

Cambodia Invaded

Liberation News Service

1970

PNOMPENH, CAMBODIA (LNS)—Several hundred unarmed men, women and children are shot down in the village of Prasauc near the Cambodian border. The bodies of over 400 Vietnamese roped together are found floating down the Mekong River near the Cambodian capital. These are just two aspects of the political program of the new Cambodian regime.

Joining the ranks of Nguyen Van Thieu and Souvanna Phouma, Premier Lon Nol completes the set of U.S.-supported despots in Indochina. And he's not wasting any time in catching up—according to Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett, more people are now being killed every day in Cambodia than in Vietnam. South Vietnamese troops are making regular forays across the border to “mop up” in villages inhabited by Vietnamese and Cambodians.

There are 600,000 Vietnamese living in Cambodia, many of whom work on rubber plantations. They have been the main victims of recent massacres, and the military regime has attributed this to the supposed age-old hatred between Vietnamese and Cambodians. It's strange that this bitterness should have lain dormant for so long and suddenly cause hundreds of deaths in the month following Lon Nol's coup.

The only age-old hatred operating in Cambodia seems to be that between a tiny group of wealthy rulers and the poor peasants and laborers of the country.

In the province of Kompong Cham, Cambodians stabbed to death Police Commissioner Hin Nil, younger brother of Lon Nol, on March 28. Earlier, the people of Kompong Cham killed two members of parliament with sticks.

Violent demonstrations against the right-wing coup have taken place in scores of towns and villages throughout Cambodia. In Kompong, Takeo, Kratie, Prey Veng and Randal Provinces, thousands of demonstrators armed with knives and jungle choppers recently fought reactionary troops. Demonstrations have spread to Kompong Tra-bak, Kep, an important coastal town, and Kompong Cham in the province of the same name—a town so devastated by demonstrations that it is described as a “ghost town” by Hsinhua, the Chinese News Agency.

Hsinhua reports, “Gunboats dot the length of the Mekong, and all the thoroughfares, bridges and ferries leading to Pnompenh have been sealed off at the order of the coup authorities in an attempt to check the advance of demonstrators toward the capital.”

Roadblocks on the edge of the city have been set up and are policed night and day. U.S. Sherman tanks guard main government buildings and entrances to cities.

Instead of bitterness and prejudices, an alliance has been made between the Vietnamese in Cambodia (many of whom are Vietcong) and the growing United Resistance Movement (URM) among the Cambodians. Together, these people have taken control of much of the Vietnamese and Laotian border regions. And in response to this, Lon Nol appears to have adopted the American Vietnam strategy—genocide.

As for Norodom Sihanouk, ousted Cambodian leader, nothing radicalizes a liberal like a U.S.-backed coup. Exiled in Peking, he has called for the overthrow of Lon Nol, and has reconsidered some of his anti-communist policies. In his April 14 message to the Cambodian people, Sihanouk admitted having put too much faith in advisors like Lon

Nol. "This led me to believe that young, socialist intellectuals were traitorous to the nation, rendering a disservice to the people."

Now the Cambodian government has opened the way for American business by de-nationalizing all industry. The Minister of Public Works announced that, "Private business in Cambodia had fallen into a deep slumber in recent years."

And America just couldn't get no satisfaction with Sihanouk.

Lon Nol is already making arrangements with the U.S. for arms shipments and air and artillery support to fight the growing resistance movement. It is no longer the Vietnam war; now it's the Indochinese War.

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