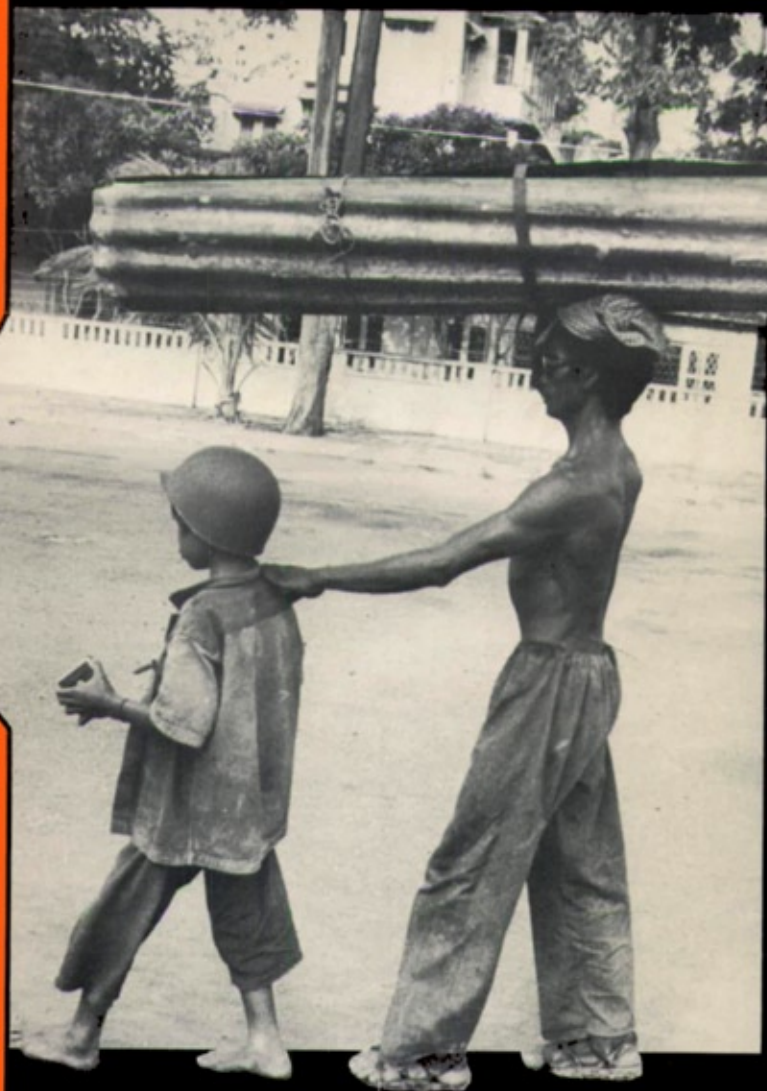


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THE POVERTY OF DIPLOMACY

**Kampuchea
and the Outside World**
by David Bull

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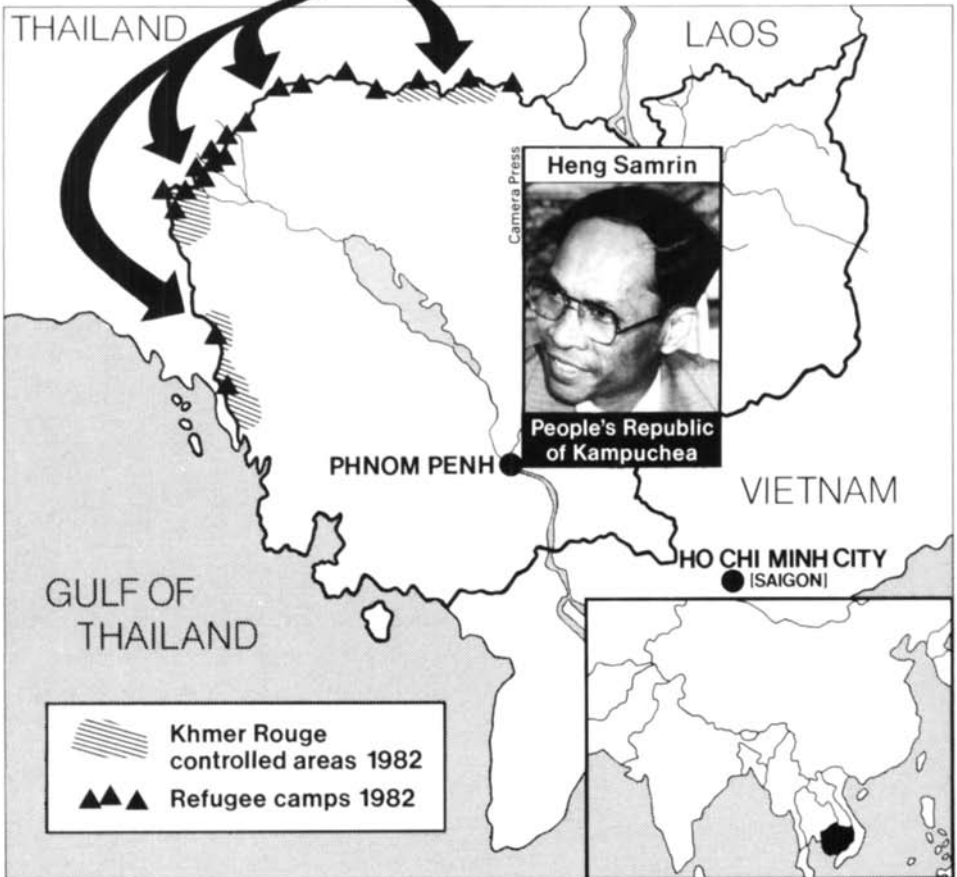
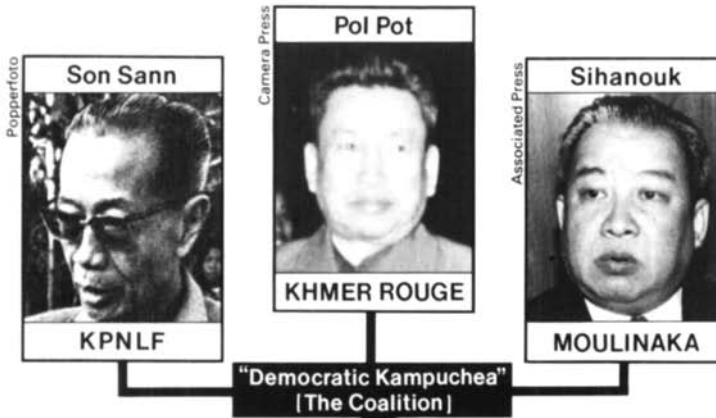
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Cover Picture: A blind survivor of the years of suffering struggles to rebuild his home. Eric Piper, Daily Mirror

Kampuchea



Introduction

In 1979, news broke of the terrible suffering of the people of Kampuchea. In Britain we saw daily on our television screens the aftermath of Pol Pot's brutal and vicious regime. After nearly four years of murder, slavery and hunger, Kampuchea was a country returned to the Dark Ages, its people in desperate need.

The people of Britain were deeply moved. More money was given than for any previous disaster – £7 million through Oxfam alone. Literally millions of people were involved in this massive fundraising effort.

Despite enormous difficulties the relief agencies were able to help the Kampuchean people to survive the nightmare and to begin the long haul of rebuilding their lives and their country.

Today, four years later, some sense of normality has returned. But the people of Kampuchea still face many problems. Malnutrition remains widespread. The process of reconstruction has only begun. Two major obstacles stand in the way: Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge army still threaten from the Thai border and essential development aid is denied by the UN and by most Western governments.

The UK Government last year gave *no* official bilateral aid to Kampuchea. And each autumn since 1979 it has voted to seat Pol Pot's representatives at the United Nations. These actions have helped to condemn the people of Kampuchea to live in continuing fear and poverty. It is an unnecessary poverty. It is a poverty accentuated and perpetuated by the inadequacy of diplomacy.

It is hard to believe that the millions of British people who gave their time, energy and money for Kampuchea in 1979 are happy that their government should, through its diplomacy, help to perpetuate fear and prevent development. There must be a better way. This report sets out to present one. It is based on Oxfam's experience of working in Kampuchea – experience involving dozens of staff members who have become familiar with the hopes and fears of the Kampuchean people.

The report concludes with proposals designed to break the stalemate. If the UK Government adopted these proposals it would:

- withdraw its vote at the UN from support for the seating of “Democratic Kampuchea” (dominated by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge).
- call for the Kampuchean seat at the UN to be left vacant for a year, while urgent efforts are made to find a more permanent solution.
- press for the immediate resumption of UN development aid to Kampuchea.
- provide official UK bilateral aid to Kampuchea.

It is time that the humanitarian needs of the Kampuchean people were put first – before strategic and diplomatic advantage or the procedural norms of UN diplomacy. We believe that the modest proposals put forward in this report would at least allow a new start to be made.

The Stage and the Actors

The Stage

Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia) is a small, fertile and once-prosperous country sandwiched between Thailand and Vietnam. During the latter half of the 20th Century it has been the scene of numerous wars, coups, invasions, despotic regimes and devastating famine.

Between March 1969 and August 1973, American bombers deposited more than half a million tons of bombs onto Cambodian territory (almost half of them in the last six months in 1973), a tonnage equivalent to 7½ times that dropped on Britain throughout World War Two. Hundreds of thousands of Cambodians were killed.

In 1975, the communist Khmer Rouge took power from the US-backed government of Lon Nol and began three and a half years of one of the most brutally repressive regimes this century. During those years, as well as condemning up to two million Kampuchean to death by hunger, disease and execution, the Khmer Rouge, led by the infamous Pol Pot, also launched attacks against its neighbours, Thailand and Vietnam. In December 1978 the Vietnamese invaded and the full horror of the devastation wrought by the Pol Pot years was revealed. The plight of the Kampuchean people moved the hearts of a shocked world and an aid effort began. Under the stability of a new Vietnamese-installed regime, Kampuchean began to rebuild their lives and their country. But they still face many problems.

Their battered country, as so often in the past, is a pawn in the game of international politics. Their new Government remains largely unrecognised, while their seat at the United Nations continues to be occupied by an unstable Coalition dominated by the feared Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. Only the presence of some 180,000 Vietnamese troops holds off the military threat from this Coalition on Kampuchea's western borders. As a result of the Vietnamese presence and the continued occupation of the UN seat by the Coalition, the people are denied development aid from UN agencies and most Western governments. This despite the evidence of recent UN agency surveys that malnutrition remains widespread and greater help is desperately needed.

The people of Kampuchea want little more than to carry on their lives in peace and stability. Yet, they continue to live in fear of the Khmer Rouge and under Vietnamese domination, without help from most of the world. For their sake, urgent solutions need to be sought to break the stalemate. Yet Britain, along with most Western nations, now denies bilateral aid to Kampuchea, and continues to cast its vote for the Coalition at the UN and to reiterate the failed solutions which have left the Kampuchean suffering in isolation for so long. How much longer will we send our representatives to the UN to cast their vote for the Khmer Rouge and their Coalition associates? It is time for a new and more enlightened policy, putting the humanitarian interests of the Kampuchean people first.

The Actors

● **Democratic Kampuchea:** The name given to Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge period 1975-79. Subsequently the name of the exiled Khmer Rouge 'government' seated at the UN, 1979-81. Currently comprising a Coalition of the Khmer Rouge, Son Sann and Sihanouk, seated at the UN in 1982.

● **Heng Samrin:** President of the Vietnamese-backed regime in Phnom Penh, the People's Republic of Kampuchea, since 1979. Formerly a member of a pro-Vietnamese faction of the Khmer Rouge. A regional official in the Khmer Rouge Government. Took part in an unsuccessful uprising against the Pol Pot regime in 1978, before defecting to Vietnam.

● **Khmer:** Used interchangeably with "Kampuchean", as in "Khmer people".

● **Khmer Rouge:** Left-wing insurgent movement in the Cambodian countryside. Took power 1975-79, led by Pol Pot. Now the dominant partner in the Coalition 'government' seated at the UN. Presently reported to maintain some 30,000 troops on the Thai/Kampuchean border.

● **Lon Nol:** Minister of Defence and Prime Minister under Sihanouk before 1970. Overthrew Sihanouk in coup, March 1970. Prime Minister, Commander-in-Chief and Head of State of "Khmer Republic", 1970-75. Fled to Hawaii, April 1975.

● **People's Republic of Kampuchea:** The name given to Kampuchea under the Heng Samrin Government since 1979.

● **Pol Pot:** Formerly Saloth Sar, a Cambodian Marxist who fled Phnom Penh in 1963. Leader of the Khmer Rouge. Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, 1963-78. Prime Minister of "Democratic Kampuchea", 1976-78. Recently reported to be Commander-in-Chief of the Khmer Rouge army.

● **Sihanouk, Prince Norodom:** King of Cambodia, 1941-55. Abdicated 1955, ruled as Prince and Head of State until deposed by Lon Nol in 1970. Head of government-in-exile 1970-75. Returned to Phnom Penh as nominal Head of State under Khmer Rouge, 1975. Forced into retirement, 1976. Now President of the exiled "Democratic Kampuchea", in coalition with the Khmer Rouge and Son Sann. The Sihanoukist Moulinaka movement is reported to maintain up to 3,000 troops on the Thai/Kampuchean border.

● **Son Sann:** Former Prime Minister of Cambodia, under Sihanouk. Now President of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) and Prime Minister in the "Democratic Kampuchea" Coalition. The KPNLF reportedly maintains some 10,000 troops on the Thai/Kampuchean border.

The Last Thirty Years – a chronology

- 1953: Cambodia gains independence from France.
- 1954: Geneva Conference on Indochina (co-chaired by UK and USSR) recognises Cambodia's neutrality.
- 1963: Left-wing opponents of Sihanouk (including Pol Pot) leave Phnom Penh to join other insurgents in the jungles and mountains of Cambodia.
- 1967: Sihanouk's forces crush a left-wing peasant revolt in Battambang province.
- 1969: *March 18*: US bombing of Cambodia begins, in secret, aimed at Vietnamese communist 'base camps' on Cambodian territory.
- 1970: *March 19*: Sihanouk overthrown in a coup by Lon Nol.
March 23: Sihanouk announces formation of United Front with his former enemies the Khmer Rouge, to oppose the Lon Nol regime.
April 30: US and South Vietnamese troops invade Cambodia, without Lon Nol's knowledge or approval, in order to attack communist bases. US troops withdraw on June 30.
- 1972: 2 million Cambodians made homeless by the war between Lon Nol and the Khmer Rouge.
- 1973: *January 27*: Paris Agreement signed, ending the war in Vietnam. Article 20 called on all foreign countries to "put an end to all military activities in Cambodia".
February 8: Massive US bombing resumed after a halt since January 27.
August 15: US bombing ceases.
- 1975: *April 17*: Khmer Rouge enter Phnom Penh and begin emptying major towns and cities.
May 3: Fighting begins between Kampuchea and Vietnam.
September 9: Sihanouk returns to Phnom Penh as Head of State of "Democratic Kampuchea".
- 1976: *April 4*: Sihanouk resigns.
- 1977: Heavy fighting on Kampuchea/Vietnam border.
- 1978: Vietnamese invade Kampuchea on Christmas Day.
- 1979: Phnom Penh captured January 7. Heng Samrin Head of new "People's Republic of Kampuchea". Fighting continues as Khmer Rouge driven towards Thai border. Aid effort begins, initially from Vietnam and the Eastern bloc, then from international and Western agencies.
- 1979/80/81: "Democratic Kampuchea" (Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge) seated at UN. UK votes in favour of this arrangement.
- 1982: Coalition government of "Democratic Kampuchea" formed in exile by Khmer Rouge, Son Sann and Sihanouk. "Democratic Kampuchea" (now the Coalition) seated at UN. UK votes in favour.



Survivors return to Phnom Penh, 1979. The Khmer Rouge had emptied the cities in 1975 and destroyed modern equipment such as refrigerators, vehicles and sewing machines.

Year Zero and Year Three

Year Zero: Kampuchea under Pol Pot

As the US bombing reached its height in the spring and summer of 1973, the Khmer Rouge forces around Phnom Penh suffered massive casualties – up to 25% of their entire army were killed. William Shawcross in his Book *Sideshow* quoted the maxim that “units cannot sustain losses of more than 10% without suffering irreversible psychological damage”. Under a rain of 750 lb. bombs, the teenage soldiers of the Khmer Rouge learned the brutality of war, and the scene was set for the horrors that were to occur when the survivors of that holocaust marched victorious into Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975.

In the months prior to the fall of Lon Nol, Phnom Penh was virtually cut off, supplied with rice only by a desperate airlift, its population swollen by refugees. Starving children wandered the streets and the hospitals overflowed with war-wounded. When the Khmer Rouge soldiers entered the capital in the morning of April 17, they were greeted by many with hope, but not for long. First, the soldiers emptied the hospitals. The sick and the injured were forced to get up and stagger from the city. Then the rest of the population were ordered out, taking only the food they could carry. Families were separated and 2½ million people had their first bitter taste of the power of the “Angkar” – the “organisation” – which now controlled their lives. Any who complained faced summary execution. “Year Zero” had begun, the beginning of a cruel new era in the troubled life of Kampuchea.

For the next 3½ years the evacuees and the peasants suffered together as virtual slaves, forced to work on the land and to fulfil strenuous work quotas in return for food. Children were taken from their parents. Anyone suspected of connections with the Lon Nol regime, or with the Vietnamese, anyone who belonged to the educated elite or any who dared to question the Angkar risked vicious and painful death. The Buddhist religion was outlawed. In some places forced marriages were arranged. Modern medicine was shunned and sick people treated with dubious alternative remedies. Money was abolished and the post and telephone systems abandoned. Child labour was common practice and education virtually non-existent.

The Khmer Rouge inherited a country desolated by war and already starving, yet they eschewed foreign aid, preferring the cruelty of slave labour and starvation rations. Work shifts ran from dawn to dusk. By the spring of 1978 up to a quarter of the population had died from starvation, disease and execution – a comparable proportion in Britain would mean 14 million deaths.

Kampuchea under Pol Pot was virtually isolated from the rest of the world, the only significant exception being a fortnightly scheduled flight from Peking and the presence in the country of some 20,000 Chinese advisers.

The Khmer Rouge regime was not unified, but divided into factions. The worst atrocities occurred when Pol Pot’s faction gained full power from early 1977. A number of attempted coups and rebellions were put down and, in the purges that followed, most leading members of the other factions were murdered. Others, including Heng Samrin, fled to Vietnam.

The regime was obsessively nationalistic. From the very beginning, as the nightmare progressed for the ordinary people of Kampuchea, the Khmer Rouge mounted often vicious attacks on their Thai and Vietnamese neighbours. Ironically, in 1977,

these included assaults on Thai villagers near Aranyaprathet, whence the Khmer Rouge guerrillas now launch their attacks on Kampuchea in the opposite direction. Most clashes, though, were with the Vietnamese, who suffered large civilian casualties. The war with Vietnam escalated during 1978 and the Vietnamese then openly backed attempts to overthrow the Pol Pot regime. Phnom Penh radio described how the Vietnamese threat could be overcome by equalising the populations of the countries. To do this, every Cambodian, it said, should kill 30 Vietnamese. The Vietnamese, as well as facing hostility from the Khmer Rouge (whom they perceived as agents of the Chinese), were also by this time providing refuge for 150,000 Khmers who had fled from the Pol Pot regime.



Photographs and clothing of people executed by Khmer Rouge.

The Vietnamese Invasion

On Christmas Day of Year Three of “Democratic Kampuchea”, the Vietnamese, in response to escalating border conflict and in fear of encirclement by Chinese domination, launched a full-scale offensive against Kampuchea. On January 7, 1979, they took Phnom Penh. The end of the nightmare was in sight. As much as the Kampuchean people may fear and dislike the Vietnamese, there is no doubt that on this occasion they were welcomed as liberators from the horror and brutality of the Pol Pot years. On 10 January the People’s Republic of Kampuchea was declared, with Heng Samrin as President.

The Khmer Rouge leaders returned to the jungles, vowing to mount a new guerrilla war against Vietnamese domination of their country. The Chinese immediately promised support and the stage was set for the next act in the tragedy of Kampuchea.

Tragedy and Survival

Tragedy

After the Vietnamese invasion, the full story of the brutality of life under Pol Pot began to emerge as refugees told their tales and as the first Westerners, journalists and aid agency personnel, visited the wrecked and broken country. During the Pol Pot era some 200,000 Khmers fled to Vietnam and Thailand. The new war between the Vietnamese and the Khmer Rouge caused many more to flee during 1979. The first were the remnants of the educated elite and at the end of 1979 these were followed by nearly half a million sick and starving people seeking refuge along the Thai border. These were largely the remains of the Khmer Rouge accompanied by the population remaining under their control. These people were in an especially sorry state, but the massive exodus of millions predicted by the Thais failed to materialise. In fact during 1979 and 1980, most of the refugees who had fled to Vietnam returned to Kampuchea, as did more than 200,000 from the Thai border. Today, there remain about 250,000 refugees on the Thai border, mostly in camps controlled by the Khmer Rouge and the other resistance groups, and including some 40,000 soldiers of these groups. Many of these refugees, though perhaps materially better off now than their fellows inside Kampuchea, would probably return to their homes if they were not prevented from doing so by the difficulty of crossing minefields and military lines to get there.

Meanwhile, within Kampuchea the Heng Samrin Government inherited a society returned to the Dark Ages.

The country, by 1979, had no currency, no financial institutions and virtually no industry. The trains were not running and the roads were damaged and unrepaired. There was no postal system, no telephones and virtually no electricity, clean water, sanitation or education. Freed from the slavery of the Pol Pot years, people began to return to Phnom Penh and to their home villages, and to seek the remnants of their families. Half the country was on the move. During their retreat, the Khmer Rouge took or destroyed a quarter of the rice harvest and one-third of the draught animals. The chaos of summer 1979 prevented normal planting and so the 1979/80 harvest was only one-third of the usual level. The country stood under the shadow of famine as the hungry 'road people' wandered in search of a new life.

The country's infrastructure was destroyed. Of 450 doctors before 1975, only about 50 remained in the country in 1979. The rest had been murdered or had escaped abroad. Of the 20,000 teachers in the early '70s only 5,000 remained. Very few trained administrators survived – those who took their place under Heng Samrin were generally very young and inexperienced. The fishing industry was hampered by lack of boats and nets. Even by 1981, the catch was less than half the level of the early '70s.

The six million or so Khmers who lived through the tragedies of the US bombing, the Lon Nol/Khmer Rouge war, the Pol Pot era and the Vietnamese invasion, were now faced with a massive task of first survival and then reconstruction of their battered and damaged nation.



Many of the surviving children were suffering from serious malnutrition. Eric Piper, Daily Mirror

Survival

As the story of Kampuchea's tragedy emerged, the people of the world were deeply moved. In the UK unprecedented sums were raised by public donation (£7 million to Oxfam alone during 1979). The UN agencies, the Red Cross and the voluntary agencies got aid to the suffering Kampuchean people as quickly as possible, both to the refugees in the camps on the Thai border and to the people inside the country.

This aid, combined with that of the Soviet bloc and of Vietnam, enabled the new Government to begin the process of reconstruction. The Vietnamese themselves helped to restore the transport systems and administrative infrastructure which enabled international aid to get through, as well as providing 140,000 tons of food and seed rice by June 1980. In the summer of 1980, 1.5 million hectares were planted with rice, but this was still insufficient and the country continued to be dependent on international food aid.

The Heng Samrin Government adopted a liberal and pragmatic policy approach, concentrating on agricultural production. No taxes were levied, there being no infrastructure for tax collection. Families were allowed to sell any excess produce either to the Government or on the open market. In the absence of taxes and currency, the Government had to rely on aid for the revenue to rebuild services such as health and education. This meant that much food aid was used to pay the salaries of Government employees, rather than being distributed directly to the people in most need.

Meanwhile, on the Thai border, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) set up holding centres to receive the refugees. In January 1980, Thailand closed its border and access to the holding centres were severely restricted. Instead refugees were directed into camps on the frontier. During 1979 and 1980, the various political and military organisations fought for control of these camps, claimed to be inside Kampuchean territory. Thanks to a broad international relief effort, material conditions in the camps have been relatively good. UN agencies took on the distribution of food, while as many as 140 voluntary agencies have taken care of education, health and other services.

Nevertheless, political and military realities have caused serious problems. The border relief effort, though essential for humanitarian purposes, was fraught with difficulties. The refugee camps are in the front line of a war, and are the bases for the military activity of the Khmer Rouge and other opposition groups. It has been impossible to prevent the aid effort from contributing to the military effectiveness of these groups and it has been estimated by UN agency officials that one-third of the relief supplies directed through Thailand have failed to reach the intended beneficiaries. The worst losses were in the 'land bridge' operation through which peasants from the western part of Kampuchea travelled to the border to collect relief supplies, much of which had to be used to pay for transport and to ensure safety on the journey. The 'land bridge' was discontinued in January 1981.

The border relief effort has been in stark contrast to the situation inside Kampuchea, where only 30 international governmental and non-governmental agencies were working. The quantity of international aid per head channelled through the Heng Samrin Government has been less, but it has been estimated that a relatively high proportion of this aid has reached the intended recipients. Such aid, combined with the resilience and resourcefulness of the Kampuchean people, ensured the

emergence of Kampuchea from the threatening clouds which hung over that desperately suffering country in 1979. Having survived, their task now was to ensure revival and reconstruction and to return shattered lives to a semblance of normality.



Emergency supplies were shipped up the Mekong River in barges from Singapore.

The Revival

Today, although the Khmer people still face many problems, an air of normality has slowly returned to the country. This sense of normality is demonstrated in many activities which may appear trivial, but are a source of great pleasure to people who have suffered so much. Colourful clothes are replacing the 'black pyjamas' of the Pol Pot years. The markets in Phnom Penh are bustling, wedding parties have made a renewed appearance and the stadium has once more become a stage for occasional football matches. Khmer culture, largely destroyed by Pol Pot's regime, has revived, with performances staged once again at the theatre in Phnom Penh, and the saffron robes of the Buddhist monks are returning to the streets.

On a more practical level, the educational system is being rebuilt. By the end of 1982, 80% of children were back at school, even though they are often in classes of 70 or 80, without desks or even pencils and taught by untrained teachers. In 1979, the number of medical personnel was too small even to begin to treat the sick. Now, although serious shortages of medicines and trained personnel remain, there are some 25 basic hospitals operating in Kampuchea, as well as 100 health centres with rudimentary in-patient facilities, and many small village clinics.

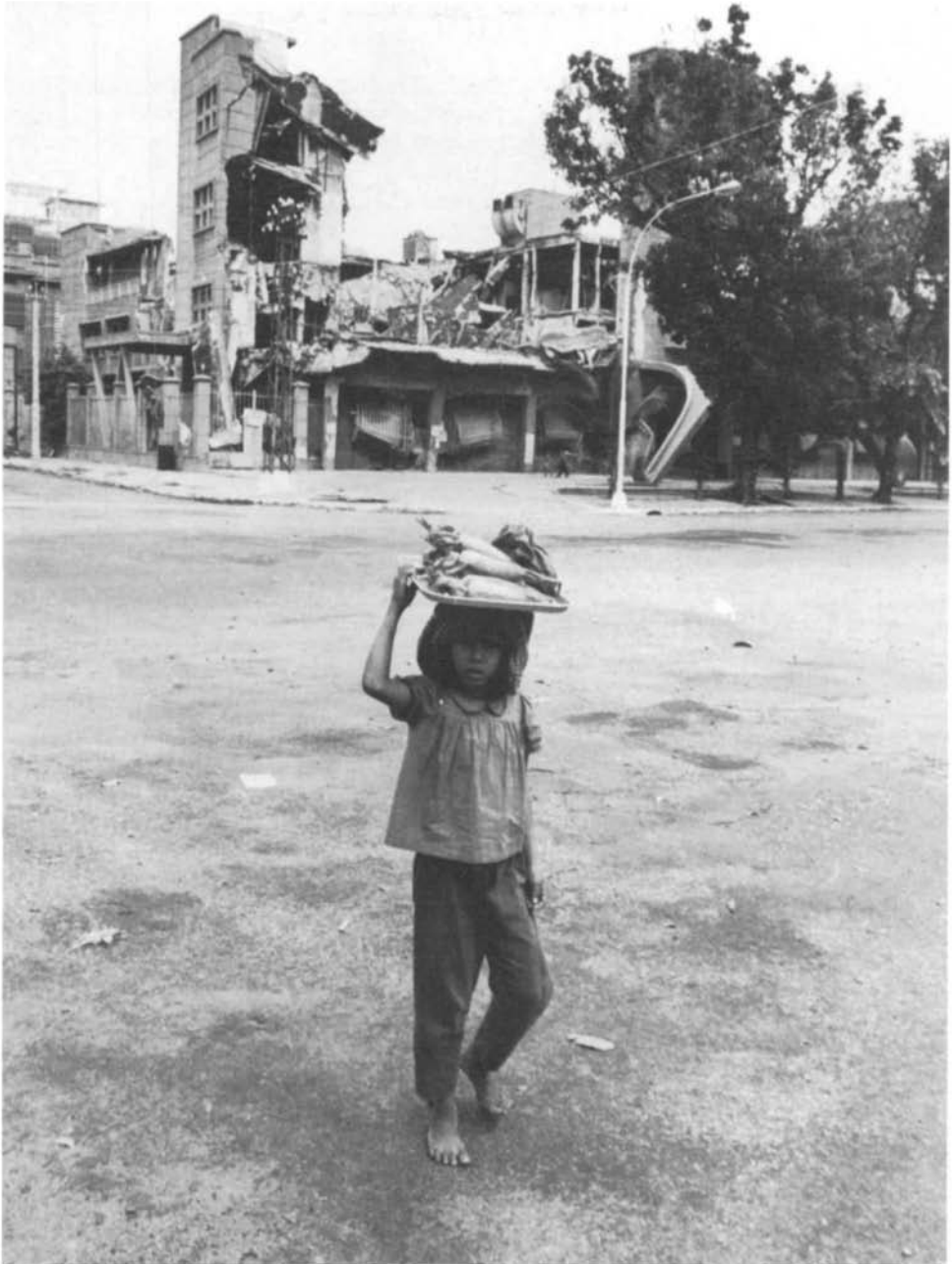
The collective farms of the Khmer Rouge period have been replaced by loosely-structured solidarity groups of 10-15 families each. The means of production, such as draught animals, are privately owned, and each family has the right to cultivate its own quarter hectare plot around its house. Surplus produce can be sold on the open market.

Currency, the riel, was reintroduced in spring 1980, and is replacing gold or rice as the medium of exchange. In the cities, the once abandoned dwellings are not owned by anyone, but are supervised by 'block committees'. No rent is charged and electricity, now intermittently available at least in Phnom Penh, is not billed. The salaries of civil servants are paid part in money and part in rice.

Trains to Battambang and the port of Kompong Som are running again, albeit irregularly, some post and telephone services have resumed, at least in Phnom Penh, and some industrial plants are operating again producing for example textiles and simple agricultural tools, in spite of lack of spare parts and raw materials. Foreign trade consists largely of aid shipments, although some small exports are now taking place, of raw rubber to the Soviet Union, cotton and kapok to Japan and dried fish to Vietnam.

The policies of the Heng Samrin Government have been relatively liberal, allowing for market forces and individual initiative. In the sphere of human rights, there have been no public executions and no reports of torture. Political opponents are 're-educated' rather than killed and the number of political prisoners, including captured Khmer Rouge, was estimated in 1982 to be between one and three thousand.

The clear impression gained by visitors to Kampuchea is that the revival is under way, although many difficulties still persist. Every surviving Kampuchean has a story to tell of how the changes of the last ten years have affected their lives. They are unanimous in their hatred of the Khmer Rouge and in the renewed hope which they now feel, despite the continuing Vietnamese presence, as their lives begin to return to something recognisable as normality.



The resourceful Kampuchians soon started to pick up the pieces of their lives among the shattered remains of their country. Eric Piper, Daily Mirror

Problems and Obstacles

Despite the 'miracle of survival' and the encouraging beginnings of reconstruction, the Kampuchean people still face many problems and obstacles in their efforts to rebuild their society and to regain their self-respect as an independent people in a world community. The task still before them is a daunting one, hampered by the continuing military conflict on the Thai border and the lack of aid and positive diplomacy from the Western world.

Nutrition

The children of Kampuchea remain a constant reminder of the legacy of Pol Pot. The population is lacking half the expected number of children aged 3 to 8, while those aged 8 to 12, who were small children during the Pol Pot years, look three or four years younger due to prolonged malnutrition. On the other hand, babies and toddlers are plentiful as the high infant mortality of the past decade is compensated for by population growth of about 3 or 4 %.

Recent nutrition surveys by UN agencies predict a rice deficit for 1983 of more than 100,000 tons. This is due to shortages of draught animals, tractors, fertilisers and pest control, leading to poor crop yields, as well as inefficient irrigation systems and lack of agricultural advice and extension services. The prevalence of moderate/severe malnutrition among children under 13 is as high as 60% in the seven provinces surveyed. The food intake of these children is highly inadequate and the situation will get worse during the latter half of 1983. The prevalence of infectious diseases will also increase, but medical treatment is hampered by shortages of doctors, medicines and the basic infrastructure for supply and co-ordination of health services. "Many children die silently in



Rice planting, with donated seed, was given high priority. But outside food supplies are still needed because of the slow pace of reconstruction.

their villages without primary health care,” concluded an FAO survey report. “At the present time, not enough food is available in Kampuchea, especially at the village level, to meet even the minimum acceptable level of adequate food intake.”

These UN surveys can be criticised for the methods used and the choice of areas surveyed. Their conclusions could therefore exaggerate the scale of the problem. Nevertheless, even taking the most critical view, the surveys clearly do show that the food situation in Kampuchea remains highly precarious and that there is a strong and definite cause for concern.

The surveys called for immediate humanitarian assistance to provide seeds, feeding supplements, medicines and fertilisers. They also pointed to the good record for effective distribution of emergency food aid in Kampuchea.

Aid

Kampuchea, despite its strides towards recovery, is still in need of international aid. Emergency aid is essential to overcome immediate shortages, but if the country is to gain a greater self-reliance for the future it also desperately requires *development* aid to rebuild its damaged infrastructure of roads, communications systems, industry, agricultural training and health care. The recent report by an independent commission of enquiry from Finland concluded that “under Kampuchea’s current conditions the building of a basic infrastructure can . . . be considered comparable to emergency aid in that without external help the nation’s economy currently does not have the resources to function even passably”. Yet, “the western nations and the international aid organisations bound to them, for reasons of international politics, have been unwilling to expand cooperation from purely emergency aid in the direction of development projects”.

There are three potential sources of aid – multilateral (from governments through international agencies, mainly of the UN), bilateral (direct from government to government) and voluntary (through agencies like Oxfam).

The *UN agencies* are currently forced to operate a *ban* on *development* aid (as opposed to emergency aid). This is a direct consequence of the political considerations which have given Kampuchea’s UN seat to “Democratic Kampuchea”. The current definition of ‘development’ aid means that UNICEF, the leading UN aid agency, has had to drop any interest in power stations and waterworks, in helping to maintain the port facilities at Phnom Penh and even in maintaining the fleet of lorries which *it* provided. At the same time factories are hamstrung by shortages of fuel, raw materials, skilled personnel and spares, and major work is needed to repair roads and bridges. Phnom Penh’s water supply and its port facilities are critical, but the UN agencies cannot help. The £1 million needed to replace old generators in the power stations of Phnom Penh is too much for small voluntary agencies to tackle and is out of bounds for the UN. The UN agencies are able to contribute emergency supplies such as medicines and fertilisers, but even these remain in very short supply.

Development aid would consolidate the valuable investment already made under the emergency programme. Also, by helping Kampuchea to become more self-sufficient, it would reduce the need for emergency aid in the future. Yet this crucially important multilateral development aid is denied while “Democratic Kampuchea” occupies the seat at the UN.

Bilateral aid comes mainly from Vietnam, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. These programmes have given priority to agriculture, supplying fuel, tractors, advisers and fertiliser. The gaps in the aid provision remain large, though, in agriculture, in-

dustry, transport and communications, health, education and social services. These gaps are far too large to be filled by the relatively small voluntary agencies. There is a clear humanitarian need for aid from the rich, non-communist world. Yet such bilateral aid, like the multilateral development aid, is currently withheld for political reasons. In 1982, the official British Government aid programme contributed £500,000 to work with refugees on the Thai border, but its total contribution of bilateral aid to Kampuchea itself, despite the clear need of the Khmer people, was zero. Even some *voluntary agency* efforts are hampered by the political positions of their home governments. In the US, the 'Trade With the Enemy Act' and other legislation virtually prohibits private development aid with Kampuchea – a declared 'enemy' of the United States. The policy is justified in terms of exerting pressure on Vietnam to withdraw its troops from Kampuchea. "Unless the Vietnamese feel pain, they'll have no incentive to leave Cambodia," said John Holdridge, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific. But the denial of aid inflicts pain first and foremost on the people of Kampuchea. Surely they have felt too much pain already. In 1981, a licence was denied for the Mennonite Central Committee to ship pencils and notebooks for Kampuchean schoolchildren which had been donated by American children. The shipment was only allowed after strong protests.

Despite the problems and difficulties, a number of voluntary agencies continue to supply much-needed emergency and development aid to the people of Kampuchea. But they are in the unusual position of having to try to fill the gaps left by the lack of Western development aid. Their resources, unfortunately, are too small to do so.

Conflict

The other critical problem facing Kampuchea is the continued conflict on the Thai border. The conflict diverts men and financial resources away from development and agricultural production. It also fuels the Khmer people's all-pervading fear of the return of Pol Pot. Their feelings of insecurity are assuaged only by the presence of 150–180,000 Vietnamese troops in their country. Despite the ancient and continuing mistrust between Khmers and Vietnamese, these troops are accepted and even welcomed, as long as 30,000 Khmer Rouge continue to crouch on Kampuchea's western border. In the words of Australian commentator Ben Kiernan, who has visited Kampuchea in 1980 and 1981, "it will be many years before the horrors of the Pol Pot period recede far enough in the popular memory for any significant numbers of Kampuchean to see the Vietnamese . . . as a greater enemy than Pol Pot's forces or anyone even loosely allied to them".

While the formation of the "Democratic Kampuchea" Coalition may, in the eyes of 90 nations at the UN, enhance the acceptability of dealing with the Khmer Rouge, it seems certain that, for the people of Kampuchea, it merely removes from Sihanouk and Son Sann any respect they may previously have commanded. After their experience of life under Pol Pot, the vast majority of Khmers cannot regard highly any who ally themselves with the Khmer Rouge. It is clear too that the Khmer Rouge are the dominant partners in the Coalition in terms both of military force and of the population under their control.

The Khmer Rouge and other Coalition forces now control virtually no Kampuchean territory and have no popular support in the country. Their resistance is based largely on international food aid and a supply of arms from China. From their border camps they mount ambushes, mine roads and attack railway lines inside Kampuchea.

During the winter dry seasons the Vietnamese attack the Coalition bases. The guerrillas flee across the Thai border and this has led to recent clashes with Thai forces, which further strain already fragile relations between Thailand and Vietnam. Inevitably, some civilian refugees in the Coalition camps also suffer casualties.

Despite continued fighting on the border, and occasional ambushes inside Kampuchea, the security situation is relatively stable. The Heng Samrin Government controls virtually all the territory, an indigenous Khmer army is slowly being formed, and the Vietnamese, in May 1983, withdrew a token 15,000 or so of their troops from Kampuchea. It may well be true that Vietnam would like to maintain control over its neighbour, but “the motives behind Vietnam’s military operation are an altogether secondary question” to the people of Kampuchea, says the Report of the Finnish Inquiry Commission. The Vietnamese troops and advisers have made sure that they have kept a low profile and “as long as a return to power by the Khmer Rouge is seen even to the smallest degree as a realistic alternative, the population is in practice ready to give unanimous support to the presence of Vietnamese soldiers”. For all those who wish to see a complete withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea, any material or diplomatic support for the Khmer Rouge and the Coalition can, under these circumstances, only be counterproductive.

* * *

The people of Kampuchea, who have suffered so much and for whom life is now beginning to regain a semblance of normality, must find it incomprehensible that most of the nations of the world continue to give diplomatic support to the Coalition. Their incomprehension must double when they realise that this support is justified by the necessity to bring pressure to bear on the Vietnamese to withdraw their troops. After the 1980 UN vote, a Kampuchean teacher expressed this sentiment to an Oxfam staff member: “We know that you [Oxfam and British donors] are our friends – why is your government helping our enemy [the Khmer Rouge]?”

For the people of Kampuchea a Vietnamese withdrawal while the Khmer Rouge continue to operate is both inconceivable and frightening. More than anything else, the people of Kampuchea want the shadow of Pol Pot cast out forever.



Harassment from Coalition guerrillas (including attacks on railways) reduces security and provides the rationale for a continuing Vietnamese military presence.

Needs

An examination of the problems and obstacles facing Kampuchea today gives a clear view of the pressing humanitarian needs of the Khmer people. Those who have visited the country in the 1980's even for a short period, are virtually unanimous in their assessment of needs, even though they may differ in their political views. These needs are three-fold. First is peace and stability and the freedom to earn their living and pursue a normal family life. Second is material aid, both emergency and development aid, to help them in the reconstruction of their country's economy and infrastructure. Third, once the threat of the Khmer Rouge is removed, is a greater degree of independence and self-determination.

Peace and Stability

In February 1983, a group of four retired US diplomats visited Kampuchea. They included James Leonard, a former deputy chief of the US Mission to the United Nations, and Emory Swank, US Ambassador in Phnom Penh between 1970 and 1973. "They have had instability for so long," said one member of the group, "that stability means everything to them . . . Stability means things like the ability to pursue family life, something they were not able to do under Pol Pot."

Peace and stability for the Khmer people means primarily an end to the threat from the Khmer Rouge and to the border conflict. This is a strangely illogical war in which even the Western nations that back the Coalition at the UN say they don't want them ever to win. The Coalition, they say, is supported in order to persuade the Vietnamese to leave Kampuchea, yet their support seems to have exactly the opposite effect. As long as the Khmer Rouge cast their shadow over the country, the Vietnamese are likely to remain and the Kampuchean people will be glad of their protection. Most of the material support for the Khmer Rouge comes from China and the threat is unlikely to disappear completely until the Chinese withdraw their backing. But both the Chinese position and that of the Coalition are encouraged by the continued seating of the Coalition representative at the UN. This recognition must also inhibit any approach to a real settlement through the UN system or through the mediation of any nation which votes to seat "Democratic Kampuchea".

Aid

The current UN position also has an adverse effect on the second major need of the Kampuchean people. In order to fulfil their pressing material needs, Kampuchea must have an immediate increase in aid in order to overcome present shortages and to begin to rebuild the country's crumbling infrastructure. The main source of this aid must be the UN agencies and Western governments. This means both emergency *and* development aid. The present ban on development aid does nothing to bring about a political settlement and condemns the Khmer people to long-term insufficiency and even to the continued malnutrition and ill-health predicted by the UN's own surveys.

Self-determination

Given the removal of the border threat, the Kampuchean people would undoubtedly like to be in a position to run their own country free from the foreign intervention and domination which has so often been their lot in past history. In the 1980s, greater self-determination must entail at least some degree of military and political withdrawal by the Vietnamese. But there is no doubt that such a withdrawal, without an end to the fear of a Khmer Rouge return, would be unwelcome to the people of Kampuchea. It would also be unacceptable to the Vietnamese themselves, who perceive the Khmer Rouge not only as a menace to Kampuchea, but also as an indirect Chinese threat to Vietnam itself. There is certainly no guarantee that the Vietnamese will withdraw if the Khmer Rouge disappear, but it can be virtually guaranteed that they will not leave while the Khmer Rouge remain a threat.

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The economic and political needs are closely related. The Khmer people need and value relations with the outside world and their chances of self-determination are dependent upon their economic development as well as on political and military realities. Onesta Carpane, who has worked in Kampuchea for a consortium of Catholic aid agencies, summarises: "If they are not helped economically, they will not be independent quickly enough . . . The recognition by the United Nations of Pol Pot keeps the country in uncertainty . . . They don't want this state of dependency [on the Vietnamese] to continue, but there is no alternative . . . If the Pol Pot threat was not there on the border they could see if the Vietnamese were sincere about withdrawing."



With very limited outside assistance, the Kampuchean make do and mend using the remnants of the pre-Pol Pot economy.

Pawns in the Game

When compared with the clear humanitarian needs of the Kampuchean people (including an end to the fear of brutal oppression which must be as much a humanitarian need as more material desires), international policy towards Kampuchea seems unhelpful to say the least. As represented in the United Nations and supported by Britain, such policy fails to provide for those needs.

UN proposals for a solution to the Kampuchean problem rely upon the proposals of an International Conference on Kampuchea held under the auspices of the United Nations in July 1981. Vietnam declined to participate in the Conference. This was perhaps not surprising given the seating of the "Democratic Kampuchea" delegation (at that time represented solely by the Khmer Rouge) in the UN. Neither was the Heng Samrin Government represented. Without the participation of these major parties to the dispute, the conference resolution is unlikely to provide a basis for a solution. The Conference called for a cease fire, a Vietnamese withdrawal and free elections under UN supervision together with "arrangements to ensure that armed Kampuchean factions will not be able to prevent or disrupt the holding of free elections" and "ensure that they will respect the result".

However, the President of the Conference in his closing statement accepted that "we could not expect the Conference to achieve fully its objectives. To find a comprehensive political settlement . . . would have had as a precondition the presence at the Conference of all parties to the conflict." In addition, whilst clearly calling for a Vietnamese withdrawal, the Conference Declaration fails to specify how the threat from Coalition forces is to be removed. It merely calls for negotiations on "appropriate arrangements".

Despite their refusal to take part in the UN Conference, the Vietnamese have since shown signs of a willingness to participate in international negotiations. Following a meeting in July 1982 of the Foreign Ministers of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, a new proposal was put forward in which the Vietnamese accepted the participation of outside powers in a conference whose agenda would be negotiated between Vietnam and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Vietnamese Foreign Minister has since indicated that Vietnam is interested in finding a mutually acceptable formula for a conference. There are numerous difficulties to be overcome but it is hard to envisage a peaceful solution which does not bring the major parties together around the conference table. Unless there is some change in the UN seating arrangements such a conference is unlikely to be achieved under the auspices of the UN.

At the more material level, the seating of the Coalition in the UN means that UN development aid is denied to the Heng Samrin Government, and therefore to the people of Kampuchea, the vast majority of whom are clearly living under the administration of that Government. The seating of the Coalition (dominated by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge) can only confer diplomatic advantage upon them and encourage them in their military activity. This clearly prevents any possibility of self-determination by the Kampuchean people who are thereby forced to accept a Vietnamese military presence in order to prevent the worse evil of a Khmer Rouge return.

So what other options does the UN have? There are two obvious possibilities – the seating of Heng Samrin's representative or an empty seat.

When the seating credentials next appear on the UN General Assembly agenda in the autumn of 1983, it is likely that Vietnam or Laos will propose that the credentials of the delegation of "Democratic Kampuchea" should not be accepted. Any member

country will then have the option of voting for this proposal, voting to accept once again the seating of the Coalition representative, or of abstaining. They would also have the option of proposing that the Kampuchean seat be left vacant. Voting for the Coalition is clearly unhelpful and, given the dominance of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge, immoral. The seating of Heng Samrin's representative would conform to the principle of accepting whichever government actually controls the territory, but would also confer legitimacy upon a government installed and maintained by the military power of another country. There are, though, precedents for this. For example the delegation of the Government of Uganda was seated following the overthrow of Idi Amin by Tanzanian forces in 1979, and that of the regime of Babrak Karmal in Afghanistan is seated despite the presence of Soviet troops. The seating of Heng Samrin's representative would certainly allow the aid flows to resume, but the current strength of feeling against the Vietnamese presence makes it unacceptable to most countries at the present time.

A number of Western nations, wishing to give credibility neither to the Khmer Rouge dominated Coalition, nor to a Vietnamese invasion, have therefore chosen to abstain on this credentials vote in past years. These last year included France, Ireland, Australia, Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden.



Reconstruction of the economy is hindered by continuing military pressures, and the wider diplomatic interests that lie behind them.

Although the Non-Aligned countries have decided to leave the Kampuchean seat vacant in their own assemblies, there is no real precedent for a vacant seat at the UN, where the principle is very strong that every country should be represented by someone. Nevertheless, the Kampuchean situation is a unique one and it may be that the vacant seat option provides the best framework for a solution. James Leonard, an ex US representative at the UN, has proposed the vacant seat option and it may be that it could be acceptable to the UN as a temporary expedient pending a new international conference or some other diplomatic initiative.

Kampuchea would continue to be recognised as a member of the UN, but no representative would be seated. Such a move, Leonard says, "would end the grotesque situation in which we appear to approve of Pol Pot and to desire his return . . . Saying that we abhor him and do not want him back is ineffective while we cast our vote for the continued seating of his ambassador." Leonard argues that the empty seat strategy offers the best basis for eliciting a compromise for Vietnam. However unlikely such a solution might be "it is not as wildly unrealistic as the notion that current pressures will produce a Vietnamese withdrawal and a government led by Sihanouk and Son Sann".

Not only do moral considerations and some precedents militate against the seating of "Democratic Kampuchea", but in addition the Khmer Rouge has infringed the UN Charter with regard to human rights and, on its assumption of power in 1975, expelled all representatives of UN agencies from Phnom Penh and, for a time, boycotted the organisation.

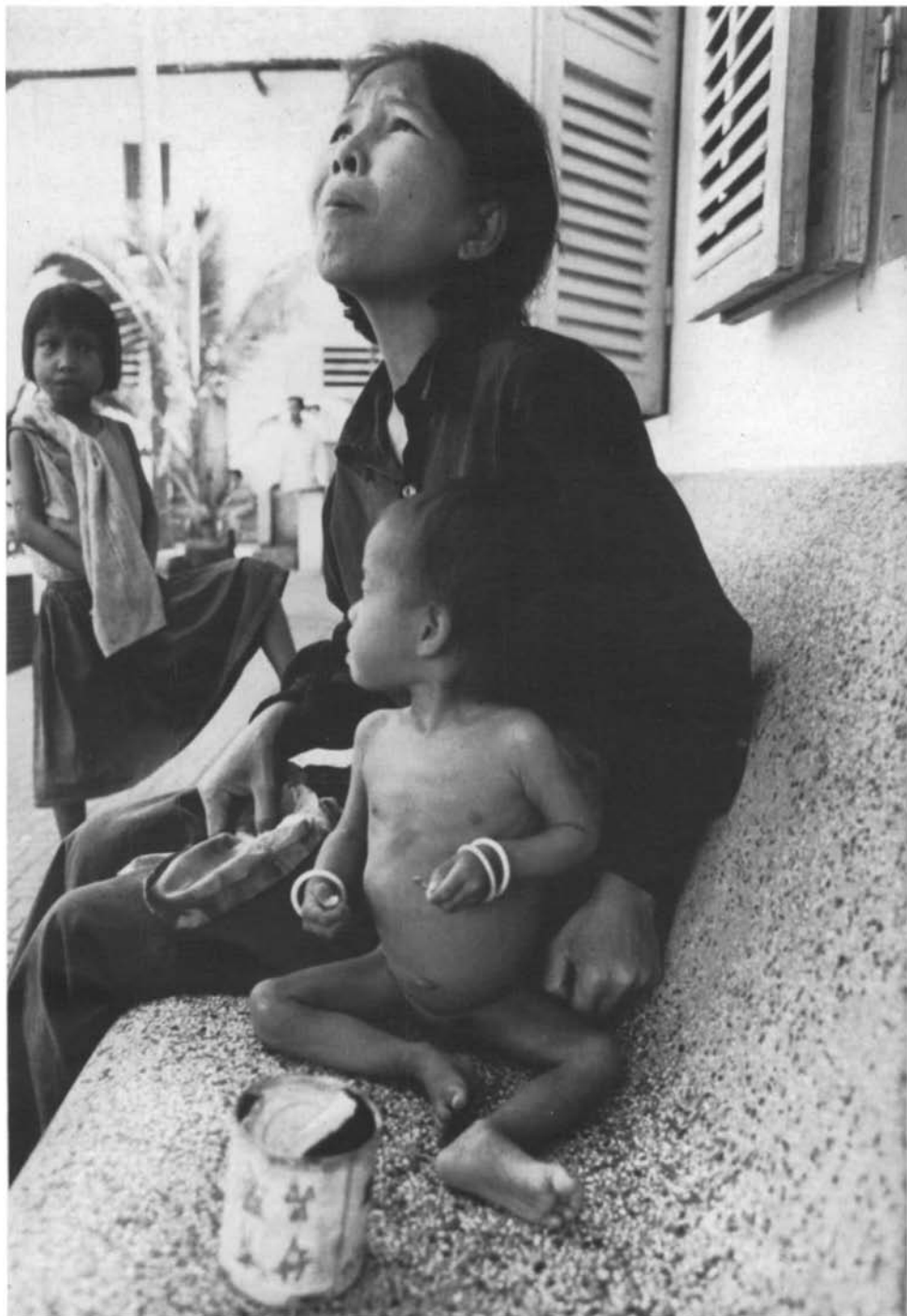
LSE expert Dr Michael Leifer sums up the situation:

"For the time being," he says, "representation at the United Nations . . . remains the prerogative of an ousted government which does not possess an identifiable seat either in the jungles of Western Kampuchea or in exile. It is a government which has been repudiated on moral grounds because of a gruesome record which matches the horrors of Nazi Germany."

Dr Leifer expressed this view just prior to the formation of the Coalition. Nevertheless, since the Khmer Rouge remain the major force in that Coalition, his point remains relevant.

The continuing representation of "Democratic Kampuchea" at the UN is a moral outrage which contributes nothing to a resolution of Kampuchea's problems. It is an absurdity for governments to express their opposition to the presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea by granting a seal of approval to a far more odious pretender who was responsible for the deaths of so many of the people of the nation he purports to represent.

The Kampuchean people, as before in their history, are innocent victims of international politics whose effect is directly contrary to their own urgent needs. Other countries are pursuing their own political and strategic interests, not the humanitarian needs of the people of Kampuchea. Diplomatic alliances are built on the dubious principle that "if you are my enemy's enemy, then you must be my friend". The Khmer people are pawns in someone else's game. As Dr Leifer concludes, "if that competitive engagement with regional and global implications were not so intense, then the issue of principle central to the international representation of Kampuchea would already have been relegated to the waste bin of history". It is time that the humanitarian needs of the Kampuchean people were put first as surely, after all that they have suffered, they deserve to be.



The people are pawns of international interests beyond their control. Eric Piper, Daily Mirror

The Lion and Friends

The UK Position

To its credit, the British Government withdrew formal recognition from “Democratic Kampuchea” in 1979. This recognition has not been transferred to the People’s Republic of Kampuchea. As a nation, Britain has no diplomatic relations with any Kampuchean representative. However, in 1979, 1980 and 1981 the British Government voted at the United Nations General Assembly to seat the representative of Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge. This was prior to the formation of the “Democratic Kampuchea” Coalition with Son Sann and Sihanouk. The Government has claimed that such a vote implied no acceptance of the Khmer Rouge and no desire to see their return to power, but was rather intended as a demonstration of opposition to Vietnamese “occupation”. It is unfortunate that the UK stance actually contributes to a UN position which appears to make a Vietnamese withdrawal less likely and which simultaneously denies essential development aid to the people of Kampuchea. It is also a position which can only encourage the Khmer Rouge and accentuate the fear and instability felt by the Khmer people.

Fortunately the UK position also contains some positive ideas. Sir Anthony Parsons in his speech to the UN in October 1980 stressed the primary need for a “comprehensive political solution” to bring peace and stability to Kampuchea. He also pointed out that Britain was among the first to direct the attention of the Human Rights Commission to the human rights violations perpetrated by the Pol Pot regime. He stressed Britain’s opposition both to the Khmer Rouge and to the presence of Vietnamese forces. The need to express abhorrence of the latter led Britain to vote for the seating of the Khmer Rouge representative “with the greatest reluctance”. “We should have been far happier had there been another way of opposing the aggression,” he said. “Our natural reaction is to say: a plague on both your houses.”

Despite this tacit acceptance on moral grounds of the vacant seat option, Britain found this option unacceptable “on grounds of principle and precedent” and because “nature abhors a vacuum in politics as well as in physics”. The latter seems a rather thin reason for giving diplomatic support to a deposed and brutal government-in-exile. Also, consideration of the desperate and real needs of the people of Kampuchea must represent a powerful argument for setting new precedents if that seems the most constructive action. James Leonard is an ex-diplomat with experience at the UN and he believes the vacant seat option to be a realistic possibility despite the problems of “principle and precedent”.

Sir Anthony Parsons also argued that “there can be no political solution without the participation and cooperation of all those concerned”. It is clear that the 1981 UN Conference failed to achieve this objective, in part as a result of the stance taken by Britain and other countries in voting to seat Pol Pot’s representative. It may be that a change in the UK vote would allow the Government more actively and successfully to pursue the political solution which they clearly desire – perhaps by diplomatic efforts to bring all parties together as suggested by Sir Anthony Parsons. Unless a change in the UK vote were to alter the outcome of the credentials debate in the UN, it is probable that such efforts would be most likely to succeed outside the context of the UN. Other Western nations have abstained on the credentials vote, and could perhaps join Britain in a diplomatic initiative unsullied by what one US diplomat called a “bloody handshake” with “Democratic Kampuchea”.

In October 1982, Britain again voted to seat "Democratic Kampuchea", now an umbrella for the Khmer Rouge/Sihanouk/Son Sann Coalition. The UK representative, Sir John Thomson, this time repeated that Britain had "no intention of contributing to the re-establishment of the Pol Pot regime". He welcomed the formation of the "coalition of resistance forces" as an "important step towards a comprehensive political solution". This clearly over-emphasises the change which this unstable Coalition represents. The "resistance forces" are plainly dominated by the Khmer Rouge and likely to remain so. The formation of the Coalition, if it has any effect at all, probably makes a "comprehensive political solution" less likely by limiting any possibility that the Vietnamese or the Heng Samrin regime will be willing to negotiate with Sihanouk and Son Sann.

Following the credentials vote, Britain joined the vast majority of nations in voting for a solution to the Kampuchea situation based on the recommendations of the 1981 Conference.

This then represents the extent of Britain's diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation in Kampuchea: the exercise of its UN vote to support the continued seating of a Coalition dominated by the Khmer Rouge and the call for a solution based on the proposals of a conference in which two of the major parties did not participate. At the same time, the UK response to the desperate material needs of the Kampuchean people during 1982 consisted of £500,000 of aid for the Thai border camps and absolutely no bilateral aid to Kampuchea itself.

If Britain is realistically to pursue the concerns expressed by Sir Anthony Parsons in 1980, this is likely to require rather more active and positive diplomacy than has been exhibited so far. For any such diplomatic efforts to be sufficiently acceptable to a wide range of parties, Britain would have to join the 26 countries who abstained in the 1982 credentials vote in refusing to accept the seating of the representatives and associates of Pol Pot.

As both a moral statement of our repugnance of the atrocities of that regime and as a catalyst to more positive diplomacy, Britain should abstain.

Such a vote would equally express Britain's non-acceptance of the presence of Vietnamese troops and this could be emphasised by a proposal for a vacant seat, as a temporary expedient pending a diplomatic solution to the dispute.

The EEC

Britain's position is closely allied to that of the EEC, which refuses both emergency and development aid to Kampuchea whilst maintaining formal and cordial links with the Association of South East Asian Nations, who are the leading campaigners for the recognition of "Democratic Kampuchea".

Despite this, though, at least some EEC countries have refused to align themselves with Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. In the 1982 UN credentials vote, two EEC member countries, France and Ireland, abstained, along with five other European countries (Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland), nine Commonwealth countries (Australia, Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and ten other Third World countries.

If Britain were to join with these other friends and allies, they would together represent a strong basis for a new diplomatic initiative. With the support of France and Ireland, it may be possible to gain the backing of the EEC as a whole and to

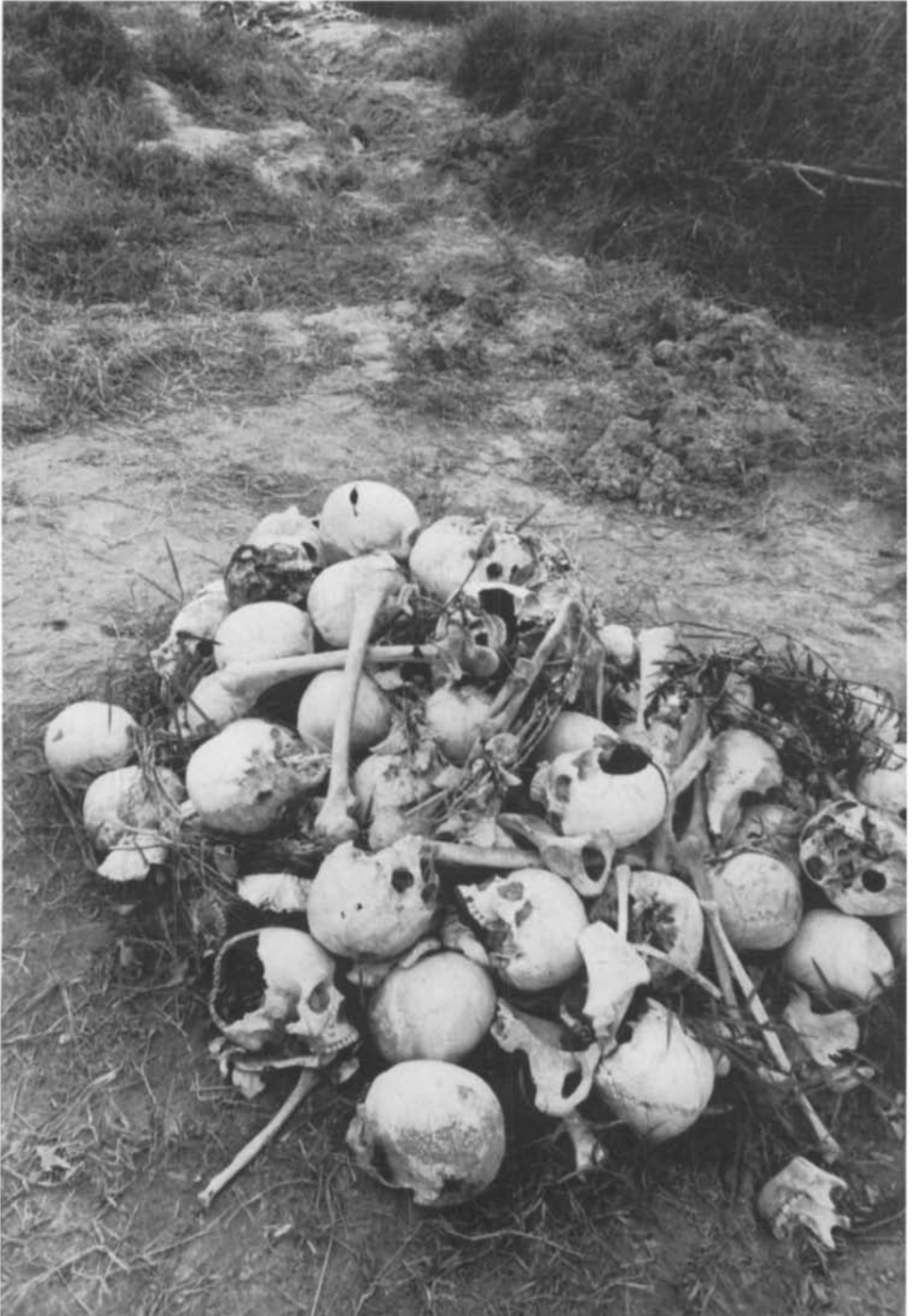
mount a credible and effective move towards a solution.

For the sake of the people who have suffered so much from the political manoeuvrings of other countries, strenuous efforts need to be made which put their needs first and foremost and which are based on humanitarian rather than narrow political considerations.

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Despite the massive outpouring of feeling by British and European people against Pol Pot, and their huge support for aid for his victims, the British and many European Governments continue to take little positive diplomatic initiative in pursuit of the interests of ordinary Kampuchean, and fail to give aid for their material needs. The people who suffered so much and those who gave so much, deserve better.

Emory Swank was US Ambassador in Phnom Penh until 1973. Following a recent visit to Kampuchea he said: "Once again Cambodia is 'the land in between', a contesting ground for rival powers, its people consumed in civil war, its economic development retarded by circumstances beyond Cambodian control. One would have wanted something better for a nation that has endured so much . . . We could provide humanitarian aid and even modest development aid to a people who have asked for little except to survive. If we could approach Cambodia – and Vietnam as well – with greater generosity of spirit, miracles might be wrought. We have tried everything else."



Kampuchea is represented at the UN by a Coalition in exile including many who were responsible for the deaths of up to 2 million of their fellow countrymen. Eric Piper, Daily Mirror

Recommendations

Oxfam's concern is solely for the humanitarian needs of those people with whom we have worked in Kampuchea and who desperately need some more positive international efforts to remove the obstacles to their development. If these efforts require a departure from accepted practice and precedent, then perhaps it is time for such a departure. As Emory Swank has said, everything else has been tried. So far those efforts have been unproductive. Solutions are so desperately needed that abstractions and legal niceties can no longer be permitted to stand in their way. If the British Government would prefer to say "a plague on both your houses" then let them do so. In doing so, let them also make this the start of a positive and humanitarian diplomatic role, based on the immense concern and generosity so clearly expressed since 1979 by the British people towards those of Kampuchea.

The following are some proposals which in our view would, if adopted by the British Government, greatly contribute to the well-being of the Kampuchean people.

1. Withdraw the British vote from "Democratic Kampuchea" in the forthcoming 1983 vote on seating credentials at the United Nations General Assembly. This would entail joining with France, Ireland, Australia and other countries in abstention. Such a vote is both a moral imperative and a prerequisite to a more positive and effective British diplomatic initiative.
2. Call, together with EEC partners, for a new diplomatic initiative on Kampuchea. This initiative could entail progress towards a new international conference, so designed as to allow all interested parties to participate. The UK, as joint chair of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina, would have a strong precedent for such a diplomatic role and could work with other countries as necessary to enhance the acceptability of the conference to all the interested parties.
3. Call, in the United Nations General Assembly, for the Kampuchean seat to be left vacant for a year as a temporary expedient pending the outcome of the conference or other diplomatic initiative outlined above.
4. Call for the restoration of emergency and development aid to Kampuchea, on humanitarian grounds, by the EEC and by UN agencies.
5. Resume bilateral humanitarian emergency and development aid to Kampuchea.

These suggestions, if carried out, would imply no acceptance either of a Vietnamese military presence or of the legitimacy of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. They would perhaps allow some progress to be made towards a long-term political solution. Most importantly, though, they would allow full aid flows to resume to a people in desperate need and would offer some glimmer of hope for peace and stability to a people who are tired of war and politics and pain and want only to get on with their lives.

Getting informed

The following publications are recommended as further reading for those who wish to gain a deeper understanding of the history of Kampuchea and the plight of her people.

Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia by William Shawcross is a readable and minutely researched account of US involvement in Kampuchea up to 1975, together with a brief summary of events up to 1979. It includes a chronology and a bibliography and powerfully portrays the story of Kampuchea, especially the horror of the American bombing. Published in paperback by Fontana.

Kampuchea in the Seventies, Report of a Finnish Inquiry Commission. This is an independent analysis of the political, social and economic development of Kampuchea, compiled by a group of Finnish academics, journalists, religious leaders and others. It summarises the historical background and examines in detail the Khmer Rouge period and the current situation, including the questions of UN policy and international law. The address of the Kampuchean Inquiry Commission is Sähköttäjänkatu 6,00520 Helsinki 52, Finland.

Cambodia Year Zero by François Ponchaud is the story of the Khmer Rouge period by a French priest who lived in Cambodia until 6 May 1975. First published in 1977, his history is based largely on the accounts of Cambodian refugees and was one of the first publications to alert the world to the horrors of the Pol Pot regime. Published by Penguin.

Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942–1981, edited by Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, brings together a selection of translations of the work of Kampuchean writers with several pieces by Australian academic Ben Kiernan. Some of the contributions were written by Khmer Rouge activists who were killed as a result of their opposition to Pol Pot. Zed Press, 1982.

The China Cambodia Vietnam Triangle by Wilfred Burchett. The author examines the Cambodian situation in the light of the country's relationship with Vietnam and China and presents a picture of life under the Khmer Rouge as it was described to him by those who endured and survived that period. Zed Press, 1981.

Indochina Issues is a monthly periodical dealing with Indochina and published by the Indochina Project of the Center for International Policy, 120, Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington DC 20002 U.S.A. The Center is "a nonprofit education and research organisation concerned with US foreign policy towards the Third World and its impact on human rights and human needs".

Appendix

Oxfam's Aid to Kampuchea

Greatly disturbed by reports from French doctors of terrible upheaval and suffering in Kampuchea, Oxfam arranged for Technical Officer, Jim Howard, to visit the country in August 1979. His report was a moving account of the continuing tragedy of Kampuchea. A large part of the population was on the move and essential supplies of food and medicines extremely scarce. Jim Howard described conditions in a camp known as 'Kilometre 7' outside Phnom Penh: "the hundreds of children seen were all marasmic, much skin disease, baldness, discoloured hair and great fear in the population".

Although estimates of the severity of the disaster varied, all the early Oxfam visitors in 1979 noted the incredible disruption which had been wrought in this society. Much of the land had not been planted. Obvious immediate shortages seemed likely to continue for some time.

Three relief flights were arranged in August and September, but these could carry only small quantities of food and medical supplies relative to the immensity of the need. On 30 September, Oxfam's Director-General, Brian Walker, arrived in Phnom Penh. He reached an agreement with the Heng Samrin Government which would allow Oxfam to channel immediate aid into Kampuchea from a consortium of voluntary agencies. Oxfam agreed to prepare a detailed programme, to provide no aid to areas controlled by Pol Pot and to accept distribution by the Government, monitored and evaluated by Oxfam. In return, Oxfam was able to set up an office in Phnom Penh with a team of seven people and the Government guaranteed that the aid would be supplied only to Kampuchean civilians, not to military or Vietnamese personnel. This was a difficult and controversial agreement, in particular because it prevented Oxfam from providing aid to Kampuchean refugees in the camps on the Thai border. Nevertheless, many other agencies were working in these camps and the need inside Kampuchea was great. Also, the Heng Samrin Government was understandably afraid that aid on the border would fuel the military conflict with Pol Pot.

35 voluntary agencies from Europe, North America and Australia joined the Consortium, each raising funds in their own countries and channelling aid through Oxfam. Oxfam alone raised £7 million in Britain before the end of 1979, including £3 million from the Blue Peter television appeal. A total of £23 million has been raised by Oxfam and the Consortium to date.

On 18 September 1979, Oxfam's Deputy Director, Guy Stringer, was despatched at two days' notice to the Far East to arrange for the shipment of large quantities of supplies to Kampuchea. He arrived in Singapore "a man with a brief-case, £50,000 and one introduction". A barge was chartered and loaded with supplies. It sailed on 9 October for the Kampuchean port of Kompong Som. Five days later "we berthed at Kompong Som wharf – the first vessel from the West to bring supplies to this desperate country".

In the first year the programme concentrated on food (£2 mn), agriculture (£7 mn), vehicles and communications (£4 mn) and the reconstruction of some essential industries (£1½ mn). The difficult logistics of getting supplies into Kampuchea meant that shipping costs accounted for more than £2 million. The agricultural input consisted largely of seed grain and fertiliser in an attempt to help the country back to

food self-sufficiency. The odds against this were enormous. Even hoes for digging were in short supply and 300,000 new hoe heads had to be provided. Full agricultural self-sufficiency is still to be achieved, as recent UN surveys demonstrate, although considerable progress has been made.

193 trucks were supplied along with spare parts and training for Khmer mechanics. Oxfam also provided three river ferries and parts for the repair of bridges. Further help was given for the repair of the wharf of the Mekong River port at Phnom Penh, to which later Oxfam barges were directed. In all sectors progress was hampered by the lack of skilled people. Almost every agriculturalist, industrialist or doctor had been eliminated during the Pol Pot years. In industry for example, this meant that it was often impossible to know whether the correct spare part had been ordered until it arrived and was tried out.

The Heng Samrin regime was governing a country at war and was, to some extent, suspicious of Westerners. These circumstances led to inhibitions on travel for Oxfam staff as well as many bureaucratic hurdles which had to be overcome. These difficulties combined with the lack of infrastructure and skilled local people to make work in Kampuchea a frustrating business. Inevitably, some mistakes were made. For example, two large irrigation pumps were purchased which turned out to be inappropriate to local conditions and still have not been installed.

Nevertheless, a total of 43 Oxfam barges sailed from Singapore with supplies for Kampuchea and help got through despite the extreme difficulties. On balance, the emergency programme was a success and Oxfam was able to provide a much needed boost to the Kampuchean people in their efforts first to survive and then to begin the process of reconstruction.

Gradually the Oxfam programme has shifted from 'emergency' to rehabilitation and 'development'. In health, for example, when UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) took on the supply of medicines, Oxfam moved to a longer-term programme, based on some degree of community involvement. Concentrating in Takeo province, Oxfam helped to rebuild 93 village health clinics and to provide wells to supply the clinics with water. The clinics were completed, with labour from the local community, although to this day many of them still lack trained staff and reliable supplies of essential medicines. It took two years to develop Kampuchean well-drilling teams, which have recently been drilling one well each week.

During 1983 and 1984 Oxfam plans to continue its work in Kampuchea, including further development of the water supply programme and provision of training materials to agricultural colleges. Funds are limited, though, and much of the available cash is likely to be taken up with provision of spares for vehicles, ferries and other equipment already supplied. Oxfam has other commitments all around the world. Even if Oxfam devoted 90% of its funds to Kampuchea this would still be very little compared to the potential development aid being denied by the UN.

Oxfam's Kampuchea Field Secretary, Roger Newton, emphasises the excellent cooperation that has existed between the voluntary and UN agencies working in Phnom Penh. But Oxfam is deeply concerned about the impact of the present UN aid policy: "Without development aid from the UN agencies," he says, "the situation is bound to deteriorate. The Kampuchean will have nowhere to turn for the spare parts to keep their trucks and tractors operating, for the fertilisers to grow their rice, for the nails and cement to rebuild their villages. Certainly Oxfam's budget of £350,000 in 1983/84 will be little more than a drop in a bucket which the UN and the Western world has decided to leave empty."



In the absence of more substantial development aid from the UN and Western Governments, non-governmental organisations are providing what help they can. This cotton mill was restarted with Oxfam Consortium funds.