

EXCURSUS 1

Robert J. Myers on THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

Prince Norodom Sihanouk's brief visit to New York in March highlighted once again the ongoing tragedy in Cambodia of hunger and starvation and warfare. Our humanitarian interests are thwarted by international political aims and squabbling Cambodian factions. All this is reflected in the New York scene, where one can keep up with the Cambodian drama by an exposure to its players and politics—from the Sihanouk visit, to a movie, to the press releases of New York-based relief agencies, to the testimony of Pol Pot's U.N. representative.

A biased film made by British journalist John Pilger in August and September of 1979 was shown in Greenwich Village in March. Filmed with the cooperation of the Vietnamese puppet government of Heng Samrin, Pilger captures the horrors of the deposed Pol Pot regime—the piles of skulls and bones in the rice paddies, the torture chamber in Phnom Penh—making an altogether convincing case for the condemnation of that bloody regime, if more evidence were needed after Father François Ponchaud's *Cambodia: Year Zero*. This film has been widely credited with the decision of the British Government to break relations with the Pol Pot regime (still recognized by the U.N.) and with the outpouring of funds from the British public to finance the relief program of Oxfam.

The film's flaw, however, is its failure to mention that the Pol Pot horror has been replaced by another, and that this was accomplished by the Vietnamese army. (The fear of Vietnamese invasion was always foremost in Sihanouk's political thinking.) Most states have refused to recognize the new Heng Samrin regime, which would acknowledge Vietnam's successful aggression. This refusal has had the unfortunate consequence of slowing large-scale and prompt relief for the starving Cambodian people. After capturing most of the country in January, 1979, the new government failed to acknowledge the pressing need for relief. As tales of starvation flowed out with the refugees to Thailand, efforts of the Red Cross and UNICEF were hampered by the question of who would control and verify the distribution of food supplies. Traditionally, the Red Cross expects to be able to deliver help to all those needing it, whatever their politics. But the Heng Samrin-Vietnamese regime, understandably, did not want food going to the Pol Pot remnants to strengthen their already troubling resistance. Further, it appears that the Heng Samrin government is carrying out a Vietnamese-dictated policy of a "genocidal war of aggression" (in the words of the Pol Pot group) or of "colonization and extermination" (in the words of a rival guerrilla organization, the Khmer People's National Liberation Armed Forces [KPNLF]).

If this is indeed the Heng-Samrin-Vietnamese policy, no wonder there are charges of nondistribution and maldistribution of relief supplies. Oxfam and others, for all their humanitarian concern, have requested almost no concessions on control of distribution and verification. The Red Cross and UNICEF have been no more demanding. William Shawcross, in a series of articles in the *Washington Post*, focused on the apparent hoarding of supplies and the subsequent transshipment of some food to Vietnam. The relief agencies have been almost mute on the subject, fearing that bad publicity might interfere with the raising of funds and with the limited distribution now being car-

ried on. This is no basic criticism of the aid effort, which is substantial and important. The Church World Service, for example, had raised over \$3 million by early March. The relief groups are correct to send supplies to Phnom Penh, despite the misallocation—the selling of supplies and other evils that are endemic in this situation. An increasing amount does reach the victims of a decade of unrestricted and unbelievable terror.

Vietnam now has about 200,000 troops in Cambodia, 20,000 more than carried out the invasion. It is costing the Soviets and Vietnam about \$2-3 million a day to maintain this expeditionary force. But the notion that its cost will lead to withdrawal is a wishful one. How to force them out remains the problem of the moment. Pol Pot's guerrillas are stationed mainly along the Thai border, although the reports issuing from his information ministry claim raids all over the country. Aided by the Chinese, Pol Pot's people say that only a successful resistance will expel the Vietnamese. His forces, estimated at from 30,000-40,000 armed men, are by far the strongest in the field. Other non-Communist groups, like the KPNLF, led by Son Sann, finance minister and prime minister under Sihanouk, have far fewer and less well trained forces. His return from comfortable exile in Paris to the jungles of Cambodia at age sixty-nine has earned him support among the non-Communist Cambodians. But he has not been able to unite all the non-Communist resistance, like the Khmer Serel, groups that are often little more than bandits, feeding on the suffering of the refugees.

How Sihanouk fits into any of this is a matter of conjecture. Khieu Samphan, ostensible head of Pol Pot's government, has called for a new united front. But Sihanouk turned that down, having had an experience with the same group back in 1970. He considers Pol Pot enemy No. 1 and feels nothing can be done until his influence is reduced. In Washington in March Sihanouk's request for military aid for the non-Communist guerrillas fell on deaf ears. In New York the same month he expressed the hope that the U.N. would follow the Havana conference of last fall and recognize neither the Pol Pot nor Heng Samrin governments, leaving the Cambodian chair vacant. The vacancy would then be filled by a new, neutralized government to be formed at an international conference. He fears that otherwise Cambodia will disappear as a nation and a people. As for himself at the moment, Sihanouk hopes for a role as a roving ambassador to help the refugees. He will return from Europe to Pyongyang, not Peking, to show his differences with China over Pol Pot.

A Cambodian proverb has it that the Cambodians will be fighting among themselves until the survivors can sit in the shade of a single tree. Somehow the fighting needs to be stopped and more and more outside help provided to keep the Cambodians alive and make possible a happier future than their own proverb allows.

Robert J. Myers is President of CRIA.

EXCURSUS 2

Thomas Land on CHINA'S LONG MARCH TO FEMALE EQUALITY

Women in rural China are facing a long march toward equality with men, according to an authoritative new sur-