

WXPost MAY 5 1975
Phnom Penh

Was Ghost City

Reuter

PARIS, May 4—A French official who has just left Cambodia said today the Khmer Rouge evacuated all 2 million people from Phnom Penh in just 24 hours shortly after the city fell.

The French official said the Khmer Rouge appeared uninterested in their relations with foreign countries "except perhaps as far as Vietnam and China are concerned. They are now going to cut themselves off and go back 50 years," he said.

The official, describing what he called "an astonishing spectacle" to the French radio station Europe No. 1, said:

"All the population, without exception, were evacuated, even women who had just given birth and invalids who were pushed along in mobile beds by members of their family."

Communist broadcasts at the time indicated an evacuation was ordered by Khmer Rouge officials alleging bombers might hit the city.

The French official, who declined to be named but said he worked at the French Embassy in Phnom Penh, was one of nearly 600 refugees who crossed into Thailand yesterday after a gruelling four-day journey by truck. He spoke to the radio station by telephone.

"All the houses were empty and looted, their doors bullet-ridden and smashed in by axes. The Khmer Rouge . . . patrolled the capital, which had been emptied of its two million inhabitants in 24 hours," the

He added that it was a mystery why the refugees who came to Thailand yesterday had to leave Cambodia by truck.

"I only know that the Khmer Rouge forbid any aircraft to land at Phnom Penh airport. A single exception was made for a Chi-

nese aircraft bringing important officials from Peking," he said.

2d Convoy Due to Quit Embassy Last Week

From News Dispatches

A second convoy of 200 to 250 foreigners who took refuge in the French embassy when Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge was due to have left the Cambodian capital for Thailand last Saturday, a journalist in the first group said yesterday.

The first convoy of about 600 people, who arrived in Thailand Saturday, took four days to make the 250-mile journey. They relaxed yesterday in Bangkok.

The 450 French nationals in the group are to be flown home from Bangkok today in an Air France Boeing 747, French officials said in Paris.

Meanwhile, the French Foreign Ministry appealed to the world's press to respect the silence that foreign newsmen who left Cambodia Saturday had imposed upon themselves until all remaining foreign refugees have left the country.

The newsmen said yesterday they had agreed to say nothing about conditions inside Cambodia until the remaining foreigners in the embassy had left Cambodia.

The Foreign Ministry stressed in a note that the news blackout was necessary "for entirely understandable motives" and appealed for its strict observance by the press.

The Foreign Ministry advised editors to be cautious about publishing reports of acts of brutality in Cambodia unless the source of the report was clearly defined.