

CLASS STRUGGLE

POLITICAL PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF BRITAIN

Vol.3 No.19 September 20th to October 3rd

fortnightly 7p

BRITISH LEYLAND WIELD AXE TO BOOST PROFITS

In another savage attack on jobs, British Leyland's whizz-kid Sir Michael Edwardes has announced a new package of cut-backs. A further 25,000 workers will lose their jobs over the next two years. This is on top of the 18,000 jobs lost in the past year. The extent of closure and destruction of factories and machinery is staggering. The Park Royal Titan Bus Plant is to be closed. Aveling Marshall at Gainsborough in Lincolnshire where special products are made is to be closed by the end of October. Car assembly will cease at Canley in Coventry and Abingdon, Berkshire. (The need to move the TR7 Triumph plant in Speke, Liverpool nearer the Canley assembly plant, was one of the reasons used to justify sacking thousands of the TR7 Speke workers. Now car assembly is being stopped in Canley.) Major parts of Leyland production in Castle Bromwich are to be closed. The new aluminium foundry project in Yorkshire is to be cancelled. The Seneffe plant in Belgium is to be reviewed. Machinery and equipment built by the working class will stand idle or be sold for scrap while British Leyland, financed by the National Enterprise Board, will invest over £1 billion in the production of five completely new car models. All to stay in the rat-race of cut-throat competition between the car giants. Each wants to oust the other, and so grab a bigger share of the world market. To this end the car and motor monopolies combine and compete, rationalising production on a national and international basis. Leyland has combined with Honda. They each hope their

combined resources and planning will be a powerful competitor for Peugeot Citroen, Fiat, Ford, General Motors etc. But the market is shrinking and the break-neck rivalry between the car giants to produce more and cheaper cars is deepening the crisis of over-production.

CAPITALIST CRISIS TO BLAME

The press barons are busy blaming the workers for Leyland's cut-backs. In its "Mirror Comment" the *Daily Mirror* put up a show of blaming workers and management. But they saved their most acid comments for the workers.

"Strikes were so notorious that the standard joke was that the workers were signing the visitors book!"

The *New Worker* weekly organ of the pro-Soviet quisling New Communist Party, adopted a "militant" stand. "It is inept management" which has brought British Leyland's "to its present sorry state" they declared. There is "inept management" in capitalist industry. But it is nonsense to say that bad management is the reason for Edwardes's cut-backs. What is taking place is rationalisation of production, destruction of old machinery to make way for new plant and machinery. Efficient management of capitalist industry would only carry out the same process more efficiently. Of course, the workers are not to blame for capitalism's crisis of over-production. The workers are producing too much not too little. Cont'd on p5

Open letter to John Pilger



Washington Post's Louis Simons knew this photo was a fake. Even so, two years ago, the Washington Post, Stern and Time magazine all eagerly published it.

It supposedly shows the execution of a peasant by soldiers of the armed forces of Democratic Kampuchea.

I have been reading the lengthy articles that you wrote for the *Daily Mirror* on September 12/13th, attacking the Government of Democratic Kampuchea led by Pol Pot. You repeat many of the lies which were dreamt up by Father Ponchard in his notorious book *Cambodia Year Zero*. You even use the same phrase "Year Zero" repeatedly. You really should have taken the trouble to read the works of well-known academics and opponents of US aggression in South East Asia, like Naom Chomsky, Jan Myrdal and Malcolm Caldwell. Such authors have totally discredited the lies that were spread by *Cambodia Year Zero* and other books and articles written after the liberation of Kampuchea from US imperialism and its puppet Lon Nol.

These works were part of a massive campaign by US imperialism to discredit the new Government of Democratic Kampuchea. Ponchard's book was part of this campaign of vilification. He too claimed that there were widespread massacres etc. Yet out of the 94 testifying witnesses he quoted from, only five even claimed to have seen any executions. Cont'd on p6

Open letter to John Pilger: from p1

On top of that many have consistently changed their stories to satisfy the demands of the world's press.

I see you repeat the old lie that the liberation forces say "it's chief aim is to reduce the population to fewer than two million." Where did you get this from? Perhaps from the cover of Ponchard's book, which says "When men who talk of Marxism are able to say that only 1.5 million young Cambodians out of six million will be enough to rebuild a pure society, one can no longer speak of barbarism; what barbarians have ever acted this way."

Clearly the propaganda is painting a lurid picture of an aim of "mass extermination" by the Kampuchean Government. But I expect you are probably well aware yourself that the Kampuchean revolutionaries were speaking of US aggression and extermination and were defiantly saying that however many Kampuchean people the imperialists murdered, the people would still continue to struggle for and win liberation!

Such US propaganda which you so willingly repeat, was also taken up by the Vietnamese. They serialised a book written in collaboration with the US State Department on the radio to prepare for their own invasion. Since they have occupied Kampuchea they have added their own tales. On your visit to Kampuchea, where doubtless you were feted, you willingly lapped up all the lurid tales. I don't know whether you are a willing tool or just a dupe who has not bothered to check his facts. Either way there is no doubt who you serve! You describe Vietnam's aggression as "its overthrow of the murderous Khmer Rouge regime". You go on to say "Every Cambodian I have met regards this "aggression" as having saved their nation from slavery and extinction. To condemn it is like condemning the Allied invasion of Nazi Germany."

Now really Mr Pilger, you must credit your readers with more intelligence. Kampuchea is a very small and very poor country. It is occupied by approximately 200,000 Vietnamese troops equipped with modern Soviet arms. Even so, it only has full control of one quarter of the country - basically the main towns and highways. The legitimate government also controls a quarter; and half is disputed territory. Food and weapons for the occupying soldiers has to be flown from town to town because of extensive guerrilla action on most of the main highways. Yet according to your report "every Cambodian" you met supported the invasion.

It must be obvious, even to you, that a hell of a lot of Kampuchean are vigorously fighting the Vietnamese! You should not pay so much attention to people you interview when on an official Vietnam-organised publicity tour. Incidentally, Vietnam claimed at one time, that they had not invaded Kampuchea. These new lies, which you so willingly print, are only replacing old lies which no longer hold water.

Let us take up some of your specific stories.

THE EVACUATION OF PHNOM PENH

You talk a great deal about the evacuation of the capital, Phnom Penh. Let us recall some facts about Phnom Penh just prior to liberation in April 1975. As you say yourself over 2,000,000 people lived in the city. Who were they? Mainly peasants driven from their land by massive US bombing and napalming of the countryside. Kampuchean agriculture, despite an extremely fertile countryside, was virtually destroyed. The inhabitants of the city were starving. Many reports were published even in British newspapers at the time which described cannibalism in the city. People lived and died of disease and starvation in the gutters of the backstreets. The day before it was liberated the US-backed Lon Nol regime set about a scorched earth policy. Lon Nol forces blew up the sewers and the fresh water supply. And Lon Nol forces blew up the National Bank of Cambodia. You claim that "The Khmer Rouge, retreating before the Vietnamese, blew it up." You will see that the picture of the National Bank of Cambodia that we have published is very similar to the one accompanying your report. *The National Bank: destroyed by a time bomb left by Lon Nol saboteurs. Pilger's ignorance on factual history of the Kampuchean liberation struggle leaves him easy prey to any lies the Vietnamese wish to feed him.*

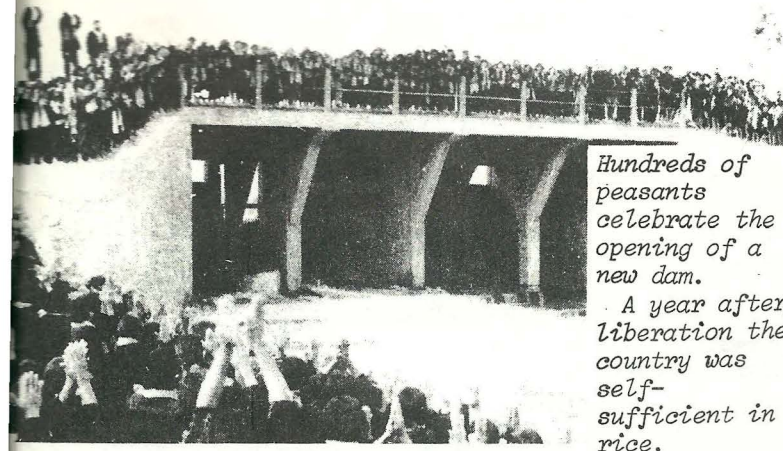


Pol Pot (left) and Ieng Sary lead the war of resistance from the Kampuchean countryside. Pilger claims that Pol Pot is in China

But now to the crunch. What would you do if you were part of the liberation forces entering Phnom Penh in April 1975? There is no food, no water, the sewers are overflowing and disease is spreading like wildfire. The countryside is lacking population; the farms bombed and isolated.

What the liberation forces did was to evacuate the city by taking the people back to the countryside - rice having been set aside in readiness to feed the vast city population. They also worked hard to build up agriculture to feed the people - by far the most urgent task.

At that time, 80% of the population had malaria, Disease and starvation as a direct result of the war. It was a consequence of US aggression then, and now, as a consequence of Vietnamese aggression. Undoubtedly a number of people died of starvation and disease before they had rebuilt their country. But do not blame the liberation forces, whose policies and acts (such as the evacuation of Phnom Penh which you found so despicable) were dictated by the circumstances that they found themselves in and were carried out in order to save the people from greater starvation. Blame US aggression, blame yourself and blame your newspaper which did nothing at that time to demand food and technical aid to Kampuchea. The propaganda machine instead spent all its time spreading lies about the new Government



Hundreds of peasants celebrate the opening of a new dam.

A year after liberation the country was self-sufficient in rice.

Incidentally, after the food problem was solved (it was despite your tales to the contrary), the Kampucheans began to gradually repopulate Phnom Penh and built up small industries and especially industry to serve agriculture. At the time of the Vietnamese invasion, Phnom Penh had a thriving population of 200,000. Your beautifully painted picture of an absolutely deserted Phnom Penh over the last few years is just not true. I suggest you examine what the Vietnamese did when they invaded.

PEASANTS HAVE A HARD LIFE

Now, you tell tales of a "forced" evacuation of Phnom Penh and the "enforced" labour in the fields. Well, the peasants were returning to their fields. They and the mass of the Phnom Penh population were quite prepared to build up agriculture and stop the starvation. I assume many of the bloated bureaucratic servants of imperialism - a small minority - were not so keen! They could no longer live off the labour of the people. You will have to forgive me. I cannot shed tears for them having to produce their own food. You get very upset that the agricultural workers were "fed according to how productive they were." Well this sounds terrible! The people were starving. They had to produce to eat. What do you expect? Of course they did not eat well but they were eating a lot better and this was improving all the while. You said - in horror - that the children did not recognise toys or pen and paper. They may not but kids were starting to get a basic education for the first time whilst at the same time being involved in productive work in the fields. I suggest you examine the conditions of the peasantry in any third world country. You will not find a nice semi-detached with carpets, a TV, toys or magazines strewn about. That is precisely why people fight for liberation. They fight for independence to improve their conditions of life. Don't blame the Government of Democratic Kampuchea for the people's conditions. Look instead at how the people of a backward country with their bare hands - there are not many tractors about - built great irrigation projects, filled in the malaria-infested shell craters, sowed and reaped the crops and produced enough food to feed the population. They were gradually starting to build up their industry. Incidentally, China - a country you so vehemently dislike - was the only country supplying extensive food and industrial aid.

Now you attack the Pol Pot government for the present starvation in Kampuchea. Instead you should attack the Vietnamese invaders who have driven the Kampuchean people off the land, looted the crops and reduced Kampuchea to hunger and starvation yet again. Only last week it was reported that Vietnamese troops drove another 60,000 sick and starving Kampucheans across the border into Thailand. If you are really opposed to genocide and the murder of a nation, you should look first to the foreign invaders.

"DRIVEN" TO THE COUNTRYSIDE OR EXECUTED?

In your September 12th article, city people were being forced into the countryside and working very hard. In the September 13th article you quote from a former "Khmer Rouge" Battalion Commander who said: "I was told that all city people had to die so we could build a new and pure Cambodia." You said he admitted to massacring "2,500 men, women and children". Now Mr Pilger, which is it to be? Mass exterminations or working in the fields? When you have answered that, why don't you tell me what you would say if another reporter put any weight on a story being told by a captured soldier, whom you admit to being in a "re-education camp" and who was interviewed in the presence of his Vietnamese captors! Not much I expect.

As for your stories of "mass murders", you are, at best, gullible in the extreme. You talk about "mass extermination" at Angkor Wat. The only evidence is a mass grave of, as you said, 9,000 bodies. Indeed it is criminal that 9,000 have died, but who killed them and when? You repeat the Vietnamese stories with no proof at all. For your information, at least 800,000 Kampucheans died in the war of liberation against US domination. Many more have been killed in the Vietnamese invasion (which you applaud!). In both wars Angkor Wat, the site of the old temples, was a major battle area. It is a symbol of the Kampuchean nation. Thousands upon thousands of Kampuchean people have died in the struggle to liberate and defend Angkor Wat. There will be many mass graves there. Don't present the existence of the graves as "proof" of genocide. They are proof of the murder of Kampuchean people by foreigners trying to dominate their country.

Why haven't pictures of the "extermination camp" in Phnom Penh been published earlier. The Vietnamese occupied the city in January. Perhaps it has taken them 8 months to "set the scene". Your picture makes it pretty clear that the stage has been set.

CROCODILE TEARS

You end your articles with pleas for food aid. If you wanted to feed the people of Kampuchea you should ask for aid to be sent to the refugee camps in Thailand, not to the Vietnamese authorities and their puppets in Phnom Penh, whose main desire is to feed the occupying army. Aid to them is aid to aggression. You say the Vietnamese were so concerned about the "plight" of the Kampuchean people under Pol Pot's Government. If they are so concerned for people then you tell me why 1 million starving Vietnamese are in the refugee camps in other countries (300,000 in socialist China) and tell me why at least 1 million more drowned trying to escape. How do you explain away their racism to the Chinese and Kampuchean minorities who live in Vietnam itself? I will tell you that you can't.

But you are doing a great service to the Soviet and Vietnamese expansionists!

The Editor 15/9/79
c/o New Era Books, 203 Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

VIETNAMESE PUPPETS IN KAMPUCHEA Cont'd from p8

The proposal then went to the praesidium (the co-ordinating body) of the conference, where the same thing was repeated! A number of delegates complained bitterly afterwards, saying, "We have not even been asked our views."

Cuba succeeded by bureaucratic means in keeping Kampuchea out of the conference. Doubtless, most non-aligned countries will learn a lesson from this and keep a very close eye on Castro, whose turn it is to be chairman of the movement until the next conference in three years time.