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

CAPITALIST CRISIS TO BLAME

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

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

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

Cont'd on p5

Open letter to John Pilger

Washington Post's Louise Simeson knew this photo was a fake. Even so, two years ago, the Washington Post, Stern and Time magazine all eagerly published it. It supposedly shows the execution of a peasant by soldiers of the armed forces of Democratic Kampuchea.

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

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

Cont'd on p6
Open letter to John Pilger: from p1

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

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

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

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

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

Yet according to your report "every Cambodian" you met supported the invasion.

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

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

At that time, 90% of the population had malaria. Disease and starvation as a direct result of the war. It was a consequence of US aggression then, and now, as a consequence of Vietnamese aggression. Undoubtedly a number of people died of starvation and disease before they had rebuilt their country. But do not blame the liberation forces, whose policies and acts (such as the evacuation of Phnom Penh which you found so despicable) were dictated by the circumstances that they found themselves in and were carried out in order to save the people from greater starvation.

Blame US aggression, blame yourself and blame your newspaper which did nothing at that time to demand food and technical aid to Kampuchea. The propaganda machine instead spent all its time...
In your September 12th article, city people were being forced into the countryside and working very hard. In the September 13th article you quote from a former "Khmer Rouge" Battalion Commander who said: "I was told that all city people had to die so we could build a new and pure Cambodia." You said he admitted to massacring "2,500 men, women and children," Now Mr Pilger, which is it to be? Mass exterminations or working in the fields? When you have answered that, why don't you tell me what you would say if another reporter put any weight on a story being told by a captured soldier, whom you admit to being in a "re-education camp" and who was interviewed in the presence of his Vietnamese captors! Not much I expect.

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

Why haven't pictures of the "extermination camp" in Phnom Penh been published earlier. The Vietnamese occupied the city in January. Perhaps it has taken them 6 months to "set the scene". Your picture makes it pretty clear that the stage has been set.

CROCODILE TEARS

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

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

The Editor 15/9/79

VIETNAMESE PUPPETS IN KAMPUCHEA

Cont'd from p8

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

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