Mystery over shot lecturer

By Our FOREIGN STAFF

DR. MALCOLM CALDWELL, assassinated in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh last Saturday, had been "a steadfast worker for the cause of liberation of Vietnam and Cambodia," former Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament chairman Dr. John Cox said yesterday.

"I would consider it a tragedy for the movement that this has happened," he said.

Dr. Caldwell, 47, was chairman of CND himself in 1968-69 at the time when Mrs. Binh, Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, was admitted to Britain as a guest of the campaign to addresses a rally in Trafalgar Square.

A lecturer in South-East Asian studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, Dr. Caldwell was visiting Cambodia as a guest of the government when he was shot dead by gunmen who infiltrated the government guest house where he was staying with two US journalists.

His body was flown to Peking later that day and arrangements were being made by the British embassy there for its transfer back to Britain.

The circumstances of his death are mysterious, although the Cambodian embassy in Peking yesterday described it as "a political crime committed by the enemy of Kampuchea's (Cambodia's) revolution."

The embassy said that, in addition to Mr. Caldwell, a fighter at the place was killed and another wounded. One of the gunmen was captured and faced "the most severe punishment."

The statement described Mr. Caldwell as "a progressive personage who had sympathy with Democratic Kampuchea and had carried out successive activities to support the struggle of Kampuchea's people."

Cambodian officials had earlier said that one of the three men armed with pistols and machine guns who had attacked the guest house had committed suicide, the second had been captured and the third escaped.

Washington Post reporter Elizabeth Becker said yesterday she and Richard Dudman of the St. Louis Post Dispatch had spent nearly two hours sheltering in their rooms in the guest house after Dr. Caldwell had been killed.

She said the attack came after midnight at the end of a two-week tour the three Westerners had made of Cambodia.

She had been awakened by a loud crash and went out into the dining room where she saw a heavily armed young man wearing a black T-shirt. When he pointed a pistol at her she escaped into her room and locked the door.

The Cambodian government says London lecturer Malcolm Caldwell's murder "was a political crime."