

# CLASS STRUGGLE



Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

## KAMPUCHEA



# KAMPUCHEA: Vietnamese Lose Military Initiative

All observers agree: the Vietnamese have lost the military initiative. The Vietnamese army of occupation have been forced back nearer their supply bases as communication lines and isolated posts are subject to increasing attacks. Vietnam's army of occupation is spread too thin. Approximately half of the force is comprised of technical and logistic support needed in a conventional war, while the majority of the others are tied down (unsuccessfully) guarding roads, bridges and the strategic highways and rail links that are increasingly subject to attack.

Democratic Kampuchea's (DK's) military priority is on cutting communications and transport lines and inflicting casualties in a war of attrition, with military success in the south around the port of Kompong Som (where a convoy transporting Soviet advisors was attacked last October), proof of DK's increased fighting ability.

While not seeking to openly control villages in the interior, thus avoiding Vietnamese retaliations against inhabitants, aid agencies officials based in Phnom Penh confirm that liberated zones extend into central and eastern Kampuchea, the provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondul-kiri, as well as western districts along the border with Thailand. Now over 1,700,000 Kampuchean are

living in liberated zones administered by Democratic Kampuchea.

## POISON GAS

The deterioration in the military field for the occupation forces has weakened their fighting capacity and morale, increased desertions and rebellions among the predominantly south Vietnamese draftees, and led to serious health problems, mainly due to malaria. Although still numerically superior, the Vietnamese Army units are not up to effective strength and are in need of reinforcement. However, while Vietnam has more than a million under arms, there is a shortage of trained troops because of its commitments in south Vietnam, Laos and on its northern border with China, as well as the 200,000+ in Kampuchea itself. The use of highly toxic poison gas in remote areas of Laos and Kampuchea, where conventional weapons have proved ineffective, has not gone undetected. American author Sterling Seagraves documents the use of toxic chemicals by the Vietnamese in Yellow Rain, identifying it as a biotoxin, specifically trichothecenes, whose major source is the Soviet Union. (A UN team of experts sent to investigate the use of toxic chemical weapons by both the Vietnamese and Russians is expected to report shortly.)

## COMMUNIST PARTY OF KAMPUCHEA

Against this background of military progress for the liberation

forces, the attempts to consolidate the moves towards unity of all resistance forces was the prime consideration for the December announcement of the dissolution of the

Communist Party of Kampuchea. The situation that faces the Kampuchean people is unlike that of the war of liberation against American imperialism; once defeated the aggressor will not be returning to the other side of the Pacific, but will probably remain a hostile neighbour. The strategic policy set out in the political programme of the Patriotic and Democratic Front of Great National Union of Kampuchea (PDFGNUK) "constructs neither socialism nor communism... for tens or even hundreds of years to come, when the nation and people of Kampuchea are and will be threatened with extermination by the Vietnamese Le Duan clique." This decision does not negate the fact that the forces of Democratic Kampuchea provide the main bulwark against the occupying forces of Vietnam, nor lessen their determination to free Kampuchea of those aggressor forces. Nor do the Kampuchean comrades deny that, "During these 21 years, the Communist Party of Kampuchea has succeeded in fulfilling its successive historical tasks by raising high its banner of struggle for the national ideal of independence, sovereignty, peace, neutrality and for the people of Kampuchea to get free from oppression of all kinds. It has done so with its constant high spirit of

sacrifice, patriotism and responsibility to its nation and people. Despite having gone through tortuous and complicated situations and having committed some mistakes, the Communist Party of Kampuchea has successfully fulfilled its glorious tasks to the maximum." (Communique by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kampuchea concerning the dissolution of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, December 6, 1981)

The announcement should be taken as a token of the seriousness of their endeavour to unite the anti-Vietnamese forces into an effective coalition that can use the increasing military victories to enforce a political solution that will guarantee Kampuchean sovereignty, independence and non-alignment.

# CLASS STRUGGLE



February 1982



# KAMPUCHEA ~ United Government Formed

The three major components in the Kampuchean fight against Vietnamese aggression have reached an historic agreement to set up a joint Coalition Government. An agreement to this effect was signed on June 22 in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Khieu Samphan and Son Sann.

Backed by the Soviet Union, Vietnam invaded Kampuchea, tried to annex the grain-rich areas of the country, occupied the capital Phnom Penh and set up a pathetic attempt at a puppet government. Since then, Kampuchea's struggle has been a symbol of the healthy trend in world affairs which embodies the people's aspiration to control their own destiny, free from the domination of the big imperialist powers and their stooges. It is supported by all genuine socialist countries and countless socialist organisations, and also by a majority of third world countries. These include the members of the Association

of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN - Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia) who played a significant part in promoting this agreement.

The forces of Democratic Kampuchea, whose main figure was Khieu Samphan, have continued to form the backbone of the effective resistance to the Vietnamese aggressors. The struggle also has to be carried out on a diplomatic level, and so far Democratic Kampuchea has been accepted as the legitimate representative of Kampuchea in the United Nations, in opposition to the Vietnamese puppet regime. The present agreement will be particularly important in consolidating this position. Prince Sihanouk is an important figure on the world political scene, who also enjoys very considerable popular sympathy within Kampuchea. Among the various forces which opposed the Kampuchean revolution but which also express a patriotic desire to free the country from Vietnamese

occupation, those led by Son Sann are the only ones which still display any combativity.

The agreement nominates Sihanouk as President of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, Khieu Samphan as Vice-President in charge of foreign affairs, and Son Sann as Prime Minister; it establishes a tripartite principle, with each organisation retaining its political identity, freedom of action, and the right to control its own armed forces.

In statements after the signature, the three leaders pointed out that the agreement would have not just diplomatic importance, but also political and military. Khieu Samphan stated that the coalition government "has dealt the Vietnamese invaders a head-on blow and encouraged all the Kampuchean people."

"Class Struggle" warmly greets the new Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and wishes it every success.

CS AUG 1982

## "Class Struggle" Correspondent

October 23, 1982 saw a day of solidarity with the Kampuchean people's struggle against Soviet-backed Vietnamese aggression. The British-Kampuchean Support Campaign (BKSC) called a picket of the Vietnamese Embassy which was also supported by the Kampuchean community in Britain, Malays, Bangladeshis and the Revolutionary Communist League. The picket kept up a militant shout of "Victory to the Kampuchean People! Vietnam Out!"

After the picket, the BKSC held its Annual General Meet-

ing. The main speaker was Arthur Clegg, a veteran British communist, and former international editor of the "Daily Worker". His speech made the following main points:

- the new coalition government is the only instrument of independence;
- true friends of Vietnam will tell them to end their aggression rather than play the sycophant;
- drew comparisons with 17th century British history when the subjugation of a neighbouring nation served to rot its own revolutionary achievement, and suggested that Vietnam has created

an Ireland that will go on and on;

- spoke of his friendship with Malcolm Caldwell and his brutal murder. Who benefited? The only ones to benefit were Hanoi. His voice, with the authority to speak out for Kampuchea was silenced.

The AGM noted with satisfaction the visit to the liberated areas of Kampuchea by the Chairman of the Campaign and the developing links with the Cambodian Association in the UK, the London Office of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, and the Bath-based Vietnamese Committee for National Relief.

DECEMBER 1982

# CLASS STRUGGLE

## Kampuchea - Still Fighting

In late October, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted a resolution by a 105-23 vote, with 19 abstentions, calling on Vietnam to withdraw its troops from Kampuchea. It was the fifth such resolution since the Vietnamese invasion in December 1978. A position that has attracted growing international support increasing from 71 in 1979. The resolution reiterated that any just and lasting solution must involve "the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodia, the restoration and preservation of its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the right of the Cambodian people to determine their own destiny."

The complete failure of Hanoi's diplomatic offensive to deprive the coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) of its legitimate seat at the UN, was obvious when the credentials committee confirmed, without a vote, DK's retention of its seat. Vietnam dared not question the decision as it would have illustrated the international isolation of Hanoi due to its continuing occupation of Kampuchea and Laos.

This condemnation of Hanoi maintains the political pressure and complements the military pressure on the Kampuchean battlefield. In August an attack on Soviet advisers instructing Vietnamese soldiers

in the use of multiple rocket launchers resulted in 9 of the advisers being killed.

During a 10-week tour this summer with DK troops, a Japanese writer, Naoki Mabuchi, observed "on frequent occasions when the Kampuchean guerrillas have prepared a large-scale attack on a Vietnamese position, the Hanoi forces have already withdrawn, apparently because the Vietnamese troops have been unable to withstand the continuous guerrilla attack." His judgement was that Vietnamese forces control only points and lines on the map "as troops of the Lon Nol government once did towards the end of their war in 1975." Indeed the similarities are striking.

Hanoi has failed to consolidate the position of its client installed in Phnom Penh as the DK's strategy of attrition constantly saps Vietnamese resources. DK President Khieu Sampan succinctly expressed the strategic dilemma facing the occupying Vietnamese: "Either they have to disperse their forces in order to occupy territory and then give our forces opportunities to wipe out these scattered forces or to concentrate their forces in order to defend strategic places and themselves, and then abandon occupied areas, enabling us to broaden the areas under our control and to further develop our activities."



## NEW VICTORIES

The occupation of Siem Reap, a Vietnamese military logistics centre and fall-back position during the rainy season, by the Kampuchean resistance forces on January 27th, marks a new stage in the war against Hanoi's occupying troops.

This operation, and the brief liberation in January of Kompong Thom, some 80 miles north of Phnom Penh, are strong indications of the strength of the resistance. The tri-partite coalition's operations constantly harass Vietnamese forces in all Kampuchea's provinces.

The 30,000-strong National Army of Democratic Kampuchea has borne the brunt of the development and consolidation of military offensives that include the re-taking of the mountainous areas of Phnom Malai and Phnom Mak Houen in the western province of Battambang. Both had been partly occupied by enemy troops since the Vietnamese invasion in December 1978.

Resistance initiatives before the expected Vietnamese dry season attacks are designed to forestall penetration into the liberated zones near the Thai border. The destruction of military facilities and supplies at Siem Reap represents a blow for Hanoi's strategy. That the Kampuchean strategy of attrition is sapping Hanoi's ability to sustain military action, can be seen in the delayed dry season offensive. A short but concentrated Vietnamese attack, designed to cause

maximum destruction and secure world headlines to disguise Hanoi's failures, is to be expected.

Hanoi's paymasters cannot be pleased with the situation in Kampuchea. Besides tanks, other weapons and supplies that arrived in November at the Kampuchean port of Kompong Som in preparation for the planned offensive, the Soviet Union has invested over £3,600 millions and sent 7,000 advisers to Vietnam and occupied Laos and Kampuchea in the past five years according to Thailand's National Security Council.

In return they receive naval and air facilities at Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang, the US-built military bases on Vietnam's east coast. The floating dry dock for maintenance and repair of submarines and other vessels has an important role in the expansion of Soviet military capabilities in the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Democratic Kampuchea is in the forefront of the struggle against the threat to regional peace, and the world-wide struggle against hegemonism is strengthened by the Kampuchean forces gaining the initiative.

"Although we have difficulties in our anti-Vietnamese struggle," Vice-President Khieu Samphan reported recently. "The situation is developing in our favour."



MAY 1984

Kampuchea: Hanoi's Offensive

Fierce fighting between Kampuchean resistance forces and occupying Vietnamese troops erupted near the Thailand border in April. During a concentrated onslaught on the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF). Vietnamese troops blatantly violated Thai territory. The capture of 40 Vietnamese soldiers and the destruction of the Russian-supplied T-54 tanks on Thai territory led to a formal protest at Hanoi's acts of aggression at the United Nations by Bangkok. While Thailand has reinforced its border positions, fighting has forced thousands of civilians across into the Thai province of Aranyaprathet.

Hanoi's delayed offensive, centred on north western Kampuchea, has focussed on the headquarters of the KPNLF, led by Son Sann. Spirited resistance has prevented the destruction of the camp to date. However tactical retreat from some positions is an established routine as with the onset of the rainy season in May, Vietnamese military operations virtually end with withdrawal to military strongholds.

The attack against areas administered by a smaller element in the tripartite Kampuchean coalition government is against a less formidable fighting force than the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea. As reported in 'Class Struggle' (March 1984), their attacks on Vietnamese-occupied towns, military installations and supply lines have damaged Hanoi's ability to consolidate its grip. This is illustrated in Hanoi's inability to sustain a dry season offensive on the scale of last year's fighting that occurred from December 1982 to April 1983.

At the same time, heavy fighting has been taking place along the border between China and Vietnam. The shelling of Vietnamese positions by China was in response to repeated attacks and incursions by Vietnamese troops into China's Guangxi region since the beginning of the year.

# KAMPUCHEA ~

## Vietnam's Vietnam

As the war in Kampuchea entered its sixth year, diplomatic manoeuvres by Vietnam's Foreign Minister, Nguyen Co Thach, on his tour of the ASEAN countries and Australia preceded the Vietnamese dry season attacks on Kampuchean patriotic forces.

Hanoi had hoped to disrupt the tripartite unity of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) and drive a wedge between the ASEAN countries by courting Indonesia away from opposing Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea. While rejecting ASEAN's latest proposals for a political solution with a withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, Thach's willingness to voice concern to settle the Kampuchean issue through negotiation and dialogue proved to be a propaganda ploy. Immediately following Thach's unsuccessful tour, Hanoi resorted to armed violation to intimidate Thailand and armed provocations along the Sino-Vietnamese border.

### KAMPUCHEAN RESISTANCE

Hanoi's dry season offensive usually comes as soon as the monsoon rains cease and the battlefield advantage swings to conventional tactics. However this year the resilience of Kampuchean resistance blunted Vietnam's offensive capability.

Escalation in resistance attacks saw important victories in attacks on strategic Vietnamese

bases. These attacks on provincial capitals were examples of the increasing strength of the resistance. Equally, combined with constant harassment they reduce the ability of Hanoi's conventional forces to retaliate.

Rather than face the more formidable DK forces, the Vietnamese concentrated their shortened dry season offensive (involving some 4,000 troops backed up by tanks, artillery and heavy mortars), against the Kampuchean People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) 's base camp at Ampil and Sok Sanh. Hanoi's attack was designed to secure 'victory headlines' and disrupt the KPNLF's development of supply lines and network of stockpiles to sustain their guerrillas in the next rainy season. General Sak Saksakhon, KPNLF's Chief of Staff, claimed that more than 500 Vietnamese troops were killed and 300 wounded in one battle in April. With the KPNLF demonstrating its military credibility in the heroic defence of Ampil, and Sihanoukist guerrillas co-ordinating attacks with the DK forces, Vietnam's ability to carry on the war is gradually being whittled down. One Vietnamese deserter from the Ampil fighting, Nguyen Ban Binh, said that during his two years in occupied Kampuchea, he had seen 40 of his army friends

killed. He spoke of low morale because Hanoi's troops are short of food, clothing and weapons.

Recent events show that there is no chance of the "easy victory" Hanoi thought possible because of the disparity between the military strength of the invading forces and that of the patriotic resistance. The re-organisation and co-ordination of Kampuchean resistance and establishment of the three party coalition government has established a firm foundation for the national liberation struggle.

As of yet, a fundamental shift in relative strength has not been achieved. Superiority in military strength and weaponry still lies with the occupying forces. But the resistance forces have been tempered, and improvements in tactics and combat capabilities point to the future development of the war in favour of the resistance.

Hanoi's dry season failure is an important victory for those championing Kampuchean independence against the creation of an 'Indochina federation' in which Vietnam's domination is ensured by 45,000 troops occupying Laos and some 180,000 fighting in Kampuchea.

CS JULY/AUG 1984

## Kampuchea

CS NOV 1984

*The rainy season which ended in September, was a time of great successes for the liberation forces of Democratic Kampuchea.*

*The Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea noted that the Kampuchean people's struggle had a strategically important turning point. Regular units of the Kampuchean army have extended their operations into central Kampuchea, to areas around the Tonle Sap, Kampuchea's Great Lake, and to Kompong Chhnang province, whose capital is only about 60 miles from the capital city of Phnom Penh.*

*Until recently the Kampuchean forces concentrated on wearing down the strength of the Vietnamese occupation army through guerrilla attacks which inflicted heavy casualties, but now they have been able to attack ammunition dumps and seriously interrupt food and fuel supplies being moved up to Vietnamese forward positions in western and north-western Kampuchea. This year, they have also carried out major attacks on provincial and district towns in many western and central areas of Kampuchea.*

*The result of both the cutting of supply lines and the extensive attacks of the Kampuchean forces has been that this year for the first time, the Vietnamese have been unable to launch one of their major operations in the western border region. Many foreign commentators noted that military action on or near the Thai frontier was low key compared to previous years.*

## Kampuchea Solidarity



Khieu Samphan and Norodom Sihanouk, leaders of the Kampuchean independence struggle.

# KAMPUCHEA...

## VIETNAM'S OFFENSIVE BLUNTED

Six years after it invaded Kampuchea, Vietnam has launched a massive attack on Democratic Kampuchea bases near the western border with Thailand.

The offensive began in January with attacks against bases and villages on the north-west border controlled by the Kampuchean People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), one of the three components of the coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea. Soviet-supplied T-54 tanks, armoured personnel carriers and heavy artillery were used to take the KPNLF bases one by one, forcing tens of thousands of refugees to escape into Thailand and the KPNLF fighters either to go with them or disperse.

The focus of the Vietnamese offensive then shifted southwards, against the Khmer Rouge stronghold of Phnom Malai, a mountainous forested region, which the Vietnamese have never succeeded in completely occupying, and the place where the central government bodies of Democratic Kampuchea are concentrated. Vietnam's 59th Division drove towards Phnom Malai from the south, while the 7th and 8th Divisions moved in from the east. The aim seemed to be to hem in a considerable part of the Khmer Rouge forces and then destroy them in a con-



*Arms, war materials and supplies abandoned by retreating Vietnamese armies after the first invasion of Democratic Kampuchea in 1978. The Vietnamese leaders have transformed their country's great liberation army of yesterday into an army attempting to subjugate other peoples of Indochina.*

certed operation involving heavy use of Vietnam's superior firepower and its air force.

Despite the Vietnamese offensive, the government of Democratic Kampuchea was still confident enough of its position at Phnom Malai to arrange for the ambassadors of Senegal, Mauritania, Bangladesh and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to present their credentials to President Norodom Sihanouk there on February 9th. To cope with the attack by Vietnamese forces superior in numbers and weaponry, the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) followed two courses of action. Part of its local forces confronted the Vietnamese attacks directly, making the enemy fight for every yard they advanced. At the same time, other elements of the NADK slipped around the three Vietnamese divisions, attacking their lines of supply and communication.

Despite the heavy pressure at Phnom Malai, the NADK was determined not to withdraw forces from deeper inside Kampuchea to assist in the defence of that

stronghold. NADK units now operate within 30 kilometres of Phnom Penh, Kampuchea's capital, and are also fighting in Kampot and Kompong Cham provinces, which border on Vietnam. Spreading the armed resistance movement throughout Kampuchea is more important than defending particular strongholds, where the Vietnamese can use their superior military power to greater effect. The larger the operational area of the NADK, the more the Vietnamese will have to disperse their own forces to hold towns, defend bases and keep open their lines of communication. The NADK knows that withdrawing units to reinforce Phnom Malai's defences could well enable the Vietnamese to concentrate far more of their own forces in the area. Vietnam has never been able to hold onto its gains in the border regions during the rainy season, and that is only two months away. When that time comes, the Kampuchean liberation forces will recover all the areas they have lost with ease.





# Film Review

## Vietnam's Vietnam

'The Killing Fields' tells the story of the friendship between an American reporter and a Kampuchean working with him in the context of the last months of the Lon Nol government in Phnom Penh in 1975; the fall of the city to the liberation forces in April of that year and the following period when the country was controlled by the 'Khmer Rouge', the liberation forces. The film ends at a time of renewed fighting between Vietnam and Kampuchea in 1979.

The film has received many awards and much publicity. It is technically a well-made film and claims to be a "true story" based on the experiences of Sydney Schanberg and his Kampuchean co-worker, Dith Pran.

For all these reasons, the film will have a wide impact and to many people, may seem to be the 'truth' about the history of the recent period in Kampuchea. The fact that it takes an anti-war stand, critical of the US role in Kampuchea, only adds to its credibility and shows the need to analyse more concretely the issues raised in the film, look critically at its view of history and the implications of this view for the present.

### PARTIAL VIEW

What makes the film more dangerous is that it is not a complete fabrication. It probably presents quite accurately a view of Kampuchean history and events as seen by an American reporter and certain Kampucheans. But by presenting this view with the full resources of modern film-making - full technicolour, fine acting, emotional music etc. - it stakes a claim to represent the "whole truth". History, however, looks different depending on whether seen from the viewpoint of the oppressed or the oppressors.

Sydney Schanberg was a reporter for the 'New York Times' based in Southeast Asia, who was critical of US policy. Having failed to undermine the neutrality of the Sihanouk government, the US organised the Lon Nol coup in 1970. The ensuing invasion by the US in 1970 and the intensive bombing killed about one million people and made millions into refugees. At the same time, this escalation of the war led to the rapid growth of the liberation forces based on a united front including both Sihanouk and the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) - the National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK).

The film shows Sydney Schanberg, together with Dith Pran, visiting the scene of an American bombing and his subsequent reporting carried in the 'New York Times'. The conclusion to the actual printed article was: "Though several soldiers and residents said they were angry, their tone carried no anger, and little anti-American reaction was discernible. Rather the people were confused, hurt and bewildered that such a disaster should befall them, and especially that it could be caused by an ally."

His view of US policy in Kampuchea was expressed in a report at the time of the evacuation of Americans from Phnom Penh: "After five years of helping a feuding government it scorned and fighting a war it knew was hopeless, the United States had nothing to show for it except a sad evacuation in which the Ambassador carried out the American flag in one hand and his Samsonite suitcase in the other."

His viewpoint was clearly that of a reporter critical of some aspects of US policy but not questioning the basic assumptions of US imperialism. Even less, could he be expected to express the viewpoint of the national resistance to the US.

The film follows these views closely. It shows the bombing of Neak Luong by the US Air Force "by accident" in some detail but by omission does not touch on the devastation of the countryside and its people by bombing, defoliation and chemical warfare.

In the film, Sydney Schanberg attributes the "barbarity and insanity" of the Khmer Rouge (liberation forces) to the scale of the US bombing. However the balance of the film which concentrates on the "atrocities" of the Khmer Rouge does not even deal in any detail with this limited view which puts the main blame on the US.

### DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

The period that followed the liberation of Phnom Penh, when Kampuchea was under the control of the liberation forces, is the main target of the film. Through the experiences of Dith Pran, it presents a picture of total madness and barbarity with a "fascist" regime determined to reduce Kampuchea to "primitive communism".

It would take more than a short film review to show how simplistic and misleading this picture is. While it would be wrong to deny that there were serious errors leading to mass killings and distorted policies with disastrous results in some areas, this is no more the total picture than is Sydney Schanberg's view of US policy.

Samir Amin puts these questions in perspective, in his article "The Struggle for National Independence and Socialism in Kampuchea".

"The excesses, which cannot be denied, are those which we know from the entire history of peasant revolts. They are of the same nature and represent the same character... Let me simply point out that through an extremely well orchestrated propaganda, the Vietnamese government has succeeded, in alliance with reactionaries from the whole world, to use this deviation as an argument to condemn the peasant revolution. All reactionaries in all countries and at all times have always used the excesses of the peasant revolution...."

(It is worth pointing out too, that it is not only peasant revolutionaries who have at times taken things into their own hands and gone "too far". In France, after the defeat of German fascism in the Second World War, thousands of collaborators were killed in spontaneous outburst of violence.)

### THE EVACUATION OF PHNOM PENH

To come back to Kampuchea, and this film's version of history, it is worth examining one incident in some detail in order to show that many questions can be raised about the film which should lead us to question the picture of Democratic Kampuchea presented in later parts of the film.

The film shows the evacuation of Phnom Penh as a tragic and senseless event, part of the insane policy of the Khmer Rouge.

In real life, Sydney Schanberg was responsible for reports from Phnom Penh at the time,

which appeared in the 'New York Times' and began the massive anti-communist hysterical coverage that was carried in the Western media. The 'Washington Star' labelled the evacuation "a monstrosity of epic proportions"; while another American columnist Jack Anderson pronounced it "the greatest atrocity since the Nazis herded the Jews into the gas chambers."

However some sources have looked at the whole incident in a different light. One American book, for example, wrote that Sydney Schanberg's article

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"was a weak foundation for the massive historical judgement rendered by the news media." This view did not get much coverage.

In reality there were good reasons for the evacuation. The capital city, originally 600,000 inhabitants, had been swollen to over 3 million by refugees from American bombing. Even with American aid, it was estimated that starvation and disease were claiming hundreds of lives a week in Phnom Penh before its liberation. To "evacuate" Phnom Penh, was in part a policy of an organised return to the countryside of people who had been forced to leave by American bombs.

It was also a policy aimed at solving the problem of feeding the population of a country whose people and agriculture had been torn apart. Democratic Kampuchea followed a policy of self-reliance and needed urgently to use the labour of the people to re-build the shattered agricultural system. Phnom Penh in 1975 was also a city with totally inadequate medical and health facilities.

Major epidemics and other health problems were a real danger and could be handled more effectively in the countryside with the basic health service built up in the liberated areas during the war of resistance to the US.

Both the US and the Soviet Union had supported the Lon Nol regime. When their embassies were forced to leave during liberation, they left behind a network of agents who were preparing to use the unrest they hoped would be generated by these basic problems to undermine the new government.

Finally, the cities of Indochina had often in the past proved to be targets of US bombing, particularly when they fell to liberation forces. The city of Hue was bombed to rubble by the Americans after it had been taken by liberation forces in the great Tet offensive of 1968. The Americans did, in fact, continue bombing Kampuchea after they left Phnom Penh, as in the case of the bombing of the town of Siem Reap in 1976.

From an outline of these points, it is clear that there were rational and practical reasons for the evacuation. There are also accounts of the way it was carried out, for example an account by a Benedictine priest, Father Jacques Engelmann, who witnessed the event himself, which contradict the "cruel and fanatical" version shown in the film.

We can assume therefore that the version of later events in the film is equally one-sided although it no doubt represents a partial view. This view is not only hysterically anti-

communist but in particular relies on a deep thread of racism which sees the Asian people of Indochina as having an 'indifference to death' and many other racist stereotypes which, in the final analysis, were used to justify US aggression.

The film does not even touch on the fact that Dith Pran, the man whose story it claims to tell, worked for the US in 1960 with the "Military Assistance" group. Or that after the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea and before his eventual escape to Thailand, he worked for the Vietnamese, first as the Mayor of Siem Reap and later as the Mayor's adviser on security. Such a record of serving foreign powers would hardly lead to a balanced view of the patriotic forces!

#### THE FILM JUSTIFIES INVASION

This brings us to the main question about the film - What purpose does it serve at the present time?

The film notes that tragically, Kampuchea continues to be torn apart by war. Towards the end, it shows Vietnamese tanks and an attack on a village. In its only comment on Vietnam's role, a Khmer Rouge cadre says that the Khmer Rouge are fighting Vietnam to regain ancient territory. The implication is clearly that the present war is the result of Kampuchean aggression.

Objectively, the film covers up and justifies aggression by Vietnam, backed by the Soviet Union, against Kampuchea. Even if the account given of life in Democratic Kampuchea were

accurate (which it isn't), it would not justify one country occupying another and denying its people national independence and freedom.

In spite of widespread reporting in the Western media, Vietnam itself has never claimed officially that it invaded Kampuchea in order to rescue the Kampuchean people from the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge. The reasons given have been different.

Imperialism will never publicise the achievements of liberation struggles, particularly those that pursue a line of self-reliance and independence. In some situations, one superpower will give limited support and publicity to a liberation struggle aimed at the other superpower, as, for example, in Afghanistan or in Central America.

There are some cases, as with Kampuchea, where neither of the superpowers has an interest in giving even limited support. The struggles in Eritrea and Tigray, and indeed in the north of Ireland, face this propaganda

blockade. In Kampuchea, both the US and the Soviet Union have a direct interest in using the "crimes of Pol Pot" to cover up their own responsibility in the area. The film does this job well for them.

Malcolm Caldwell, who had studied Southeast Asia deeply and supported the liberation struggles of its peoples, was a more reliable source of information. He stressed the wide support given to the Kampuchean people in their struggle against Vietnamese aggression, by non-aligned countries such as Yugoslavia and Rumania, by the socialist countries of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and by Communist Parties of Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and the Philippines, among others.

We also should give our support to the Kampuchean people in their just struggle against the Vietnamese occupation, and do what we can do to demolish the powerful myths spread around by this film.

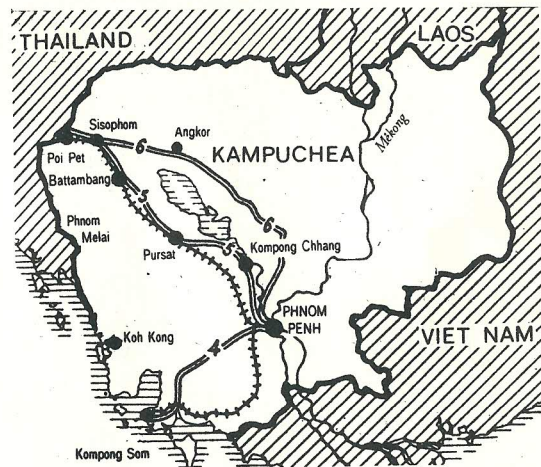


# Kampuchea: The Struggle for Independence Continues

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

In the forthcoming dry season, the Kampuchean resistance forces intend to intensify their military operations. Since late August, the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) National Army has stepped up its attacks, occupying the Battambang district town of Phnom Sambou, and on the night of September 6th, temporarily liberating the Vietnamese occupied town of Barey, some 100 kilometres north of Phnom Penh. Attacks have been designed to disrupt Vietnamese military supplies, constantly cutting off railways and ambushing trucks along the strategic route 502, which links Phnom Malai to the Thai border.

Because Hanoi has a policy of mainly defending "strategic strongholds", the Kampuchean forces have relative freedom of movement outside those areas. The KPLNF spokesman, Vora Kuikanphoul, explained that they are taking advantage of this in the immediate period to send cadres back to their home villages to carry out political work: "We should do this in order to make our struggle more effective. We will continue to carry out military



activities, but the emphasis will be on the political work." The ease with which Kampuchean forces can infiltrate the Vietnamese-occupied interior was demonstrated in August when journalists were taken on a mission 30 miles inside Kampuchea.

On the diplomatic front, there has been a number of important conciliatory gestures as a consequence of the July meeting of the DK National Army cadres. They discussed policies to bring about a peaceful solution to the six year old war. Besides offering a non-aggression pact

with Vietnam and a guarantee for the rights of members of the Vietnamese-installed Heng Samrin regime, the meeting's communique went as far as to state that a future Kampuchea could be a liberal parliamentary democracy.

The sincere desire to open avenues to a political settlement was also reflected in the retirement of Pol Pot from Supreme Military Command in September.

Hanoi had argued that his presence in the UN-recognised coalition government constituted the main obstacle to any negotiated settlement.

"This is a concession on the part of the Democratic Kampuchea coalition," said Mr Savetsila, the Thai Foreign Minister. "So I wish Vietnam and her patron, the USSR, to carefully consider it, because it is in line with the political solution that we, ASEAN, are trying to pursue." Hanoi's response was to denounce as an "insufficient gesture" any moves towards dialogue.

## HANOI OBSTINATE

The intransigence of Hanoi in repeatedly defying the UN resolutions for a withdrawal of its troops and a political settlement has been well illustrated. While the Coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea endorsed ASEAN's suggestions for "proximity" talks involving Vietnam, the Heng Samrin regime and the tripartite coalition government, Hanoi rejected this offer. Instead, Vietnam asserted its "right" not to remove its army of some 180,000 until 1990 and at the same time put forward a series of conditions designed to stall any progress to a negotiated settlement.

Prince Sihanouk, President of the CGDK, dismissed as absolutely unacceptable the three main conditions set by Hanoi: the elimination of the DK National Army, the surrender of arms by Kampuchean resistance and the requirement that Sihanouk and Son Sann can only join in the settlement election in their individual names. This last condition reflects one of Hanoi's aims - to split the three partner resistance coalition by offering accommodation with Prince Sihanouk.

"Vietnam is not capable of extinguishing Khmer Rouge, it wants us to do so," said Sihanouk, acknowledging that theirs is the strongest armed forces in the resistance, providing the main obstacle in the way of attempts to colonise and maintain Kampuchea under Hanoi's political control. Sihanouk added that "peace which cannot help Kampuchea restore independence is unacceptable."

Son Sann, Prime Minister of CGDK, denounced the Vietnamese "ploy to mislead international opinion ... to buy time in order to consolidate its hold on Kampuchea, which has been seriously shaken by forces of the resistance." He also complained that while the Soviet Union is helping Vietnam to occupy Kampuchea with 6 million US dollars a day, and has recently shipped 56 Soviet tanks to the occupying forces, the Kampuchean resistance forces receive no backing by the Western countries, except in humanitarian aid for refugees and political support in the diplomatic field. This support is expected to be confirmed at the voting for the Coalition government to retain its seat in the UN General Assembly this October.

# KAMPUCHEA

## NEW PEACE PROPOSALS

New peace proposals from the coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea, aimed at ending the six-year old war in Kampuchea, mark a new development as they accept the principle of a broader coalition to include the Vietnamese-installed Heng Samrin regime.

This diplomatic move towards a compromise solution, announced in mid-March, is conditional on the withdrawal of Hanoi's forces of occupation. The proposals from the tripartite coalition, call for a two-stage withdrawal of Vietnamese forces, leading to a United Nations supervised cease-fire. Talks with Heng Samrin to establish an interim four-party administration in Phnom Penh, would take place prior to free elections.

The inclusion of the Heng Samrin regime is a new element in the search for a political solution by the coalition government. However, the Vietnamese response to this flexible approach has been intransigent. Rather than show any willingness to negotiate the restoration of Kampuchean independence, Hanoi repeats its unacceptable demand



that the main force resisting its hegemonic plans, the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea, be excluded from talks.

It is trying to win by diplomacy what it cannot win on the battlefield. The unity of the coalition government remains firm in the face of Hanoi's inducements to Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann to leave it. This united front against Vietnamese aggression remains the main weapon through which the Kampuchean people will win back their independence and sovereignty.

VOL.10 NO.4 APRIL 1986

## The 8 point Peace Programme

This proposal is inspired by the Kampuchean people and the CGDK's genuine desire to seek a political solution to the problem of Kampuchea and is based on the United Nations relevant resolutions adopted in the past seven consecutive years and the International Conference on Kampuchea Declaration in 1981.

1. The tripartite Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) calls on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to get into negotiation with it in order to discuss about the process of the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. We do not demand the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to withdraw all its forces from Kampuchea at once. We accept the withdrawal of the Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea in two phases within a definite period of time.

Other countries may take part in the negotiations according to their judgement in order to help bring about a political solution to the problem of Kampuchea.

2. After the agreement on the process of the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, there will be a ceasefire so as to allow Vietnam to withdraw its forces according to the said agreement.

3. Both the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops and the ceasefire must be supervised directly by a UN observer group.

4. After the first phase of the Vietnamese troops withdrawal, Heng Samrin and his faction get into negotiation with the tripartite CGDK in order to set up a quadripartite coalition government of Kampuchea with Samdech Norodom Sihanouk President and His

Excellency Son Sann as Prime Minister in conformity with the spirit of the great national union and national reconciliation so that each of the four parties should have the same rights as political forces in the national community.

5. The quadripartite coalition government of Kampuchea will hold free elections under the supervision of a UN observer group.

6. Kampuchea will be restored as an independent, united in her own territorial integrity having a liberal democratic regime, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned country without any base of foreign troops on her soil. The Kampuchea's neutrality will be guaranteed by the UN with the presence of its observer group on the spot for the first two or three years.

7. Kampuchea welcomes all countries from West as well as from East and neutral and non-aligned countries to help rebuild the country.

8. As for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Kampuchea independent united in her own territorial integrity, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned, is willing to sign with it a non-aggression and peaceful coexistence treaty and to establish economic and trade relations between the two countries for ever.

The above proposal is put forward for the sake of peace in Kampuchea, and peace and security in South East Asia and Asia-Pacific region as well.

Signed Beijing, March 17th, 1986.

Khieu Samphan, Vice President of Democratic Kampuchea.

Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, President of Democratic Kampuchea.

Son Sann, Prime Minister of CGDK.



Cooperation between the three forces making up the Coalition Government has improved and monthly meetings have been taking place to coordinate military activities.

#### VIETNAM IS "POURING WATER INTO A BROKEN BUCKET"

Most commentators would agree with Khieu Samphan who likened Vietnam's putting resources into the occupation of Kampuchea, to "pouring water into a broken bucket". The deterioration of Hanoi's position will continue as the Coalition Government has proved that it is strategically sound despite Western scepticism at its formation in July 1982.

"As patriots, we have to unite not only at present," the Vice-President explained, "but also in the future after the Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea, on the basis of our 8-point national charter."

In March 1986, the CGDK issued their 8-point proposals for a political solution to the Kampuchean problem. It is the three partners' common programme that maps out the rebuilding of Kampuchea. Over 60 countries have formally expressed support for the proposals of Democratic Kampuchea.

#### VIETNAM MUST WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS

The CGDK has consistently maintained that the root cause of the conflict is Vietnam's denial of self-determination to the people of Kampuchea, in the form of a military occupation of their country. Thus, the January 1987 proposal from Hanoi for talks between Heng Samrin, head of Vietnam's imposed administration and the CGDK, was rejected.

Support for Kampuchea's position comes from around the world. The number of countries condemning Hanoi's occupation increases year by year, with 116 nations supporting the resolution for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, in the autumn of 1986.



# Kampuchea

## GROWING UNITY IN RESISTANCE

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Since the Christmas invasion of 1978, Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea have faced a national resistance that has gained in strength and taken the fight into the interior of the country after initially being restricted to border areas. Today, the entire Western half of Kampuchea is open to constant attacks by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) forces, with frequent assaults on army posts and military convoys. Hanoi is forced to scatter its forces and station them in smaller units to try and check CGDK activities.

Smaller units are more vulnerable and, as Khieu Samphan, Vice-President of Democratic Kampuchea, in his New Year message, reported:

"During the whole year (1986), we have succeeded in dismantling more and more Vietnamese administrative centres in the villages and communes."

Khieu Samphan also observed that the Vietnamese "are unable to launch any significant operation at the start of the dry season, because they have not enough forces and their troops have been caught in, and unable to extricate themselves from, our guerrilla networks throughout the country."

Khieu Samphan urged Vietnam to accept the CGDK's magnanimous peace proposals, pointing out that Vietnam "will have nothing to lose. It will only stand to gain". Vietnam stands to gain, he pointed out, from peaceful relations between the two countries of Vietnam and Kampuchea. It would be able to mobilise resources to rebuild Vietnam's economy and improve the living standards

of the Vietnamese people. It would also gain from improved international relations, both in South East Asia and world-wide.

Such conciliatory overtures from the CGDK have not been taken up by Hanoi. Diplomatically, the Vietnamese have tried to cause dissension within the CGDK by offering to open talks only with Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, President of Democratic Kampuchea. Such manoeuvres were rebutted in Sihanouk's speech to the United Nations in October 1986:

"For the sake of our survival, we are resolved to persevere in our efforts to always develop and strengthen national unity and to achieve national reconciliation by refusing the elimination of whoever or whatever party."

# An Interview with Khieu Samphan

The following comments were made by Khieu Samphan, Vice-President of Democratic Kampuchea, in charge of Foreign Affairs, in an interview with Thaddee In, published by 'Politique Internationale', Winter 1986/1987.

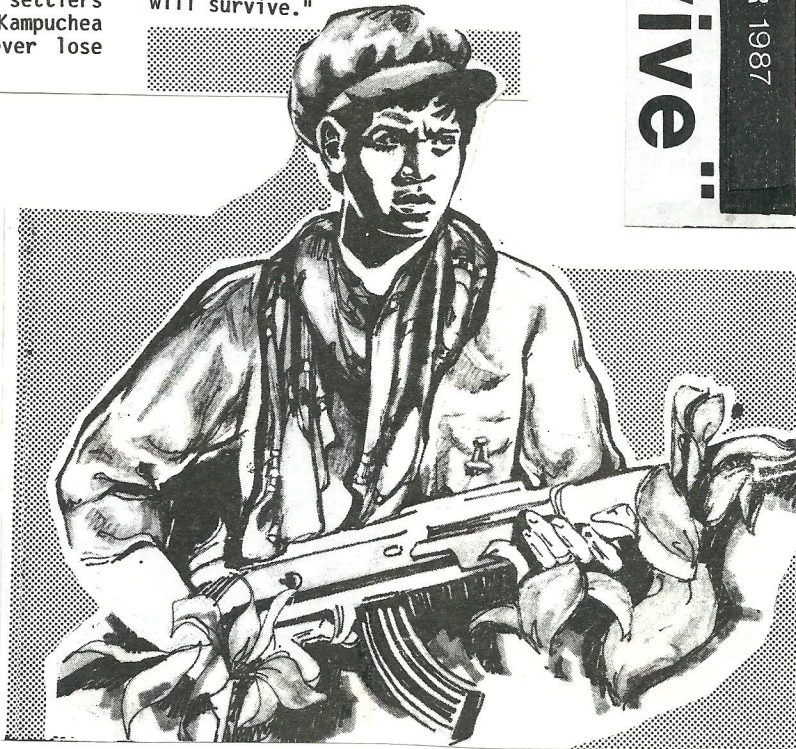
"The 8-point proposal further clarifies and thoroughly specifies our previous offers. Besides, it inserts itself within the framework of the resolutions successively adopted by the United Nations. It deals with the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops to be supervised by a UN observer group, the national reconciliation and the organising of free elections....."

"It is not at all in our interest to have the Soviet Union as our enemy. We wish, on the contrary, to have good relations with it. That is why we call on it to stop helping Vietnam in its war of aggression against us. In spite of all appearances, the Soviet Union has not yet shown its real intention to work in favour of peace and security in South-East Asia. In this respect, the Vladivostok speech of Mikhail Gorbachev is indeed edifying: Moscow continues to support Hanoi's strategy of 'Indochina Federation' and it wants ASEAN and the international community to accept the Vietnamese fait accompli in Kampuchea."

".....The systematic settlement of Vietnamese nationals is part and parcel of the global strategy of 'Indochina Federation' ... The war imposed upon us is a war of racial extermination, not a colonial war of conventional type. The settlers have entered Kampuchea illegally: we must never lose sight of this fact."

"No-one can deny that Vietnam has failed in its tactics of lightning-attack, lightning-victory. Year after year, it has got bogged down deeper and deeper in spite of everything it has tried. It now attempts to extricate itself by resorting to diplomatic manoeuvres, but it is more than ever isolated on the international scene. The steady and overwhelming support of the international community to our proposal will compel Vietnam to negotiate with our Coalition Government."

".....Vietnam has nurtured for a long time the ambition to set up an 'Indochina Federation' which would have included Laos and Kampuchea under its control. .... The occupation of Laos by Vietnam and the settlement of more than 700,000 Vietnamese nationals in Kampuchea are not isolated and fortuitous events. They are actually part and parcel of a global strategy masterminded more than half a century ago. Believe me, it was not our past mistakes that had brought about the invasion of Kampuchea. On the contrary, it would be only fair to recognise that we have contributed to prevent Kampuchea from undergoing a fate similar to that of Laos. Our people and the international community appreciate to its value the struggle we are waging against an ambitious Vietnam, whose expansionist strategy is supported by Moscow. By now the progress and success scored by our Coalition Government with Prince Sihanouk as President of Democratic Kampuchea have prompted us to state that our country will not be integrated into Vietnam. Our Kampuchea will survive."



**Kampuchea**  
**"Our Kampuchea will survive"**

VOL. 11 NO. 7 SEPTEMBER 1987

"More than anyone else, Vietnam knows it is not possible to impose a military solution on the Kampuchean problem", stated a spokesman for the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), at the July public meeting organised by the British Kampuchea Support Campaign. The CGDK's deputy delegate to UNESCO in Paris, presented an overview of the Kampuchean national struggle to his London audience.

The CGDK spokesman emphasised that the Vietnamese army has reached an impasse. The main front is around the region of the Great Lakes - an area of key importance as it is the country's rice basket and fish reserve.

Guerrilla activity is carried on continuously in this populous area. The results are not spectacular but has a long-term impact by gradually dismantling the infrastructure set up by the Vietnamese and their war machine.

A video showing these guerrilla operations was shown at the meeting, filmed in the combat zones in 1986.

It is the increased participation of the population in the resistance struggle that is regarded as the most significant political development. "The war in Kampuchea is not one between two armies, but a war between, on the one side invading Vietnamese troops, and on the other the Kampuchean people, whose armed forces are like the iron of the lance."

Pointing out that Kampuchea is a small country, a poor country, with a population ten times smaller than Vietnam, he said: "We aspire to live in peace and good neighbourliness, and it is the Vietnamese that threaten Kampuchea's existence." This alone would guarantee that all Kampuchean parties would adhere to the proposals of the 8 Point Programme to preserve the national cause of the Kampuchean people.

Talking to 'Class Struggle', the CGDK spokesman recalled that a few months after liberation in 1975, there were clashes between Vietnamese and Kampuchean forces. This was over Hanoi's refusal to withdraw from Kampuchean territory that had provided the Vietnamese a safe rear area during the liberation struggle against the US.

The conflict that ensued, culminating in Vietnam's Christmas invasion in 1978, has had an influence on the Coalition Government's thinking about a diplomatic settlement. The Heng Samrin group installed by the Vietnamese is not regarded as the enemy. Reconciliation with such misled people is being positively sought. At the present time the main objective for solidarity work is to publicise the 8 Point Peace Programme. These proposals are supported by over 60 countries around the world.

# SLOW PATH TO PEACE

CLASS STRUGGLE CORRESPONDENT

SEPT. 1982 VOL. 12 # 7

CLASS STRUGGLE  
Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

1990 has been set by the Vietnamese government as the official date for the withdrawal of their 120,000 troops at present occupying Kampuchea. Hanoi plans to withdraw 50,000 by the end of this year.

Thailand's national newspaper, *The Nation*, commented on 1st July: "After ten years, Vietnam finally admitted for the first time that 55,000 Vietnamese died and an equal number were wounded in Kampuchea, trying to prop up the puppet regime Vietnam helped establish in 1978".

It is clear that these 55,000 have died in vain. But it is not so clear that the Vietnamese plan to withdraw completely.

There are reports that Vietnam is redesignating some of its forces as troops of the Heng Samrin regime, placing them in the uniform of, and under the direction of, Phnom Penh.

At the same time, they have rejected the generous conditions outlined in the **Eight Point Peace Plan** proposed by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK).

## ATTEMPTS AT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

The three parties of the CGDK have made clear "their willingness to reach a reasonable political solution to the war of aggression in Kampuchea, a solution without Vietnam losing face, with the prospect of national reconciliation through the participation of the puppets as fully-fledged partners in a quadripartite provisional government."

The lack of progress made at the informal meetings held in Indonesia in July has not improved the prospects of a quick settlement.

However, working groups to examine further the issues that divide the Kampuchean groups, were established. They are expected to report in December.

Vietnam's Foreign Minister, Nguyen Co Thach, demanded guarantees that supplies would be stopped to the strongest military component of the CGDK, describing this as important "to prevent the recurrence of the Pol Pot regime".

On the first day of the informal meetings, the puppet representative, Hun Sen, refused to consider the dismantlement of his administrative structures prior to the holding of free elections.

The CGDK proposed that the following elements should form the basis of discussion:

1. The withdrawal of the Vietnamese forces in three phases under international supervision.
2. At the end of the second phase of the Vietnamese withdrawal, a simultaneous dismantling of the Phnom Penh regime and the state of Democratic Kampuchea and the formation of a provisional quadripartite government under the leadership of Sihanouk.
3. The provisional government would organise free, direct and general elections, under international supervision, of a constituent assembly which will endow the country with her state constitution.

Vietnam has avoided discussing the basis for an end to its occupation. Instead, Hanoi has manoeuvred to split the resistance forces and exclude the Democratic Kampuchea National Army from a political settlement, attacking it as a "murderous gang".

The truth is, however, that any "murderous gang" would long ago have been tossed aside by the Kampuchean people. Today the DKNA forces are by far the strongest in the Kampuchean resistance. It could not be in this position without the support of the people.

All the different forces involved in trying to bring about a settlement in Kampuchea are trying to prevent the political resurgence of the strongest resistance force in a post-settlement Kampuchea.

In an attempt to offset the military strength of the DK forces, and compensate for his own weakness, Prince Sihanouk has called for an international peace-keeping force to be deployed for five years from the formation of a post-settlement government in Phnom Penh.

The DKNA, for its part, has made moves to make concessions. For example, in a proposal issued in mid-August by the DKNA leader, Khieu Samphan, it was suggested that the DK would reduce its army to the level of others as part of a political settlement.

Furthermore, in a move to reassure fellow Kampuchians of their good faith in respecting such a settlement, Khieu Samphan suggested an international conference should be convened to explore measures to guarantee the political agreement and Kampuchea's independence, neutrality and territorial integrity.

Such a conference would set up an international body to ensure that "Cambodian parties do not abuse one another" and that the Vietnamese do not repeat their invasion and occupation of the country.

## INTERFERENCE FROM OUTSIDE

Although preliminary moves have been made towards a settlement, there is a danger that a deal will be made by outside parties involved in Kampuchea and not in the best interests of the people of Kampuchea themselves.

A weak, neutralised Kampuchea, rather than a strong, independent country, may better serve the interests of the superpowers and their respective allies in the region. Already, with an eye to the future, Japan has offered to pay for an international peace-keeping force after the departure of the Vietnamese and to provide re-construction aid.



Samdech Norodom Sihanouk and Khieu Samphan

## PRESSURES ON VIETNAM

There are different pressures operating within Vietnam to make Hanoi search for a settlement.

Firstly, the deteriorating economy can no longer take the strain. Nguyen Van Linh, the General Secretary of the Vietnamese Workers' Party, said earlier this year about the troops dying in Kampuchea: "We want to bring them home to work in the reconstruction of the country." Recent reform-orientated changes in domestic policy and the change in leadership provide an opportune moment to lessen the burden of supporting the army of occupation at a time when Hanoi has been forced to appeal for international food aid.

Secondly, Hanoi has to come to terms with the changing priorities of its principal backer, the Soviet Union. Moscow's support for Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea (to the tune of three million dollars a day), has prevented it from developing relationships with the ASEAN bloc of nations. Their prosperity and growing international influence

along with the world shift to the Pacific Rim axis, is in marked contrast to the isolation, poverty and backwardness of Vietnam. "Fortress Vietnam" is excluded from the world's main donor countries and organisations by her aggression in Kampuchea. A settlement there, could unlock the purses for development aid.



Arms and equipment taken from retreating Vietnamese soldiers

Thus Soviet encouragement, as well as desperate economic conditions at home, have put pressure on Hanoi to seek a solution. Hanoi recognises that the CGDK cannot be beaten on the battlefield and that there is no hope of Vietnam winning the Kampuchean people's political support for a long-term occupation.

Hanoi will seek to dictate the terms of any settlement to protect her position in the region. But time is running out. Vietnam is caught between the stick (a solution to the Kampuchean conflict stands in

the way of a Sino-Soviet summit) and the carrot (US Secretary of State, George Shultz, has mentioned the prospect of the US normalising its diplomatic relations with Vietnam in the case of a settlement).

Hanoi should recognise that the superpowers have never had any respect for the national sovereignty of other countries. Vietnam may once again find itself at the receiving end of pressure from the superpowers for its own failure to respect Kampuchean self-determination.