P.S. to **the NEWS**

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THE TRAGEDY OF CAMBODIA

After a recent speech I made in San Francisco, an angry man accosted me and said, "I hold you responsible, as a member of the media, for the blackout of news about the tragedy of Cambodia." I protested that I had written several columns on the bloodbath following the Khmer Rouge takeover, but he was not mollified.

"The silence of the press on this subject is the most outrageous and irrmoral double standard of our time," he added.

While not all the media are equally to blame for giving Cambodia the silent treatment, W:ea culpas are called for from most of us. Few examples in all history can match the systematic, sadistic murder of more than l million out of Cambodia's 7 million inhabitants. The whole idea of talking about "human rights" in South Africa; Rhodesia, or Chile approaches the ridiculous when discussed by anyone who is silent about Cambodia.

Some spokesmen are naturally downplaying the Cambodian bloodbath because of their reluctance to be reminded of their own erroneous predictions. When the fate of Cambodia hung in the balance in 1975, liberal columnists cried out: "The present Cambodian government is corrupt. It doesn't really matter if the Com munists take over. Cut off U.S. aid and that will stop the killing."

Joseph Kraft wrote, "Does it really matter whether Cambodia goes Communist? Not very much." Tom Wicker in The New York Times wrote that "there is not much moral choice" between the Cambodian government and the Khmer Rouge Communists.

Bella Abzug said we should "let the Cambodians find their own political solution."

Senator George McGovern predicted that the Cambodian people would be "better off" working out their problems in their own way. Senator Mike Mansfield said it was in the "bests interests" of Cambodians to stop American aid. Senator

Alan Cranston warned that more U.S. aid would "only prolong the agony of Cambodia."

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After U.S. aid stopped, the agony really moved into high gear. The Khmer Rouge first followed the favorite Communist tactic of murdering the leadership class: the entire army officer corps and their,:families, most of the admini strative officials of the former Cambodian government and their families, the teachers, the Buddhist and Moslem priesthood, and almost anyone with an education.

But the Khmer Rouge murdered the proletariat, too. They emptied the cities and forced the people, no matter how feeble or ill, to march out to the country side. Hundreds of thousands perished on the way. The Khmer Rouge brigade was a human "neutron bomb": it killed the people while leaving the buildings intact.

The head of the Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot, revealed in a 1977 speech that his patron and mentor was Mao Tse-tung. He said his army had the "wholehearted, unconditional and all-around support and assistance of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, Com rade Chou En-lai, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese government, and the [Chinese] people, who are our comrades-in-arms."

Hua Kuo-feng, the present Chinese Communist Party chairman, later confirmed Chinese aid to the Khmer Rouge: "Our two parties, two countries, and two peoples have forged a profound revolutionary friendship and militant unity in their pro tracted struggles. This friendship and this unity are based on Marxism-Leninism and proletarian international ism.[11]

So the Khmer Rouge, brutal, illiterate peasants that they are, did not perpe trate one of the most horrible mass murders in history simply to release nihilistic urges. Nor did they do it alone. Using Communist revolutionary ideology and the material assistance of their Red Chinese friends, they have provided a classic example of what total Communist control means.

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