

wars, and yet, up until 1991, they were under total sanction and embargo.

**Ambassador Borith:** We were isolated! Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam were isolated after the war, from 1979-91, and into 1993. We had to re-win the right to be here [at the UN], but it is unfair for people to speak out about injustice in Cambodia when you see human rights violations still exist in some developed countries.

**EIR:** When people think of Cambodia, rather than just reading newspapers, how should they think about it?

**Ambassador Borith:** From my point of view, all people who think of Cambodia, should try to find a way to help this poor country. We accept criticism when we are wrong, but, please, at the same time, consider our request for assistance. We are not perfect, but we work very hard. Our government tries its best to improve the situation. Another example, prison conditions. We are told that the prison conditions are worse and worse. But how can we correct this? You know, our government employees receive only \$20 per month. How can we take care of our prisoners? Where does the money come from to take care of the prisoners? This problem is related to the complex problem of the society.

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## Interview: Loung Ung

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# Cleaning Up After the Wars

*Loung Ung is the National Spokesperson for the Campaign for a Landmine Free World, a program of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation. EIR reviewed her book First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers, in our Feb. 18, 2000 issue. She gave the following interview to Gail Billington on May 3, in Washington, D.C.*

**EIR:** Would you give us an idea of the scope of the Campaign's work?

**Loung:** We are still trying to eradicate landmines, and to help those hurt by them. In the whole world, the estimate is that 26,000 people every year are maimed, killed, or injured by landmines. The estimate is that there are between 60-80 million, perhaps upwards of 100 million



Loung Ung

landmines in some 70 countries, or one-third of all nations. The numbers vary, depending on which reports you read, but whatever the numbers may be, you can trust that there are a lot of them in the ground, and that people are finding them whether we do anything or not.

As far as Cambodia, the landmine problem is, I believe, the biggest factor in development of the country after the war. It's estimated that the land in Cambodia is anywhere between 40-50% contaminated with mines. And for a country where 85% of the people are agricultural farmers, you can just imagine what that does to the economy. They can't farm. When they are cold, they can't go into the woods to collect wood. Cows need to be grazed. That's another issue. Not only is it hurting people, but in a country like Cambodia, where the per-capita GDP is anywhere between \$250-300 a year, your livelihood may depend on that cow, that one pig, those three chickens, those two dogs; and if your one cow steps on that landmine, it makes the difference between your ability to farm or being reduced to begging to survive.

The scope of the problem is very large, and, unfortunately, a lot of people don't know about landmines. A lot of people don't know about this aftermath of the wars. I survived the war, as you know from reading my book. I still have a sister and brother in Cambodia, and they have to survive the peace. After the war, people talked about the lack of medicine, the lack of education, child prostitution, the brothels that have cropped up, AIDS and HIV, but they rarely talk about landmines in the ground, and I don't understand why. It's all around you, but, I think society as a whole wishes it weren't there, and so, therefore, they try as much as they can to make those injured or maimed invisible, ship them off to places where they are hidden.

**EIR:** I understood that one of the most infested areas was in Battambang, which was the rice basket of the country prior to the war. Do you know the situation there now?

**Loung:** There are still a lot of landmines there. The Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC) has gone to Battambang and has cleared some of the area, a few acres at a time. I think in the last two years, actually, in the last year, the clearance de-mining units have been able to move a lot faster. Battambang used to grow the best rice in the world, and was well known around the world for the quality of rice produced. Then, because of that, the Khmer Rouge controlled Battambang, and were hiding in the jungle and forests. Our killers, you know, looked like us, spoke our language, worshipped our religion, had the same skin color, so you don't know who's who.

Right now, I think we have been able to move a lot faster in clearing Battambang, but it is a slow, tedious process, because when you de-mine the land, you have to go inch by inch.

**EIR:** What is the technology that's mostly used?

**Loung:** First of all, for military purposes, they don't de-mine the land, they "bleach" it; they shoot rockets, ammunition or

flares into it, which gets rid of maybe 60-80% of the mines. That is a rate that military units may be able to tolerate, but in human de-mining, you have to get it as close to 100% as possible. When a minefield is located, it's because someone has stepped on one. Half a million animals step on mines each year worldwide.

The de-mining unit works in teams of two, and they are still using the same basic equipment used since World War II, consisting of a bayonet, a knife of some sort, and a metal detector. The unit sweeps the ground in front of them, inch by inch. Every time the metal detector beeps, the de-miner has to get on the ground, and probe with the knife into the ground at a 45 degree angle, and hope that it doesn't detonate. Once they find the mine, they clear the area and blow it up with TNT. Of course, there are also 340 different types of landmines out there. A lot of the mines are very sophisticated, so that they can be planted horizontally, so that when you try to probe it with a knife at a 45 degree angle, sometimes it detonates.

The other reason it is so tedious, is that you can imagine, in a country like Cambodia, after all the years of civil war, every time the metal detector beeps, what is the chance that it's an actual mine? It could be anything that has any little piece of metal. In Cambodia, the ground is very high in iron content, and sometimes that sets off the detector. But the de-miner has to treat every single beep as if it were a live mine, or they could be dead.

The estimate is that only about 1 in 50 times is it an actual mine, and it is sad because, I think, we just haven't had the political will to put money into research and development to find different ways and technologies to remove mines.

**EIR:** You were saying there is a bit more of that going on. What are the new technologies?

**Loung:** There are technologies being developed, being tested, but they are not in the field yet, and until it's in the field and working, it doesn't matter to the indigenous people. The one technology (and to call it technology is not fair), but the one thing that seems to work very well, is dogs—dogs trained to sniff explosives. They have been very successful; if the dog smells explosives, it sits down next to the mine.

**EIR:** Even if the mine is 25 years old?

**Loung:** I haven't seen any research for that. But the problem with dogs, is that they can only smell it if it is close to the surface, but for mines 3-4 feet in the ground, no, they can't. Another problem with dogs is, they are in a different terrain, culture, climate. They are having a lot of problems with dogs trained in Western countries. Westerners don't do the actual de-mining, but they train indigenous people to be de-miners, and for that person to be able to communicate to the dog, they have to learn how to issue the commands in the language the dog will recognize and respond to, such as Norwegian or English.

Other technologies include a kind of tractor with spikes



*A worker probes for landmines in Laos. Unexploded ordnance poses a lethal threat to people, as well as farm animals, on which the livelihoods of many depend.*

that goes through the field. These are called mine survey technologies, which are used to tell you where the mines are *not*; they can run over the land, and if there are no explosions, then there appear to be no mines, but if there are mines, then you still have to clear them.

These technologies also assume you have level terrain, but in Cambodia, Mozambique, Rwanda, you have rice paddy, hills, shrubs, trees, rocks. There are other technologies being developed, but, for now, we're still using the bayonet and metal detector.

**EIR:** What are the top ten countries in terms of the density of landmine contamination?

**Loung:** They include Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Somalia. We are working now with a program called the De-Mining Initiative, where we go in and we survey the top 20 countries.

**EIR:** Any information about contamination in Laos and Vietnam?

**Loung:** There is information about Laos, but they have a lot more problems with cluster bombs. There is less information available on landmines in these countries, but we know there are mines. I've been to Cambodia and Vietnam, and we have a clinic in Vietnam that manufactures prostheses for children who are affected by landmines and also by Agent Orange.

**EIR:** The April 14-27 *Phnom Penh Post* had a report on the U.S. bombings of Cambodia, and what they are now saying is that final data on the B-52 bombings are still not fully available, but the density of other types of ordnance that was dropped is astounding.

**Loung:** In Cambodia, four to six times more tonnage of bombs was dropped than on Japan in World War II. Unfortunately, in Third World countries, where religion, culture, sociology, economy, psychology come into play, when people are hurt by mines, they are hidden away. They are lost to the world; they are not to be seen. They are considered a shame, bad *karma*. When we were in Vietnam, and when we started our project in Cambodia, we had to create a mobile team, equipped with prostheses and technologies to be able to show people that they could have a second chance at life. It's sad. I know specifically in Cambodia, it is about *karma*. You don't want others to know that you have a child who has been hurt, unless you are so desperate that you put the child in the street to beg. Otherwise, they are hidden. If there are other children, whom you want to see married, there is fear the other family won't accept marrying into a family with bad *karma*.

**EIR:** When was the program set up?

**Loung:** The program in Cambodia was set up in 1991.

**EIR:** As part of the UN's administration?

**Loung:** No, it was prior to that. My boss, Bobby Muller, is a Vietnam veteran, who was paralyzed from the waist down, and we have colleagues who were hurt by landmines. There were 64,000 U.S. soldiers maimed, injured, or killed by landmines during the Vietnam War. My boss would tell me how soldiers feared landmines more than being shot. When he went into Cambodia, he was devastated by the "forgotten war."

When he was there in 1990, it was still all there. There was no place for the civilians and soldiers hurt by landmines to go. Many were disowned by their families; they would come to the city, and were sent to a place, Kien Khleang, which is where our project is and, for lack of a better term, it was known around Phnom Penh as the "leper colony," to which there was no access except by ferry. Now it has been turned into a place where people come to find a chance to live, not to die; now, we even have a waiting list to get in.

In 1991, five hundred people in Cambodia were hurt by landmines every month; that has gone down to 50-100, depending on the rainy season. Yes, the rainy season: As you saw with Mozambique, and with Hurricane Mitch, mines are made up of so little plastic and metal, that they get flooded to the surface. In Cambodia, there is a natural disaster every year as a result. Every year the Tonle Sap triples in size during the rainy season, and floods Phnom Penh and villages, and brings in the fish and the landmines.

Again, Cambodia is not alone; 26,000 people worldwide are hurt annually. Some have called landmines a weapon of mass destruction in slow motion. Landmines have killed more than chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons combined, and yet, the problem is not well known. Every time I go to a university to speak, I'm always flabbergasted by students who are involved in all sorts of causes, but know nothing about landmines.

We have another project in Cambodia, a silk-weaving project. In 1994, our mobile team went into a village called Preah Vihear, which has more than the average number of amputees, because it is on the Thai border, where there is heavy landmine contamination. The village is completely land-locked; the only way in or out is by chartered plane. Our project started with five injured women, who had been disowned, and were begging in the streets. We taught them how to weave, and now they make these gorgeous products, and the project has grown to 80 people. The original five women are now married; their able-bodied husbands are staying home taking care of the kids. Because of their success, these women, who had been abandoned, were courted by men from neighboring villages. They are now running the project themselves, but we put them on a 9-5 schedule, with breaks, and after work, they have started their own school, where they are teaching themselves English and Khmer. We have five projects now in Cambodia.

The plight of women in these circumstances, not only in Cambodia, is very, very difficult. We see it also in Kosovo now. We see that if two siblings are injured by mines, and there is not enough to help both, the boy will be treated over the girl. I know, because I survived the minefields; but I don't know what would have happened if I had been injured.

**EIR:** Do you take people to teach them about landmines?

**Loung:** We have a program where we take our donors' representatives, as well as musicians and artists, to Cambodia, to see the problems directly.

The Campaign was created in 1991, and, I think the mistake that the Campaign made was that they didn't have a human face with which to identify. When Princess Diana came along, she humanized the campaign. She was associated with the international campaign to ban landmines. We realized we needed to reach the public, which is why I'm on the road all the time, to let them know the war continues. We teach people that for \$150, we can give someone a new life, but you can't just give them a prosthesis. They have to be fitted, they have to learn how to use the leg, so you need clinics, where they stay for two weeks to two months. We have a clinic in Phnom Penh, and smaller ones in Kratie, Prey Veng, and Prey Vihear.

We also have projects in Angola, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, and Vietnam.

**EIR:** Do you have estimates on the rate of injuries to children?

**Loung:** It's hard, because hospitals have begun to keep statistics just within the last ten years, but they are incomplete. Some statistics show that up to 50% of children who step on mines do not live. Children suffer most from head and heart injuries. Also they are closer to the ground, so if they survive the blast, the blood loss, if they get to the hospital —

**EIR:** Assuming there is one.

**Loung:** Right. For children, it's a lifetime of scarring. One of my colleagues, who is an amputee, talks about "phantom pain," which he still feels. For children, it is not phantom pain, it is real pain. Because their bodies continue to grow, so depending how old they are, they have to have the injured limb cut and re-cut every six to eight months, every two years, and the higher you have to cut into the leg, the harder it is to learn to walk.

**EIR:** And, of course, as the child grows, the prosthesis must be changed.

**Loung:** That is the human factor. The cost of these little weapons, the size of a child's hockey puck — this one is called a butterfly mine; it's dropped from a plane. It looks like something that is as close to a toy as many kids will ever see. Kids are being killed for their natural curiosity.

**EIR:** There are no maps for the landmines.

**Loung:** No, there aren't, and even if there were, many years later, erosion, flooding [would change them]. In Mozambique, where there are millions of landmines, many floated to the surface in the recent flooding. Before that, de-miners and NGOs [non-governmental organizations] had marked off where some of the mines are with some fencing and signs — all washed away, and even if you remember where they were, it's likely the mines themselves have been flooded into other places. They found one mine 20 miles from the nearest battlefield. Same thing with Hurricane Mitch in Guatemala and Honduras.

**EIR:** The last time we met, was at a press conference of Cambodian opposition figure Sam Rainsy in Washington, where the subject of a tribunal for the Khmer Rouge came up, and you spoke of the feedback you had from family members in Cambodia about that.

**Loung:** I've been to Cambodia maybe seven times, and even though a lot of Westerners seem to think that Cambodians don't know what's going on, even if they can't read, they have a sense of justice. When I ask what they want, they say an international tribunal.

**EIR:** What do they mean by that?

**Loung:** When I explain to them that we are going to have a "mixed" tribunal with foreign judges and Cambodian judges together, they accept that. They are willing to compromise. And, I think when we are talking about a mixed tribunal that meets international standards, there are a lot of issues revolving around that. What type of international standards?

**EIR:** It's sort of hard to find international standards in how the UN dealt with Cambodia up to this point.

**Loung:** It's true, and I think for the people, they want a trial. I've also talked to a lot of Westerners, who are always wanting the government to stick to an international standard or one where everything is approved by the UN. It's nice to talk

about principles, to stick to principles, when you don't have to worry where your next meal is going to come from, or you don't have to worry that if you disagree, you will be killed.

I was talking to a Westerner, who said: If it's not going to be an international trial, then I want no part of it. And I said: Then maybe you shouldn't have any part in it, because you don't understand. Do you think all of us who survived don't have guilt? Don't have problems? All of us who survived the war, compromised our principles.

**EIR:** I've followed the discussion of who should be indicted, and, from your book, one of the things that struck me was your description of those Cambodians who were driven out of Phnom Penh, who were considered "class enemies," the "new people"; then, because the Khmer Rouge had decimated their own ranks, they had to draft "new people" into their army: So, these people who were fighting to survive day by day, your brothers, for example, then find that *they* were now the Khmer Rouge. They faced a "kill or be killed" situation.

**Loung:** When you talk about principles, they assume that you *had* a choice. Our war didn't last two days. In the U.S., you may see it on the front page the first day; by day 30, maybe it's a little paragraph; on day 60, a sentence in the world news. Our war lasted 3 years, 8 months, and 21 days, and that is enough time for a lot of guilt, a lot of shame for a lot of things that you wouldn't otherwise do, because you wouldn't otherwise be in that situation.

So it's easy for others to talk about sticking to your ideals. But among Cambodians I've talked to, yes, we have learned to compromise. My brothers in Cambodia, my sister, my aunt, the taxi driver, and the people in the markets I talked to, we're all willing to compromise. And excuse us, excuse us, if we don't have the Western ideal of: We have to have it all or nothing. It took America 200 years to have a working democracy, the semblance of a working democracy. Cambodia has only had a few years. And excuse us, if we are willing to say, "Yes, we are willing to compromise." If we can't indict 500 Khmer Rouge, we'll settle for those we can.

This man, telling me if you can't have ideal justice, then don't have anything, that's like my father or mother saying, "Well, if we can't live together, we might as well die, all of us." But we wanted to live, so, therefore, my mother sent us out, so that some of us would live.

I see, and a lot of Cambodians see, that we are willing to deal with a less than perfect tribunal system. We are willing to put only some of the people on trial, and we're also looking at the fact that this trial is not only about who killed whom, and who is accountable, but about our place in the world. It's about saying to the world, "Gosh darn it, this happened, you didn't know about it. You can't forget, because you never remembered. You can't forget, because you never knew." I can't forget, because it is always there, and I want my place in history. I want my place to be visible, to have an identity, to be a Cambodian, and for people to know.

And I'm also hoping that all that attention will also turn

into foreign investment, to greater credibility, to people looking at Cambodia as no longer messed up.

**EIR:** One of the most crucial things at this point, is that Cambodians learn how to live with each other. No one else can do that for them.

**Loung:** Yes! Foreigners don't have to kid themselves. Cambodians know the Khmer Rouge are living in their towns, are in the streets. They know who they are.

I was so upset with Sam Rainsy — yet I think that he is a great man. I admire him for his passion. I admire him for his heart. I admire him for his courage and for putting himself out there, for wanting to do all he can. But Sam Rainsy also *didn't* go through the Khmer Rouge. I am so sorry, he was outside of Cambodia. He grew up in France. He came from a wealthy family. He was not there. *He was not there.* And a lot of his family is out of Cambodia. He doesn't have a brother, a sister, a grandmother, an aunt, and a hundred relatives in Cambodia. They are safe. He doesn't have to be afraid that it's not only his life that he has to worry about.

**EIR:** What do you think is the actual risk of the Khmer Rouge taking up arms again?

**Loung:** I don't know how you evaluate that, but from what we see, and the reports from the people we talk to, I think the one big factor you look at, is Pailin and Anlong Veng. It's not a jungle any more: It's a casino town. There are brothels, bars, music.

**EIR:** I saw an article about the Khmer Rouge camp Anlong Veng recently, where it was reported that this was the first year that the kids did not have military training. That they didn't make sharpened pungee sticks after class.

**Loung:** You know, I did that at that age. But there is so much coming in now. The soldiers themselves say, "We don't want to fight anymore. We don't know what we are fighting for. We have nothing to fight for now. And we just want to live the last years of our lives with our families in peace and quiet."

**EIR:** Another *Phnom Penh Post* article talked about how this history is not taught in the schools. I've asked myself and some of my Cambodian friends: Who will teach the children, and what will they be taught?

**Loung:** I think we saw the same article, where they spoke to the principal, who said: If the kids want to know, they can go ask their parents, or they can go to the genocide museum.

**EIR:** And the kids said: But our parents can't talk to us about it.

**Loung:** And what do you know about museums, which are set up for foreigners, or as showcases? I've been to over 50 colleges and universities in the last two years, and in all of them, there have always been Cambodian students coming to listen to me. And they come, because they have nowhere else to go. They told me they couldn't talk about it, and I never



*A Vietnamese People's Army convoy under way through the bombed and defoliated wilderness along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.*

talked about it with my family, nor with my brother or sister-in-law. My nieces couldn't talk about it with their parents, but they could talk about it with me, both my nieces in America and in Cambodia. My nieces in America are 19 and 15. They study Russian history, Chinese history, American history, but they don't study Cambodian history in school. I have always been the one to talk to them, and a lot of the young people said they couldn't talk about it. But that 800-pound gorilla is always in the room with you. You know it's there, but you stay away from it—except sometimes you explode.

My book I wrote for my nieces, and if I have done anything, I am very proud that the kids can take it home, and have a reason to ask questions; instead of talking about their parents right away, they can ask questions. I want the kids to start learning *their* story.

**EIR:** What about the Cambodian diaspora? What have you picked up about their inclination, or not, to go back?

**Loung:** Cambodians and tourists from the United States, especially Cambodians, represent the largest increase in tourism. The young people all want to go back. My generation are going back, and are doing something. Whether they go back to visit, or to work, or they're trying to increase visibility, like I'm doing. The older generation are starting to take their money back, and are starting to feel safe to visit. And I think, until two years ago, when the Khmer Rouge completely disbanded, a lot of them weren't going back, they were still afraid.

You have Cambodian friends. The first time I went back,

I was petrified, terrified. When we left the country, it was at war, and that's the image you had. The more I go back, the more I am no longer afraid to go back. I go back every year now. For a lot of Cambodians, their first trip home is terrifying. But my brother is going back; a lot are taking their money back, starting to look into investing, starting to look at putting their money in the banks in Cambodia. A lot are looking forward to retiring in Cambodia. But they're not sure they can survive the hot season! Unless they can have air conditioning, and that means having electricity. So I think a lot of Cambodians want to go back, but it needed to have the Khmer Rouge disbanded in 1998, and they're feeling safe again.

I talked to my boss about it. I fear for my safety when I'm in Cambodia, so I am a lot more quiet and more in the background. I fear for my family's safety, but everyone's always saying, "but you're safe now." It doesn't mean that another million people have to be killed. One more person killed brings back the fear. It stays with you, and until the Khmer Rouge were gone, we were afraid.

**EIR:** As for higher education, there's just the national university, right? No technical, or vocational schools?

**Loung:** There is just the national university, and of the 11 million people in the country, roughly 7,500 Cambodians are enrolled in higher education—not enough. And in higher education, they don't have a lot of qualified teachers. Teachers don't make nearly enough money to support themselves, their families. The school system also works on a two-sessions-per-day schedule. So you have kids who go to school in the morning, and those who go to school in the afternoon. Too many kids, not enough schools.

I went to the school in my sister's village. When I first

came to America, I was told, you go to school and it's your way out. In that village, I met a kid who has two brothers and a sister, and the brothers and sister stayed at home to help. The siblings basically looked alike, and the classroom was overcrowded, so this boy, 9-10 years old, would go to school in the morning, come back, and then go back to school in the afternoon and tell the teacher he was his brother, so that he could go to school for the whole day. Here, kids complain about going to school from 8 a.m to 3 p.m. This kid is lying to be able to stay in school all day. How can we not help kids with that ambition?

I sat with my nieces in their English classes, and it's sad, very sad. If someone like me went back to teach English, I'd have kids, adults, all ages in the class. Here, if you're a celebrity, you're somebody. In Cambodia, you're somebody, if you are a good student.

**EIR:** When I got involved in what I do now, I had decided I wanted to change the world. I've been thinking a lot about what more I could do.

**Loung:** I think about changing the world, too, and I think about the people who helped me: some of the people in Vermont, people in the refugee camp who gave me vaccinations, who taught me about life in America, who taught me about spoons, forks, and knives—many people I don't know, but they changed my world. If you had asked me where I would be 20 years ago, when I was eating out of garbage cans, running around a war zone, I wouldn't have said I would be here. When I was in the foster home, I told them the only way I was going to become anybody was if I became a prostitute, and as a young person, I was deathly afraid of that. People gave me opportunities, and I seized them.

# LaRouche's Memorandum on Vietnam's 1984 Five-Year Plan

*On Oct. 4, 1984, Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. issued a 53-page memorandum of "Technical Observations on the Economic Policy of the Sixth Plenum of the Communist Party of Vietnam," in which he reviewed three general areas: "1) Economic development as such, 2) The interdependency between economic and cultural development; and 3) Special problems, bearing upon economic development, to be taken into account in light of the presently worsening economic-monetary-strategic conjuncture in both eastern Asia and the world generally." We excerpt sections of the memorandum here on the subjects of 1) problems of formerly colonized nations; 2) the philosophy of colonialism; 3) the role of basic economic infrastructure; and 4) the principles of culture.*

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## 1. Problems of Formerly Colonized Nations

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Excepting the case of China, which requires special classification and treatment, all of the newly independent nations of portions of Asia bordering the Indian and Pacific Oceans, excepting Thailand and Japan, were long victims of European flag-colonialism, and during that period of colonial subjugation suffered cruel deformations of both rural development and development of urban life. These heritages of prolonged colonial subjugation are chief among the internal problems to be mastered in essaying sound economic development today.