music recorded in the country since April 1975 are widely circulating throughout the world. They have frequently been played on 3CR (a Melbourne community radio station). In one paragraph Pilger tells us that all communications, which presumably include railways, were abolished from 1975. A few paragraphs later we are told that thousands of people were brought to a "death camp" from December 1975 to June 1977 by train!

Inevitably, John Pilger repeats the much circulated allegation that the Pol Pot government "slaughtered millions". A picture is printed that purports to be Pol Pot's "Auschwitz". Skulls from around Angkor Wat are also shown. They are supposed to have been Pol Pot's victims. These pictures prove absolutely nothing. The Hanoi regime was quite capable of standing before the U.N. Security Council in late December last year and swearing black and blue that it didn't have one soldier in Kampuchea when it had at least 130,000 there and was at that very moment pouring more across the frontier. Such a regime is quite capable of rigging up a "death camp" for foreign journalists when, to put the kindest interpretation on the man, they are as gullible as John Pilger. The Angkor Wat area abounds with the graves of Kampuchean who have died from U.S. bombing or at the hands of Lon Nol's secret police in the past. The Hue Massacre incident returns to mind. In the late 60's the U.S. aggressors dug up bodies of those earlier killed by U.S. bombing and then put them forward as evidence of an NLF massacre. There is just no proof for all the ridiculous allegations of "genocide" under Pol Pot. Bit by bit this mendacious propaganda is coming unstuck. The famous picture of the Kampuchean revolutionary soldier "shooting people on the streets of Phnom Penh" in April 1975 has appeared hundreds of times in hundreds of newspapers. The German who took that photo has nearly gone hoarse trying to point out that the Kampuchean soldier was not shooting anybody at all but cautioning looters. The "atrocities" pictures that formed the basis of the propaganda on-slaughter by the U.S. media three years ago have now been revealed as having been taken in Thailand. Pol Pot's "victims" were not even Kampuchean--they were Thai intelligence officers. The pictures were apparently taken to be very blurry so as to increase their "credibility". Examples such as these are extensive.

Aggressors are as ruthless, as unprincipled, on the propaganda front as they are on the battlefield. After the American defeat in Kampuchea in 1975, the Ford-Kissinger White House worked overtime to blacken the new government of Kampuchea. Kissinger had the blood of up to a million Kampuchean on his hands. He had a definite interest in trying to divert attention from that, to say the least. At the same time the Soviets

and Vietnamese were planning to subjugate Kampuchea. The Western slanders against the new Kampuchea suited their purposes too. As time has gone on they have embellished and re-broadcast the old stories with a vengeance. They have become part of the shaky Vietnamese propaganda that goes with their aggression. First, Hanoi said there had been an "indigenous uprising" in Kampuchea. Then Vietnam said that it had been "invited in" by the "government" in Phnom Penh, despite the fact that the "government" they refer to was not the government that existed in Phnom Penh when 130,000 Vietnamese troops crossed the border. In the end Hanoi has been left with no saleable pretext for its aggression beyond the anti-communist diatribes of the Readers' Digest against Pol Pot.

In the final analysis the nature of the Pol Pot leadership will be decided once and for all by history. If the Government of Democratic Kampuchea were an anti-people regime then one is entitled to ask by what magic it is today conducting nationwide resistance to the occupation, despite all the difficulties. If the Government has no popular support then why are Vietnam and its European backers escalating the commitment of their forces against Pol Pot? Those who are dancing around what they think is Pol Pot's grave are in for a rude shock. As time goes on they will find out it is their own grave.

THE QUESTION OF INTERNATIONAL AID TO KAMPUCHEA

The world is appalled at the suffering brought to the Kampuchean people by the invasion. Various international relief agencies are making efforts to get supplies in. Much controversy has arisen about whether aid sent through the Vietnamese-occupied capital will reach the Kampucheans. This concern is very valid. The fact is that those who are killing the Kampuchean nation are the last ones who will facilitate the distribution of relief to them. Many disturbing reports from reliable people are being made about what is happening to aid when it reaches Phnom Penh. The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross has recently expressed concern that international relief for Kampuchea is being diverted to the Vietnamese occupation forces. Other accounts tell of Vietnamese officials hawking aid in the streets of Phnom Penh in exchange for gold.

Kampuchea desperately needs international aid. In our opinion aid should definitely be sent to the people through the Government of Democratic Kampuchea. In our opinion aid should only be sent to those areas of the country occupied by Vietnam if there is reasonable evidence that it is reaching the Kampucheans. It would be appalling if the well meant efforts of people around the world went not to alleviate the suffering of the Kampucheans but to oil the wheels of the aggression that has imposed such suffering in the first place. It would also be appalling if the non-governmental international agencies, which have only recently gained some standing after a generally bad record in the third world, were to wittingly or unwittingly become envoys of Soviet/Vietnamese aggression in Kampuchea and S.E. Asia. This will certainly take the

private aid industry back to the bad old days. Already a question mark hangs over the English organisation, Oxfam, whose officials have seen fit to propound the cause of Vietnamese aggression in Kampuchea. It surely behoves those who ask the public to donate to Kampuchean Appeals to explain clearly why there is starvation in Kampuchea--that it is the result of Soviet-backed Vietnamese aggression and occupation.

The greatest contribution Australians can make to ending the suffering of the Kampucheans is to vigorously campaign for an end to the aggression against Kampuchea; to demand that the Soviet/Viet invaders withdraw, that Kampuchean national independence, state sovereignty and territorial integrity be assured and that the Kampucheans be free to exercise fully the right to decide their own destiny.

Neil McLean,
MALAYA NEWS SERVICE

P.O. Box 164,
Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia

October 1979