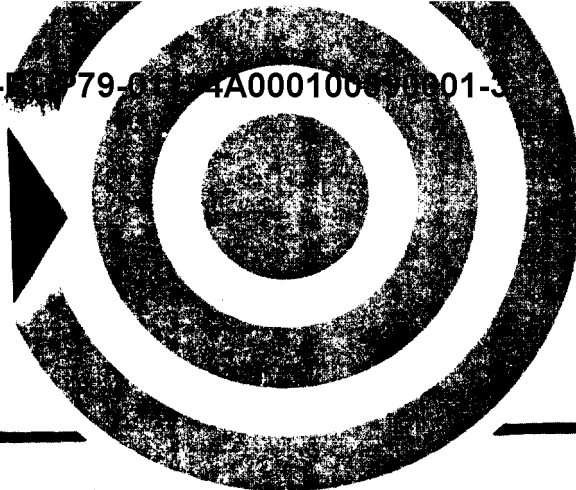


FEATURES



Khmer Rouge Takeover of Cambodia and Related Reports: Dispatches by Sydney H. Schanberg, The New York Times, 9 May 1975.

CPYRGHT

Attached are eyewitness accounts by Sydney H. Schanberg on developments in Cambodia, beginning with the 17 April takeover by the Khmer Rouge, which was marked by widespread plundering by Communist troops, arrests and reported executions of high-level members of the Lon Nol government. The principal dispatch covers the forced evacuation of millions of Cambodians, including the elderly and the sick and wounded, from the city to the countryside, an exodus that some observers equate to genocide. This complete upheaval of life for the Cambodians, and the human grief and suffering it is causing are highly exploitable for replay and commentary. However, we feel they are mainly useful for discussions with, or for passing to, liaison, agents of influence and other influential local contacts who may not have read first-hand accounts of the Khmer Rouge takeover.

The related articles are mainly human interest accounts that provide additional, graphic details on other aspects of the situation. Please note that the article entitled "Grief and Animosity in an Embassy Haven" is for your background information only.

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13 May 1975

Cambodia Reds Are Uprooting Millions As They Impose a 'Peasant Revolution'

The writer of the following dispatch remained in Cambodia after the American evacuation and was among the foreigners who arrived in Thailand last Saturday. His dispatches were withheld, under an agreement among all the confined correspondents, until the remaining foreigners were transported to safety yesterday.

By SYDNEY H. SCHANBERG

Special to The New York Times

CPYRGHT

BANGKOK, Thailand, May 8 — The victorious Cambodian Communists, who marched into Phnom Penh on April 17 and ended five years of war in Cambodia, are carrying out a peasant revolution that has thrown the entire country into upheaval.

Perhaps as many as three or four million people, most of them on foot, have been forced out of the cities and sent on a mammoth and grueling exodus into areas deep in the countryside where, the Communists say, they will have to become peasants and till the soil.

No one has been excluded—even the very old, the very young, the sick and the wounded have been forced out onto the roads—and some will clearly not be strong enough to survive.

Old Economy Abandoned

The old economy of the cities has been abandoned, and for the moment money means nothing and cannot be spent. Barter has replaced it.

All shops have either been looted by Communist soldiers for such things as watches and transistor radios, or their goods have been taken away in an organized manner to be stored as communal property.

Even the roads that radiate out of the capital and that carried the nation's commerce have been virtually abandoned, and the population living along the roads, as well as that in all cities and towns that remained under the control of the American-backed Government, has been pushed into the interior.

Apparently the areas into which the evacuees are being herded are at least 65 miles from Phnom Penh.

In sum the new rulers—before their overwhelming victory they were known as the Khmer Rouge—appear to be remaking Cambodian society in the peasant image, casting aside everything that belonged to the old system, which was generally dominated by the cities and towns and by the élite and merchants who lived there.

Foreigners and foreign aid are not wanted—at least not for now. It is even unclear how much influence the Chinese and North Vietnamese will have, despite their considerable aid to the Cambodian insurgents against the Government of Marshal Lon Nol. The new authorities seem determined to do things themselves in their own way. Despite the propaganda terminology and other trappings, such as Mao caps and Ho Chi Minh rubber-tire sandals, which remind one of Peking and Hanoi, the Communists seem fiercely independent and very Cambodian.

Isolation From World Seen

Judging from their present actions, it seems possible that they may largely isolate their country of perhaps seven million people from the rest of the world for a considerable time—at least until the period of upheaval is over, the agrarian revolution takes concrete shape and they are ready to show their accomplishments to foreigners.

Some of the party officials in Phnom Penh also talked about changing the capital to a more traditional and rural town like Siem Reap, in the northwest.

For those foreigners, including this correspondent, who stayed behind to observe the take-over, the events were an astonishing spectacle.

In Phnom Penh two million people suddenly moved out of the city en masse in stunned silence — walking, bicycling, pushing cars that had run out of fuel, covering the roads like a human carpet, bent under sacks of belongings hastily thrown together when the heavily armed peasant soldiers came and told them to leave immediately, everyone dispirited and frightened by the unknown that awaited them and many plainly terrified because they were soft city people and were sure the trip would kill them.

Hospitals jammed with wounded were emptied, right down to the last patient. They went — limping, crawling, on crutches, carried on relatives' backs, wheeled on their hospital beds.

The Communists have few doctors and meager medical supplies, so many of these patients had little chance of surviving. On April 17, the day this happened, Phnom Penh's biggest hospital had over 2,000 patients and there were several thousand more in other hospitals; many of the wounded were dying for lack of care.

Silent Streets, Eerie Lights

A once-thriving city became an echo chamber of silent streets lined with abandoned cars and gaping, empty shops. Streetlights burned eerily for a population that was no longer there.

Old and Sick Included; Economy Is at Standstill

The end of the old and the start of the new began early in the morning of the 17th. At the cable office the line went dead for mechanical reasons at 6 A.M. On the previous day, amid heavy fighting, the Communist-led forces had taken the airport a few miles west of the city, and during the night they had pressed to the capital's edges, throwing in rockets and shells at will.

Thousands of new refugees and fleeing soldiers were filling the heart of the capital, wandering aimlessly, looking for shelter, as they awaited the city's imminent collapse.

Everyone—Cambodians and foreigners alike—thought this had to be Phnom Penh's most miserable hour after long days of fear and privation as the Communist forces drew closer. They looked ahead with hopeful relief to the collapse of the city, for they felt that when the Communists came and the war finally ended, at least the suffering would largely be over. All of us were wrong.

That view of the future of Cambodia—as a possibly flexible place even under Communism, where changes would not be extreme and ordinary folk would be left alone—turned out to be a myth.

Inadequate Descriptions

American officials had described the Communists as indecisive and often ill-coordinated, but they turned out to be firm, determined, well-trained, tough and disciplined.

The Americans had also said that the rebel army was badly riddled by casualties, forced to fill its ranks by hastily impressing young recruits from the countryside and throwing them into the front lines with only a few days' training. The thousands of troops we saw both in the countryside and in Phnom Penh, while they in-

cluded women militia, some of whom seemed no more than 10 years old, looked healthy, well organized, heavily armed and well trained.

Another prediction made by the Americans was that the Communists would carry out a bloodbath once they took over—massacring as many as 20,000 high officials and intellectuals. There have been unconfirmed reports of executions of senior military and civilian officials, and no one who witnessed the take-over doubts that top people of the old regime will be or have been punished and perhaps killed or that a large number of people will die of the hardships on the march into the countryside. But none of this will apparently bear any resemblance to the mass executions that had been predicted by Westerners.

[In a news conference Tuesday President Ford reiterated reports—he termed them “hard intelligence”—that 80 to 90 Cambodian officials and their wives had been executed.]

Refugees Poured In

On the first day, as the sun was rising, a short swing by automobile to the northern edge of the city showed soldiers and refugees pouring in. The northern defense line had obviously collapsed.

By the time I reached the Hotel Le Phnom and climbed the two flights of stairs to my room, the retreat could be clearly seen from my window and small-arms fire could be heard in the city. At 6:30 A.M. I wrote in my notebook: “The city is falling.”

Over the next couple of hours there were periodic exchanges of fire as the Communists encountered pockets of resistance. But most Government soldiers were busy preparing to surrender and welcome the Communists, as were civilians. White flags suddenly sprouted from housetops and from armored personnel carriers, which resemble tanks.

Some soldiers were taking the clips out of their rifles; others were changing into civilian clothes. Some Government office workers were hastily donning the black pajama-like clothes worn by Indochinese Communists.

Shortly before 9 A.M. the first rebel troops approached the hotel, coming from the north down Monivong Boulevard. A crowd of soldiers and civilians, including newsmen, churned forth to greet them—cheering and applauding and embracing and linking arms to form a phalanx as they came along.

The next few hours saw quite a bit of this celebrating, though shooting continued here and there, some of it only a few hundred yards from the hotel. Civilians and

around town—in jeeps, atop personnel carriers and in cars—shouting happily.

Most civilians stayed nervously indoors, however, not yet sure what was going on or who was who. What was the fighting inside the city all about? they wondered; was it between diehard Government troops and the Communists or between rival Communist factions fighting over the spoils? Or was it mostly exuberance?

Some of these questions, including the nature of the factionalism, have still not been answered satisfactorily, but on that first day such mysteries quickly became academic, for within a few hours, the mood changed.

The cheerful and pleasant troops we first encountered—we came to call them the soft troops, and we learned later that they were discredited and disarmed, with their leader declared a traitor, they may not even have been authentic—were swiftly displaced by battle-hardened soldiers.

While some of these were occasionally friendly, or at least not hostile, they were also all business. Dripping with arms like overlaid fruit trees—grenades, pistols, rifles, rockets—they immediately began clearing the city of civilians.

Using loudspeakers, or simply shouting and brandishing weapons, they swept through the streets, ordering people out of their houses. At first we thought the order only applied to the rich in villas, but we quickly saw that it was for everyone as the streets became clogged with a sorrowful exodus.

Cars stalled or their tires went flat, and they were abandoned. People lost their sandals in the jostling and pushing, so they lay as a reminder of the throng that had passed.

No Reasons Given

In the days to follow, during the foreign colony's confinement in the French Embassy compound, we heard reports on international news broadcasts that the Communists had evacuated the city by telling people the United States was about to bomb it. However, all the departing civilians I talked with said they had been given no reason except that the city had to be reorganized. They were told they had to go far from Phnom Penh.

In almost every situation we encountered during the more than two weeks we were under Communist control, there was a sense of split vision—whether to look at events through Western eyes or through what we thought might be Cambodian revolutionary eyes.

Was this just cold brutality, a cruel and sadistic imposition of the law of the jungle, in

seen through the eyes of the peasant soldiers and revolutionaries, the forced evacuation of the cities is a harsh necessity? Perhaps they are convinced that there is no way to build a new society for the benefit of the ordinary man, hitherto exploited, without literally starting from the beginning; in such an unbending view people who represent the old ways and those considered weak or unfit and would be expendable and would be weeded out. Or was the policy both cruel and ideological?

A foreign doctor offered this explanation for the expulsion of the sick and wounded from the hospital: “They could not cope with all the patients—they do not have the doctors—so they apparently decided to throw them all out and blame any deaths on the old regime. That way they could start from scratch medically.”

‘Pure and Simple Genocide’

Some western observers considered that the exodus approached genocide. One of them, watching from his refuge in the French Embassy compound, said: “They are crazy! This is pure and simple genocide. They will kill more people this way than if there had been hand-to-hand fighting in the city.”

Another foreign doctor, who had been forced at gunpoint to abandon a seriously wounded patient in midoperation, added in a dark voice: “They have not got a humanitarian thought in their heads!”

Whatever the Communists' purpose, the exodus did not grow heavy until dusk, and even then onlookers were slow to realize that the people were being forcibly evacuated.

For my own part, I had a problem that preoccupied me that afternoon: I, with others, was held captive and threatened with execution.

After our release, we went to the Information Ministry, because we had heard about a broadcast directing high officials of the old regime to report there. When we arrived, about 50 prisoners were standing outside the building, among them Lon Non, the younger brother of President Lon Nol, who went into exile on April 1, and Brig. Gen. Chim Chhuon, who was close to the former President. Other generals and Cabinet ministers were also there—very nervous but trying to appear untroubled.

Premier Long Boret, who the day before had made an offer of surrender with certain conditions only to have it immediately rejected, arrived at the ministry an hour later. He is one of the seven “traitors” the Communists had marked for execution. The others had fled except for Lieut. Gen. Sirik Matak a former Premier who

French Embassy, where he had taken refuge.

Mr. Long Boret's eyes were puffy and red, almost down to slits. He had probably been up all night and perhaps he had been weeping. His wife and two children were also still in the country; later they sought refuge at the French Embassy, only to be rejected as persons who might “compromise” the rest of the refugees.

Mr. Long Boret, who had talked volubly and articulately on the telephone the night before, had difficulty speaking coherently. He could only mumble yes, no and thank you, so conversation was impossible.

There is still no hard information on what has happened to him. Most people who have talked with the Communists believe it a certainty that he will be executed, if indeed the execution has not already taken place.

One of the Communist leaders at the Information Ministry that day—probably a general, though his uniform bore no markings and he declined to give his name—talked soothingly to the 50 prisoners. He assured them that there were only seven traitors and that other officials of the old regime would be dealt with equitably. “There will be no reprisals,” he said. Their strained faces suggested that they would like to believe him but did not.

As he talked, a squad crouched in combat-ready positions around him, almost as if it was guarding him against harm.

The officer who appeared no more than age 35, agreed to chat with foreign newsmen. His tone was polite and sometimes he smiled, but everything he said suggested that, as foreigners, meant nothing to him and that our interests were alien to his.

Asked about the fate of the 20 or so foreign journalists missing in Cambodia since the early days of the war, he said he had heard nothing. Asked if we would be permitted to file from the cable office, he smiled sympathetically and said, “We will resolve all problems in their proper order.”

Clearly an educated man, of no more than 35, he almost certainly speaks French, the language of the nation that ruled Cambodia for nearly a century until the nineteen-fifties, but he gave no hint of this colonial vestige, speaking only in Khmer through an interpreter.

In the middle of the conversation he volunteered quite unexpectedly: “We would like you to give our thanks to the American people who have helped us and supported us from the beginning and to all people

and justice. Please give this message to the world."

Purpose: End the War

Noting that Congress had halted aid to the Phnom Penh Government, he said "The purpose was to stop the war," but he quickly added: "Our struggle would not have stopped even if they had given more aid."

Attempts to find out more about who he was and about political and military organization led only to imprecision. The officer said: "I represent the armed forces. There are many divisions. I am one of the many."

Asked if there were factions, he said there was only one political organization and one government. Some top political and governmental leaders are not far from the city, he added, but they let the military enter first "to organize things."

Most military units, he said, are called "rumdos," which means "liberation forces." Neither this commander nor any of the soldiers we talked with ever called themselves Communists or Khmer Rouge (Red Cambodians). They always said they were liberation troops or nationalist troops and called one another brother or the Khmer equivalent of comrade.

The nomenclature at least is confusing, for Western intelligence had described the Khmer Rumdos as a faction loyal to Prince Norodom Sihanouk that was being downgraded by Hanoi-trained Cambodians and losing power.

The Communists named the Cambodian leader, who was deposed by Marshal Lon Nol in 1970 and has been living in exile in Peking, as their figurehead chief of state, but none of the soldiers we talked with brought up his name.

One over-all impression emerged from our talk with the commander at the Information Ministry: The military will be largely in charge of the early stages of the upheaval, carrying out the evacuation, organizing the new agrarian program, searching for hidden arms and resisters, repairing damaged bridges.

The politicians—or so it seemed from all the evidence during our stay—have for the moment taken a rear seat. No significant political or administrative apparatus was yet visible; it did not seem to be a government yet, but an army.

The radio announced April 28, that a special national congress attended by over 300 delegates was held in Phnom Penh from April 25 to 27. It was said to have been chaired by the Deputy Premier and

Samphan, who has emerged—at least in public announcements—as the top leader. Despite that meeting the military still seemed to be running things as we emerged from Cambodia on Saturday.

One apparent reason is that politicians and bureaucrats are not equipped to do the dirty work and arduous tasks of the early phases of reorganization. Another is that the military, as indicated in conversations with Khmer-speaking foreigners they trusted somewhat, seemed worried that politicians or soft-living outsiders in their movement might steal the victory and dilute it. There could be severe power struggles ahead.

After leaving the prisoners and the military commander at the ministry, we headed for the Hotel Le Phnom, where another surprise was waiting. The day before, the Red Cross turned the hotel into a protected international zone and draped it with huge Red Cross flags. But the Communists were not interested.

At 4:55 P.M. troops waving guns and rockets had forced their way into the grounds and ordered the hotel emptied within 30 minutes. By the time we arrived 25 minutes had elapsed. The fastest packing job in history ensued. I even had time to "liberate" a typewriter some one had abandoned, since the troops had "liberated" mine earlier.

We were the last ones out, running. The Red Cross had abandoned several vehicles in the yard after removing the keys, so several of us threw our gear on the back of a Red Cross Honda pickup truck and started pushing it up the boulevard toward the French Embassy.

Several days before, word was passed to those foreigners who stayed behind when the Americans pulled out on April 12 that, as a last resort, one could take refuge at the embassy. France had recognized the new government, and it was thought that the new Cambodian leaders would respect the embassy compound as a sanctuary.

As we plodded up the road, big fires were burning on the city's outskirts, sending smoke clouds into the evening sky like a giant funeral wreath encircling the capital.

The embassy was only several hundred yards away, but what was happening on the road made it seem much farther. All around us people were fleeing, for there was no refuge for them. And coming into the city from the other direction was a fresh battalion marching in single file. They looked cur-

iously at them. In the 13 days of confinement that followed, until our evacuation by military truck to the Thai border, we had only a peephole onto what was going on outside, but there were still many things that could be seen and many clues to the revolution that was going on.

We could hear shooting, sometimes nearby but mostly in other parts of the city. Often it sounded like shooting in the air, but at other times it seemed like small battles. As on the day of the city's fall we were never able to piece together a satisfactory explanation of the shooting, which died down after about a week.

We could see smoke from the huge fires from time to time, and there were reports from foreigners who trickled into the embassy that certain quarters were badly burned and that the water-purification plant was heavily damaged.

The foreigners who for various reasons came in later carried stories, some of them eyewitness accounts, of such things as civilian bodies along the roads leading out of the city — people who had apparently died of illness or exhaustion on the march. But each witness got only a glimpse, and no reliable estimate of the toll was possible.

Reports from roads to the south and southeast of Phnom Penh said the Communists were breaking up families by dividing the refugees by sex and age. Such practices were not reported from other roads on which the refugees flooded out of the capital.

Executions Reported

Reports also told of executions, but none were eyewitness accounts. One such report said high military officers were executed at a rubber plantation a couple of miles north of the city.

In the French Embassy compound foreign doctors and relief agency officials were pessimistic about the survival chances of many of the refugees. "There's no food in the countryside at this time of year," an international official said. "What will they eat from now until the rice harvest in November?"

The new Communist officials, in conversations with United Nations and other foreign representatives during our confinement and in statements since, have rejected the idea of foreign aid. "whether it is military, political, economic, social, diplomatic, or whether it takes on a so-called humanitarian form." Some foreign observers wondered whether this included China, for they speculated that the Communists

would at least need seed to plant for the next harvest.

Whether the looting we observed before we entered the French compound continued is difficult to say. In any case, it is essential to understand who the Communist soldiers are to understand the behavior of some of them in disciplinary matters, particularly looting.

They are peasant boys, pure and simple — darker skinned than their city brethren, with gold in their front teeth. To them the city is a curiosity, an oddity, a carnival, where you visit but do not live. The city means next to nothing in their scheme of things.

One Kept, the Rest Given

When they looted jewelry shops, they kept only one watch for themselves and gave the rest to their colleagues or passersby. Transistor radios, cameras and cars held the same toy-like fascination—something to play with, as children might, but not essential.

From my airline bag on the day I was seized and threatened with execution they took only some cigarettes, a pair of boxer underwear shorts and a handkerchief. They passed up a blue shirt and \$9,000 in cash in a money belt.

The looting did not really contradict the Communist image of rigid discipline, for commanders apparently gave no orders against the sacking of shops, feeling, perhaps, that this was the least due their men after five years of jungle fighting.

Often they would climb into abandoned cars and find that they would not run, so they would bang on them with their rifles like frustrated children, or they would simply toot the horns for hours on end or keep turning the headlights on and off until the batteries died.

One night at the French Embassy, I chose to sleep on the grass outside; I was suddenly awakened by what sounded like a platoon trying to smash down the front gates with a battering ram that had bright lights and a loud claxon. It was only a bunch of soldiers playing with and smashing up the cars that had been left outside the gates.

Though these country soldiers broke into villas all over the city and took the curious things they wanted—one walked past the embassy beaming proudly in a crimson-colored wool overcoat that hung down to his Ho Chi Minh sandals—they never stayed in the villas. With big, soft beds empty, they slept in the courtyards or the streets.

Almost without exception, footsoldiers I talked with, when asked what they wanted to do, replied that they only wanted to go home.

Grief and Animosity In an Embassy Haven

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The following dispatch by Sydney H. Schanberg accompanied his account of the upheaval in Cambodia.

Special to The New York Times

BANGKOK, Thailand, May 8 —For the 800 foreigners, including this correspondent, who spent two weeks in the French Embassy in Phnom Penh after the Communists took over, the time seemed like a chaotically compressed generation of life.

A baby was born, another died. A dozen marriages were performed—all marriages of convenience to enable Cambodians to get French passports so that they could escape the country and its peasant revolution.

There were days of deep sorrow. Cambodians without foreign papers had to go on the trek into the countryside. Friends were torn apart. Families broken up as Cambodian husbands were separated from their European wives. On those days sobbing could be heard in every corner of the compound.

And there were days when hopes rose, days when the rumors said that evacuation was imminent.

Heroes and knaves emerged—more of the latter than the former. There was no running water and food was limited, and out of this grew tensions and rivalries between groups.

Between French officials living well in the embassy and French civilians living in the driveways and gardens outside. Between the outside French and the French staff of Calmette Hospital, who were also living fairly well. And between the non-French foreigners, including the favorite targets—Americans and journalists—and everyone else.

There was more selfishness than sharing. A minor example: Put a pack of cigarettes on a table for 10 seconds and turn around, and it would be gone.

This correspondent emerged into Thailand last Saturday, after 13 days in the embassy and the next three and a half days on the road. Hundreds

of other refugees remained in the embassy even longer, arriving in Thailand today.

To describe what life was like in the compound is to describe sheer incongruity. A French doctor walked the hospital's pet sheep around the gardens. (The hospital's pet gibbon was taken by the Communists and led around the street outside in a pink dress.) Some of the Frenchmen in the compound fed their dogs better than other people were able to feed their children.

Our group of foreigners lived in the building that used to be the ambassador's residence, one of three buildings on the grounds; the others are a chancellery and a large cultural center. Eighteen of us, using sofa cushions and pillows as mattresses and linen tablecloths for blankets, slept on the floor of a large living room—surrounded by humming air-conditioners, an elegant upright piano, a crystal chandelier and some of the embassy's best silver, except for the silver teapots, which were used to boil water over wood fires outside.

For a few days it might have been fun—a curious experience to dine on when you got home. But as time wore on nerves frayed more and more and hardly an hour went by without an argument somewhere in the compound, usually over something petty.

The water supply ended a few days after our arrival, after which we had to rely on water tapped from our air-conditioners and that delivered periodically in barrels by the new government. There was never enough for bathing, and the odor of unwashed people was ripe.

Nothing Funny About It

With food limited and with no running water, sanitation deteriorated and there were scores of cases of diarrhea—the evidence of which filled every walkway and garden in the compound.

The compound was difficult at times, but never as difficult as was suggested by the radio news reports we kept listening to, which said our situation was "more and more precarious." Sometimes when we were hearing those

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Though some people managed not to fare too badly, for most of those in the compound the situation was far more than a series of annoyances; there was nothing funny about it.

There was nothing funny for Mrs. Nha, an Air France employe who sat sobbing under a tree on the morning of April 19. Her mother and father were missing, and in two days she would be forced to take her young son and go into the countryside herself.

"I was an optimist," she said as the tears coursed down her cheeks. "Not only me. All Cambodians here thought that when the Khmer Rouge came it would be all welcomes and cheering and bravo and the war would be over and we would become normal again. Now we are stunned, stunned."

There was nothing funny for Mrs. Praet, a Belgian whose Cambodian husband was being forced to leave her and join the march. As she wept into her handkerchief he embraced her gently. "Courage, ma cherie. Courage, ma cherie," he whispered. She could not control herself and her small body shook with her weeping as their two little girls looked on uncomprehending.

There was nothing funny for a Government officer who cannot be named here who vainly took refuge in the embassy. Soon he and his large family had to leave. years, wounded several times, he was reduced to hopelessness and was crying like a child.

'Could Have Gotten Out'

"I could have gotten out of the country 10 days ago," he said "but I believed the United States would come and help, do something for us. If you get out, please write about this. Tell the world what is happening here."

Some Cambodian women, realizing that their infants could not survive the long trek, earfully gave theirs to French families for foster care or adoption.

"My first baby, my only baby! a mother in shock shrieked. "Save him! Save him! You can do it."

In a corner a young Cambodian who is a Roman Catholic was reading a passage from his Bible: "It is necessary to entirely renounce oneself to obtain freedom of the heart." Looking up to see a foreign newsman watching him, he forced a smile. "Our morale is up," he said. "It must be up. Today is the

was dining as the Cambodians left. The hospital's sheep, tethered to a truck, was bleating mournfully; no one paid any attention.

At one time, about 1,300 people were living in the attractively landscaped compound, which is 200 yards by 250 yards or so. Then the Communists ordered out all Cambodians without foreign passports or papers, which forced about 500 people to take to the road.

Family or not, we all lost someone close to us, and when the Cambodians trudged through the gate we foreigners stood in the front yard, weeping unashamedly.

Emphasizing Primary

The forced evacuation was part of an apparent campaign to make it clear to Jean Dyrac, the consul and senior French official at the embassy, and to everyone else in the compound that the new Government, not foreigners, was in charge—and under its own rules.

The first thing the Communists did was declare that they did not recognize the compound as an embassy, simply as a regroupment center for foreigners under their control. This shattered the possibility of asylum for high officials of the ousted regime who had sought sanctuary. On the afternoon of April 20, in a gloomy drizzle, Lieut. Gen. Sirik Matak, who was among those marked for execution, and a few other leading figures were taken away in the back of a sanitation truck.

Throughout our stay the Communists continued their campaign of proving their primacy—refusing to let a French plane land with food and medical supplies, refusing to allow us to be evacuated in comfort by air instead of by rutted road in the back of military trucks, and, finally, shutting down the embassy radio transmitter, our only contact with the outside world.

At the same time they did not physically harass or abuse us—the only time our baggage was searched was by Thai customs officials when we crossed the border—and they did eventually provide us with food and water. The food was usually live pigs, which we had to butcher.

Another Point of View

Though the new rulers were obviously trying to inflict a certain amount of discomfort—they kept emphasizing that they had told us in radio broadcasts to get out of the city before the final assault and that by staying we had deliberately gone against their

other way to look at it. From their point of view, being fed and housed much better than their foot soldiers were and should not complain.

But complain we did — about the food, about each other, about the fact that embassy officials were dining on chicken and white wine while we were eating plain rice and washing it down with heavily chlorinated water.

Though there were exceptions, constructive figures who worked hard to make the compound run smoothly, our squabbling and our refusals to share and cooperate presented a spectacle that may have reinforced the Communists' notion of us as people too selfish and egotistical to live a less than affluent Asian society.

Outside the gates of the compound soldiers were living in simple fashion—sleeping on the ground and subsisting on rice and salt, with an occasional chicken or piece of pork.

Among the embassy denizens, even in the midst of the tears and heartache, a search for the appearance of normality went on.

Blossoms and Bridge

A Frenchwoman picked orange-colored blossoms from a bush and twined them in her laughing child's hair.

Gosta Streijffert, a former Swedish Army officer from a patrician family who is a Red Cross official sat erect in a straight-backed chair he had carried outside and read a British news magazine with his monocle fixed.

At a table nearby a United Nations official and a Scottish Red Cross medical team played bridge and drank whisky; someone carped loudly about the way his partner conducted the bidding.

In the midst of all this an American airplane mechanic who did not leave Cambodia

on the day the United States Embassy staff was evacuated because he was too drunk had an epileptic seizure. The Red Cross doctors carried him on the run to the building where the hospital staff was quartered with their equipment.

The American recovered slowly. His case interrupted the staff's dinner—steak. We were envious, and they seemed embarrassed and angry when journalists made notes about their full larder.

Why was there not more sharing, more of a community spirit? What made us into such acquisitive, self-protective beings?

Why did all the Asians live outside, in the heat and rain, while many of the Caucasians, like my group, lived inside, with air-conditioning? We explained it by saying the living arrangements were up to the embassy, but this was clearly not an answer. Was our behavior and our segregation a verdict on our way of life?

Some Exceptional Behavior

Amidst the generally disappointing behavior of the Westerners there were exceptions—people who rose above the squabbling and managed to hold things together.

There was François Bizot, a Frenchman who worked for many years in the countryside restoring ancient temples and ruins. He lost his Cambodian wife and mother-in-law, who were forced on the march. Yet his relationship with the Communists was strong and they trusted him, for he had met some in his work in the interior and he speaks Khmer fluently.

It was Mr. Bizot who, in the early days of our confinement, was allowed to scout for food and water. And it was he who successfully argued the cases of some Asians whose papers were not in perfect order. A num-

ber of people who were in the compound probably owe their futures to him.

There were others who performed constructive roles, among them Douglas A. Sapper 3d, an American with a Special Forces background who was involved in a private airline company.

Sapper, as everyone calls him, organized our group's kitchen and food rationing to make sure supplies would last. His ranger training—and his colorful language, none of which can be reproduced here—kept us eating regularly and kept pilferers out of the larder.

Disappointing Behavior

These special people notwithstanding, the general level of behavior remained disappointing throughout our stay. We held constant group meetings and made endless lists of who was supposed to perform what chores, and we were constantly going through the movements of organizing, but we never really got organized.

Lassitude and depression set in as the days dragged on. People lay dozing on the makeshift beds through the day, waiting only for the next meal. One journalist slipped into a torpor in which he had energy only to lift his aerosol insecticide can and spray away flies.

Occasionally, however, there was an occurrence dramatic enough to break this morphic aura—such as the sighting of a Chinese plane on April 24 coming in for a landing at the airport, possibly carrying high Cambodian and Chinese officials from Peking.

There was also the unexpected arrival the day before of the seven Russians who had been holding out at the Soviet Embassy. They had been desperately trying to make friendly contact with the new Cambodian leaders

influence. But it was the Chinese and not the Russians who had been supplying the Khmer Rouge with arms. The Cambodian Communists rebuffed the Soviet overtures, fired a rocket through the second floor of their embassy, looted the building and ordered the Russians to the French compound. The Russians, having failed in their mission, looked gloomy. They did not appreciate any of the jokes about assignment to Siberia or the salt mines.

Veritable Storehouse

The Russians seemed to console themselves by carrying a veritable storehouse of food, including large stocks of tinned meat and vodka. They shared none of it with anyone either in the compound or on the trip to Thailand—which occasioned some arguments and also some further jokes about the bourgeoisie and the revisionist influences that seemed to have crept into Soviet Communism. The Russians did not appreciate those either.

This phase came to an end for us in the early hours on April 30 when—after an evening of sipping champagne “borrowed” from embassy stocks and singing determinedly hardy traveling songs such as “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary,” we were awakened as scheduled, after a few hours’ sleep, and told to board the trucks.

As we stepped into the pleasantly cool air with our sacks and suitcases, we could see in the night sky the lights of many planes coming from the direction of South Vietnam and heading west. Saigon was falling, and South Vietnamese pilots, carrying their families and other refugees, were making their own evacuation journey to Thailand.

American's Brief Brush With Arrest and Death

BANGKOK, Thailand, May 8—Some of the foreigners who stayed behind after the American evacuation of Phnompenh learned quickly and at first hand that the Communist-led forces were not the happy-go-lucky troops we had seen in the initial stage of the Communist take-over.

I had my first experience with the tough Khmer Rouge troops early in the afternoon of the first day of the take-over.

With Dith Pran, a local employe of The New York Times, Jon Swain of the Sunday Times of London, Alan Rockoff, a freelance American photographer,

This dispatch was also written by Sydney H. Schanberg.

driver, Sarun, we had gone to look at conditions in the largest civilian hospital, Preah Keth Mealea. Doctors and surgeons, out of fear, had failed to come to work and the wounded were bleeding to death in the corridors.

As we emerged from the operating block at 1 P.M. and started driving toward the front gate, we were confronted by a band of heavily armed troops just then coming into the grounds. They put guns to our heads and, shouting angrily, threatened

everything—cameras, radio, money, typewriters, the car—and ordered us into an armored personnel carrier, slamming the hatch and rear door shut. We thought we were finished.

But Mr. Dith Pran saved our lives, first by getting into the personnel carrier with us and then by talking soothingly to our captors for two and a half hours and finally convincing them that we were not their enemy but merely foreign newsmen covering their victory.

We are still not clear why they were so angry, but we believe it might have been because they were fearing

the hospital at that time to remove the patients and were startled to find us, for they wanted no foreign witnesses.

At one point they asked if any of us were Americans, and we said no, speaking French all the time and letting Mr. Dith Pran translate into Khmer. But if they had looked into the bags they had confiscated, which they did not, they would have found my passport and Mr. Rockoff's.

Officers Also Picked Up

We spent a very frightened half-hour sweating in the baking personnel carrier, during a journey on which several of our prisoners were picked up—Cambodians in

...vian clothes who were high military officers and who were, if that is possible, even more frightened than we.

Then followed two hours in the open under guard at the northern edge of town while Mr. Dith Pran pulled off his miracle negotiation with our captors as we watched giddy soldiers passing with truckloads of looted cloth, wine, liquor, cigarettes and soft drinks, scattering some of the booty to soldiers along the roadside.

We also watched civilian refugees leaving the city. We thought they were people who had fled into the city from the near outskirts in the last days of the fighting and were now returning home. We did not yet realize that people were being forcibly evacuated.

We were finally released at 3:30 P.M., but the two Cambodian military men were held. One was praying softly.

A Few Stowaways Joined Long Convoy

From the French Embassy to Thailand

CAMBODIANS ABLE TO EFFECT ESCAPE

Travelers See How Rulers Have Organized Rural Life —Troops Along the Way

The following dispatch was also written by Sydney H. Schanberg.

Special to The New York Times
BANGKOK, Thailand, May 8
As refugees beginning our evacuation journey to Thailand, we left the French Embassy in Phnom Penh on April 30 in virtually the same chaos in which we had entered it 13 days earlier.

In the predawn darkness there was milling and confusion in the embassy yard as more than 500 of us clambered into 26 Soviet, Chinese and American military trucks for the 250-mile journey.

There were supposed to be 20 persons per truck, but darkness and confusion cover a multitude of things and some stowaways managed to sneak aboard. There were five: Asian wives of westerners whose papers were incomplete but who were fiercely determined to get out; a child of one of them and a German television correspondent.

All of them, for reasons that cannot be fully told here, got onto my truck, which contained, among other passengers, some Americans, Swedes, Bulgarians and seven Russians from their

embassy, with a mammoth load of luggage and food.

The German newsmen sat upright but the other stowaways slipped under our legs and we covered them with towels, bush hats and other oddments. Somehow the officials who were checking the convoy never noticed them.

At 6 A.M., with the sun just coming up, the convoy moved out. As it did we saw a fresh battalion of troops marching single file into the city from the north—a mirror image of the battalion that marched in on the evening of April 17 when we entered the French Embassy.

New Images on the Way

Then the scene changed and we met new images. The street light burned casting their artificial rays along the boulevards of a deserted city. Abandoned cars and assorted trash marked the trail of the missing population.

In the courtyard of the Hotel Le Phnom soldiers stood in morning formation. Another battalion formation was lined up down the street in front of the railway station; similar formations were visible on adjoining streets.

The soldiers stood with heads bowed, their weapons at their feet, as if in prayer. An anthem was being played; it appeared to be some kind of morning "thought session."

Every shop had been broken open and looted. Not a single civilian was visible—only soldiers camping in the shops and on the sidewalks. There were large numbers of them.

We suddenly turned right—that is, west—down the road to the airport, and this was puzzling because we were sup-

posed to be heading north and northwest toward the Thai frontier.

Our journey gave us a brief but revealing glimpse into the covert spy system and communally organized countryside of the Communists—a glimpse that, as far as is known, no Westerners had ever before gotten.

Covert Supply System

We traveled on some of the well-defended dirt roads they had built by hand and used as clandestine supply routes during the five years of the war that ended with their seizure of Phnom Penh on April 17.

None of these roads show on maps of Cambodia, yet some were only half a mile or so from the main highways.

We saw reservoirs, dikes, bridges—all built with hand tools. No machines or earth-moving equipment were visible.

We also saw boy militia units on patrol everywhere and male-female work crews repairing roads.

As we passed many of the villagers and soldiers stared at us wonderingly, as if they had never seen a white man before—which is possible.

From what we could determine it seemed that these areas had been developed and organized over a long period and that they had remained untouched sanctuaries throughout the war. There were no signs that either American planes or planes of the old Phnom Penh government had bombed here, nor were there any signs that troops of the old Government had tried to mount a ground assault against those areas. The trees bore no marks of bullet holes, as they always do when there has been ground fighting.

The over-all impression was

striking. Some of the hand-dug reservoirs, for example, had a terraced system that channel water into an agricultural irrigation system.

The supply network that we got the best look at snaked through thick forest and swampy ponds along a line that ran generally parallel to and west of Route 5. It covered approximately 40 miles, running from near the town of Oudong to the province capital of Kompond Chhang.

One got the feeling as we traveled along these dirt roads, which were occasionally wide but often so narrow that tree branches along the isles thwacked against our trucks, that the village and countryside organization was much stronger than anyone on the other side had imagined.

Yet while this organizational system was impressive, when we traveled on other roads we saw some depressing sights. Refugees forced out of Phnom Penh and other places were still plodding along, pushing carts and carrying heavy sacks of belongings over their shoulders as they headed for the interior areas, where the Khmer rouge say they must now become peasants and grow rice.

Abandoned and stripped cars littered some highways; apparently city people had started out in them and jettisoned when they ran out of fuel. There was other detritus too—steel helmets and other military equipment and weapons discarded on the run by the routed troops.

Here and there were bodies, but it was difficult to tell if they were people who had succumbed to the hardships of the march or simply civilians and soldiers killed in the last battles.