

78/No. 9

June 1, 1978

Recently, I was given a reprint of the article "Forty-One Future Problems". While it is written primarily from an American point of view, most of the problems are common to industrialized societies and as a result have world-wide repercussions.

Since a number of Sedos members attended the course on Liberation Theology sponsored by the U.S.I.G., this month's bulletin contains a list of material available in the Documentation Centre.

In the recent Chapter elections of the Society of African Missions Fr. Joseph Hardy was re-elected Superior-General. Fr. Harrie van Hoof and Fr. Michael Morgan Evans were elected members of the General Council. Our congratulations and assurance of prayers to the newly elected Council.

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NOTICE

Beginning 1st June, the office hours
of the Sedos Secretariat will be
8.30 am. to 1.30 pm.

Forty-one Future Problems

(an article published in THE FUTUREIST, Oct. 1977)

Here is the list of long-term societal problems identified by researchers at SRI International's Center for the Study of Social Policy. The emphasis is on national or international-scale problems that could become major societal crises in the coming decades but are not very widely recognized at the present time.

1, Malnutrition-Induced Mental Deficiencies Leading to Social Instability. Malnutrition during the prenatal period and infancy seems to result in permanent mental and emotional damage. The social and political results of mentally deficient and possibly emotionally unstable populations, especially in the third world where malnutrition is endemic, will be serious for an increasingly complex and interdependent world.

2. The Cultural Exclusion of the Aged. In all developed countries the absolute and proportional growth of the aging population is straining social and economic institutions. Growth occurs through a combination of demographics, lengthening life span, and earlier retirement. The economic problem is that of an increasing economic load per worker to support the aging, which may intensify the political conflict between young and old. The sociocultural problem is that of wasted lives—citizens without participating roles. The breakdown of extended family structures in many nations is making the time of growing old one of enforced idleness and loss of meaning in life. Structural change in society may be required for the eventual resolution of the problem of aging.

3. Global Firewood Shortage. About one-third of the world's population relies on wood as its principal fuel. Rising population has created overwhelming demands on forest reserves, particularly in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and Latin America. The major consequence has been massive deforestation, with resultant flooding, erosion, climate change, and loss of land suitable for farming. The substitution of animal dung for wood fuel has further damaged the soil by denying it natural humus and fertilizer. High prices for fossil fuels discourage wood-dependent peoples from abandoning destructive use of wood and animal wastes.

4. Critical Advances in Biomedical Technology.

Access to Life Extension. The development of life-extending medical techniques raises important questions about access. Experience with renal dialysis machines indicates that the supply of surgeons and of natural organ or machine replacements will probably not meet demand.

Genetic Engineering. Developments in bioscience, particularly in what is called genetic engineering, pose unprecedented social and ethical problems. The ability to control the sex of human beings and their physical, mental, and emotional characteristics (using techniques modeled on animal husbandry) threatens the moral basis of human social organization. These forms of population shaping and control are more direct than even drug or mass psychological manipulation.

Euthanasia. Strong movements are developing for the adoption of euthanasia to dispose of the aged and unfit. Supporters of this movement promote the concept of voluntary death for those lacking a place in society.

5. The Growing Conflict Between Central Control and Individual Freedom. The advance of science has produced technologies of enormous power, scale and sophistication. The size and scope of both public and private organizations have grown enormously in the past 200 years. Many of society's ills, especially crime, the economy, and energy, seem to be demanding immediate and effective solution. The growth of giant urban complexes, with highly mobile populations, contributes to the decline of social cohesion and binding institutions, such as the community and the family.

The power of our technology seems to require equally powerful regulation. The scale of our organizations increasingly makes them remote from and dominant over the citizenry. The urgency of problems often seems to demand the sacrifice (albeit willing) of individual freedoms and sometimes of civil liberties (the threat of airplane hijacking led to warrantless search at airports). The decline of social cohesion places ever greater demands on the formal institutions of society. The net result is a reduction in the accountability of institutions, in the efficacy of individual choice, and in the preservation of civil liberties—in short, producing the conditions for a progressively authoritarian society.

6. The Conflict Between Low Growth and Rising Expectations. World-wide expansion of communications and transportation networks is leading to rising material expectations and a growing sense of inequity among those in the lower economic spectrum. The gap between rich and poor nations grew rapidly from only \$100-\$200 (per capita product) in 1850 to over \$2000 in 1970. Until recently, world industrial growth was seen as the chief means of closing the gap. However, if the world is, indeed facing fundamental limits to growth or, for other reasons, nations are unable to achieve growth, expectations will be frustrated. Widening the gap will increase the likelihood of political instability and violence.

7. Police Alienation From the Populace. New technology is having an unanticipated effect on the nature of U.S. law enforcement activities. The demand has been for technological augmentation and extension of each officer's capabilities. The economic pressures that necessitate increasing the area of his coverage, the speed of his response, and the level of force he employs have increased the social distance between the officer and the citizens he serves. Alienation of police officers from all segments of our society is such that police forces are regarded in some places as an army of occupation.

8. Loss of Cultural Diversity. The emergence of one interdependent world economy linked by rapid communications and transportation is leading to homogenization of world culture. The resulting standardization would allow greater economic efficiency and greater political and social stability. However, a culturally unified world might be less adaptable and less creative than a culturally heterogeneous one. It is well known that a complex ecology (e.g., a tropical rainforest) has greater potential for survival and is more stable than a simple ecology (e.g., monoculture). Moreover, our rich mix of cultural systems is worth preserving because such systems have intrinsic worth and may also contribute understanding essential to the solution of human problems.

9. Potential for New Urban Violence. The deterioration of older American cities and the decline of their economies threaten to trap urban populations in a situation not unlike that of Appalachia. The situation of these depressed and despairing agglomerations—including already impoverished minority groups—portends widespread and persistent violence. Quasi-guerilla warfare in the inner cities with raids against outlying, more affluent areas and assaults against police and public service facilities may reach intolerable levels.

10. The "Invisible" Famine. Even slight variations in world climate can have significant impacts on food and hunger problems. Because this effect is widespread, an "invisible famine" blankets many of the poor nations rather than being focused in a particular geographic area. The victims are likely to be in less visible rural areas because city populations are fed first to ease the threat of disruption there.

11. Persistent Malnutrition Despite Affluence. Serious lack of nutrition as a result of the composition of the diet imperils even affluent Americans. New deficiencies are continually being discovered as nutritional knowledge improves. Well-known problems such as obesity, sugar overconsumption, and nutrient removal in cereal processing persist due to public taste and the influence of technology and advertising (e.g., cost and efficiency pressures in over-the-counter and other food services, and total exposure to advertising influences through TV and other sophisticated motivational methods).

12. Teenage Alcoholism. Heavy consumption of alcohol among adolescents (13 - 18 years of age) is now at about 25%. This extension of adult drinking patterns into youth groups indicates that the present serious problem of high alcohol consumption endemic in the United States may grow worse. Further, teenage alcoholism contributes to the problem of juvenile crime.

13. Lack of Functional Life Skills in Adults. Recent U.S. Office of Education tests indicate that less than half the nation's adults possess the basic skills to function well in today's society. More than 20% are barely able to read want ads or to do the arithmetic necessary to use a checkbook. These results raise severe questions about the efficacy of American education and suggest that as our society becomes increasingly complex many more people will be unable to master the skills necessary to function well.

14. A Growing Subculture of the Information-Poor. A post-industrial society places high value on possessing and effectively using information. However, the gap is widening between those who are information-rich and those who are information-poor. Economic, educational, social, and motivational factors create an uneven distribution of ability to make use of our sophisticated new communications technology. More equal access to such technology is an ineffective solution because ability to use the technology depends on the information already held by the user. Thus those who possess the information can use the new technology to increase their existing advantage over those who have not.

15. Barriers to Large-Scale Technological Innovations. All industrial nations find it increasingly difficult to carry out large-scale technological projects in critical fields such as transportation, energy, food production, environmental protection, and housing. Huge public, private, or mixed investment schemes either fail to achieve the promised results technically (e.g., the Bay Area Rapid Transit or BART) or prove far more costly than originally estimated (the Concorde SST project). Such failures—contrasted with earlier successes (railroads, airlines, television) contribute to growing disbelief in promised benefits and discourage both private and public willingness to invest. There is a consequent loss of faith in technology and a growing reluctance to take bold innovative risks.

16. The Social Impact of Changing Role of Women. Increasingly, women are entering the work force. Equal opportunity laws and changing mores suggest that many will eventually assume senior positions in government and business. Moreover, they will do so without having to adapt to male behavioral norms. As the number of women in these positions increases dramatically, the nature of the institutions will probably change in response. In the long term, the change should prove productive

and beneficial. During the transition, however, internal problems, resembling those of a clash of cultures, can be anticipated. Institutional effectiveness may suffer a short-term decline while the problems are resolved.

17. The Sociocultural Impact of Media. Rather than direct experiences in the real world, an increasing proportion of people's life experiences are vicarious through the media. Consequently, their perception of social reality may be distorted, and their judgment may be more susceptible to intentional and unintentional manipulation. They may also tend to withdraw from direct political and social participation.

18. The Social Implications of Changing Family Forms. During the past decade the U.S. has seen a drastic increase in the divorce rate and in the number of single-parent families. Traditionally, we have expected the products of broken homes to exhibit undesirable social behavior. If true, society can expect increased delinquency, alienation, and mental illness. Perhaps as significant is a growing acceptance of the nonpermanent marriage and nonrelated family groups, which undercut older expectations of permanence and family stability. This will have impact on the whole range of social, economic, and legal institutions designed for the nuclear family (parents and children).

19. The Effects of Stress on Individuals and Society. The negative effects of stress may cost the United States more than \$100 billion annually. Although much is being done to treat the symptoms of stress through such remedies as drugs, there are significant aspects of the problem that are barely recognized, let alone studied. There are, for example, different types of stress —some of them potentially beneficial. Our treatment approaches tend to be monolithic, perhaps worsening some kinds of stress. Similarly we know little about societal stress resulting from individual stresses. Because stress-producing situations such as job and family insecurities seem on the rise, stress-related pathologies will also likely increase. At the same time, with growing demand for some form of national health care, the costs of medical treatment of stress-related symptoms could be expected to increase substantially. If the apparent correlation between the rate of social change and social stress is real, it can be expected that stress on the social level will rise as well.

20. The Potential Use and Misuse of "Consciousness Technologies." Various "consciousness technologies" constitute an applied science that draws upon medicine, physics, psychology, neurophysiology, and parapsychology. Research is revealing the potential impacts of these technologies upon humankind —both for good and for ill. Whether they present a considerable opportunity or a considerable problem depends on their diffusion and application, as illustrated below:

-Alternative medicine: A growing body of research indicates that many diseases involve psychosomatic mind-body interaction. If so, integrating the psychological/mind-body component into the treatment would be a potent aid in reducing disease. Serious questions about the fiscal dependability of national health care insurance and the rapid inflation of medical costs indicate that we badly need supplements to expensive traditional medicine.

-Capacity-enhancing technologies: Evidence exists that the human potential for rapid learning, creativity, healing and the like exceeds customary assumptions. Consciousness research suggests sociocultural barriers and professional taboos may be restricting application of new techniques in problem solving, health care, education, and criminal rehabilitation.

-Psychic abilities: There is growing evidence that psychic abilities may exist and that they may have considerable potential for misuse, principally in two forms: acquisition of confidential information and generation of long-distance effects that could be psychologically disorienting and physically harmful. At present we have insufficient information to evaluate with confidence whether such abilities exist or the threat presented by this technology of mind—a technology that may be rapidly developed, given current scientific investigations.

21. Decreasing Capital Productivity of New Technology. New technology seems to offer increasingly small return on capital investments. Investors fear that prevailing commodity prices in many industries are too low to support the risk and that necessary increases would not be supported in the market. The alternative is to seek government subsidy or tax incentives. However, to do this is to invite government regulation or intervention in business decision-making. Rather than risking an uncertain market or sharing control with the government, industrialists may increasingly elect to restrict their investments and live on past earnings while the general economy stagnates.

22. Regulatory Restraints and Economic Growth. Demand for stricter regulation of the economy appears to be rising as a result of more universal appreciation of needs (to contain pollution, conserve resources, reduce hazards), better organization of special interest groups, higher levels of public support, and distrust of large institutions. Regulation could be restrictive enough to reduce productivity, discourage free enterprise, eliminate development of significant resources, such as oil shale, and increase costs in domains such as coal mining. There may be a problem of increasingly onerous tradeoffs between the need for regulation and the requirements of a healthy economy.

23. Weapons Technology and the Right to Bear Arms. In the past, certain weapons (explosives and machine guns) have been excluded by law

from inclusion in the constitutional right to bear arms. However, new weapons technology, resulting from military research and the public's demand for better antirriminal weapons, is already beginning to strain existing laws. Weapons such as electric-shock Tasers and tranquilizer guns are already widely available. Controlling this proliferation of new weapons is difficult because of a perceived growing gap between the arms allowed the private citizen and the arms used by the police and military.

24. Cumulative Effects of Pollution. As new industrial processes are developed and new products are manufactured, the number and quantity of new chemical compounds released into the environment have increased dramatically. The effects of these compounds on human health and personality and on the stability of the ecosystem may be unknowable for years or even generations. The large number of such new compounds (estimated at about 5000 per year) makes it almost impossible to establish an acceptable testing program, which is the necessary first step in determining potential deleterious effects. Monitoring of pollutants, understanding how they reach man and his environment, characterizing their interactions with other chemicals, and assessing their potential for inducing low-level, long-term effects are beyond our present capabilities.

25. Limits to the Management of Large, Complex Systems. The power to create large complex systems (economic, political, social) does not automatically confer the power to effectively control such systems. There is growing evidence that we have aggregated small, comprehensible systems into supersystems that are very difficult to manage at all, let alone in a democratic, participatory fashion. Further, large, complex systems tend toward conditions of relatively low performance as they become more incomprehensible and less amenable to democratic control. There is a trade-off between reduced efficiency and increased capacity for survival through many levels of backup systems. Large, complex systems also tend to become increasingly vulnerable to disruption at key points as a consequence of increasing levels of interdependence. They also demand an ever higher level of self-discipline on the part of individuals.

26. The Apparent Conflict Between World Peace and World Justice. The success of efforts to preserve world peace and a tendency to replace peace with stability and the absence of conflict may result in the preservation of existing inequities within and between nations. This poses the danger of the defense of injustice in the name of peace and the danger of far more serious and uncontrollable eruptions in the future.

27. Catastrophic Experiments. The destructive potential of some new and emerging technologies has raised questions about whether some experimentation might have catastrophic results and, hence, should not be permitted. However, the traditional ethic and practice of science and the potential benefit foreseen from the successful development of such technologies seem to demand that the experimentation go forward in spite

of the risk. Examples can be drawn from physics (especially the nuclear field) and from the biological sciences (e.g., test tube creations of new strains of bacteria). No mechanism exists for identifying potentially catastrophic experiments.

28. Vulnerability of Water Supplies. The development of highly toxic chemicals and bacteriological substances and the increasing availability of powerful radiological materials pose a clear and present danger. Their accidental or deliberate introduction into public water supply systems would have disastrous results. The complexity of modern water supply systems and the vast populations they serve exacerbate the problem.

29. The Dangers of Computer Dependency. Increasing reliance on computers and a lag in supporting functions that make computer technology safe are becoming a national and an international problem. Legislative attention is being given to the loss of personal privacy relative to computer data banks. However, even more serious losses are increasingly associated with the use of computers and data telecommunications. Innovations such as electronic funds transfer (EFT), point transaction automation, and process control (such as rapid transit scheduling) entailing the safety of human life are accelerating the number and seriousness of risks due to accidental or intentional disruptions or loss of information.

30. Decreasing Utility of Higher Education. The formal educational system may be increasingly inefficient in training people to perform needed tasks, especially those of coping with a technologically advanced society. The universalization of access to colleges and universities may be diluting the quality of curricula designed for individual personal development. Thus, higher education may be contributing less to individual and social needs and may no longer ensure the greater personal and societal rewards traditionally expected.

31. Effects of Technology on the Individual Psyche. Constant exposure to technological devices may be having a serious impact on the human psyche. Examples are numerous: media-presented violence with its concomitant effect on the human approach to life; high mobility which leads to rootlessness and weakening of family ties; excessive television viewing, which blurs the distinction between reality and fantasy; an overload of stimuli, which leads to ever higher needs for sensation. Few systematic attempts have been made, however, to observe or measure such changes or to determine their effects.

32. Loss of Political and Social Cohesion. There seems to be a decline in political and social cohesion—the sense of shared purpose that provides the balance between individual desires and the general well-being. This decline seems to result from a number of forces, including high mobility: erosion of communities; the replacement of the extended

family with the nuclear family: an inward turning to personal goals resulting from a sense of individual powerlessness in a mass society; and the growth in effectiveness of interest group politics. The consequence of this loss is the undermining of the efficacy and legitimacy of society's basic institutions.

33. Institutional Boundaries as Impediments to Societal Problem-Solving. As the scope, scale, and concentration of human activities have increased, our societal institutions have become more tightly interconnected. Institutional boundaries created for a less tightly coupled society tend to compartmentalize aspects of problems and to resist more comprehensive attempts at solutions. The resulting frustration and conflicts call into question the legitimacy of the entire institutional fabric of the society and generate demands and violent actions aimed at its destruction.

34. The Need for Better Socioeconomic Models. At a time when the managers of both corporate business and government have developed powerful tools for systems management, it is important that their models be accurate for the systems they propose to manage.

Unfortunately, management technology appears to have grown faster than design capabilities for social science systems. There is a danger that management tools will be ineffective because the social systems model is insufficient for assessing the problem and defining the remedy.

35. Advanced Microcomputers and Rights to Privacy. The development of powerful microcomputers, combined with improved semiconductor memories, will make possible inexpensive and highly sophisticated individual surveillance and the maintenance of vast numbers of data banks. Individuals will find it impossible to know who is keeping dossiers on them and what information is in those dossiers. Privacy and other personal rights will be threatened as this technology develops.

36. Chronic Unemployment. Contrary to many predictions, fundamental changes in the economic situation (e.g., environmental and other constraints to economic growth, and basic long-term capital shortage) present the possibility of chronic unemployment. Various analyses indicate high degrees of hidden unemployment at present, and more in the future. Various societal full-employment bills in Congress betray awareness of the problem. Inaccurate identification of the long-term nature of the new unemployment could result in expensive attempts to resolve the problem with the wrong approaches.

37. Social Response to Energy Disappointments. Delays and uncertainties will almost certainly occur in obtaining new energy sources over the next decade. In the interim, economic uncertainties will make private investors reluctant to invest heavily in older technologies. Inevitably,

strong pressures will be exerted for control of consumption through rationing and for nationalization of utilities and of the coal, oil, and gas industries. These delays and associated conflicts could result in a number of negative social consequences.

38. A Growing Need for "Appropriate Technology." There is a growing array of "appropriate" or "intermediate" technology that could provide practical support for a much-simplified way of living. Examples of these technologies include solar power, wind power, intensive gardening, biological means of pest control and fertilization, and composting toilets. In general, these technologies tend to be ecologically more sound, energy conserving, comprehensible, and efficient when used on a small scale.

As we confront apparent limits to growth—whether induced by economic or political forces—we may have to simplify our level and patterns of consumption. Failure to nurture, in appropriate ways, the development of intermediate technology and supportive social forms will make it more difficult to solve the practical and pressing problem of finding new ways to live healthily in a world of increasing scarcity. Failure to develop appropriate technology would also result in a missed opportunity for creative social and technical learning during a time of stress and transition.

39. The Societal Changes Required to Adapt to New Energy Sources. Even though new sources of energy from advanced technologies may produce abundant cheap energy, the form in which the energy is available could be quite different from fossil fuels. Thus, when diminishing fossil fuel supplies have become prohibitively costly, we may find ourselves with a system whose structure and behavior are inappropriate for the new forms of energy. If required changes could be anticipated, we might more effectively plan long-term investments and prevent undesirable consequences.

40. Emerging Nations and the End of Oil. Over the next 25 years as the developed nations invent and install new energy sources, they will deplete most of the world's oil reserves. As they do so, they will deprive much of the third world of access to cheap fuel at a time crucial to development. Because the new alternative energy sources may be too complex and costly for these poorer nations, they may be relegated to permanent poverty.

41. Social Effects of Redefining Legal Liability. Increasing complexity, interdependence, and scale of action in society have increased the potential liability for decisions of individuals and organizations, while permitting lines of responsibility to blur. Legal devices to avoid responsibility tend to reduce the legitimacy of existing institutions and

to reinforce loss of trust and confidence in institutions and the professions. Loss of trust and confidence, in turn, has been reflected in increasing resort to the courts to seek redress for real or imagined grievances. Consequently, entrepreneurial and professional risk-taking has become far more hazardous.

Excerpt from Towards a Philosophy of Futurism by Edward Cornish

The Importance of Ideas.

....If our ideas are powerful, we can dramatically change the world to make it a happier place. But if our ideas are weak, then we are extremely limited in what we can do. The power of ideas is itself a powerful idea. In recent years, government and business leaders in the advanced countries have come to realize that the major constraints on human achievement are not physical but conceptual, that is, the limitations are in our ideas rather than in the material resources at our disposal.

In social systems, more may depend on what people think will happen than on the "realities." A builder once explained how important it was for him to get people to think that a building was actually going to be built: If people believed that he was really going to build the building, then he would get the money from the bank and credit from suppliers and the building would indeed be built. The image of the future that people had in their heads played a crucial role in actually determining the future.

People often "cannot" do things because of a lack of ideas rather than a lack of muscle power, tools, or money. Armed with the right ideas about what to do, the "impossible" may quickly become possible! To get the right ideas, we can invest in the research required to develop them. In short, if we really want to do something that seems very difficult or "impossible", we invest time and effort in the development of ideas directed at achieving our goal. History is full of instances where an "impossibility" was simply a case where people did not see how something could be done. In recent years, governments have shown that the allocation of funds for research and development is an effective means of removing the obstacles that have made desired goals seem "unattainable."

Firmly convinced that ideas can move mountains, futurists are extremely interested in the systematic development of ideas. Better ideas will make it possible to improve the human condition. Armed with powerful ideas, the people of the poorest underdeveloped nation in the world might become the richest in less than a single generation. With the right ideas, the people of the world might soon throw war, poverty, famine, and disease into the ashcan of history....

From THE FUTURIST December, 1977

TOPIC: CAMBODGE

Superficie: 184.000 Km² (1 tiers de la France; 4 fois et demie la Hollande).

Population: 7.000.000 en 1970; 5.000.000 (?) en 1976.

Races: Khmers (90%); Chinois (100.000 ?); Montagnards 80.000; Chams 150.000.

Capitale: Phnom Penh (20.000 ?).

HISTOIRE

- 1° - 6° siècle : Royaume de Fou Nan dans le Bas-Mékong assèchement des marais de Cochin-Chine
- 6° - 7° siècle : Royaume de Chenla au Moyen-Mékong. Irrigations.
- 802 - 850 : unification du Cambodge, fondation du royaume d'Angkor.
- 1180 - 1220 : apogée de la culture d'Angkor. Extension du Royaume Khmer sur toute l'Asie du S.E. Règne de Jayavarnam VII, le roi "lépreux".
- 14° - 18° siècle : A la suite d'intrigues de cour le Cambodge est en butte aux invasions du Siam et du Vietnam.
- 1863 : Le roi Norodom demande aux Français de protéger son royaume.
- 1941 : Accession au trône du prince Norodom Sihanouk.
- 1953 : Indépendance du Cambodge.
- 1955 : Abdication du roi Sihanouk en faveur de son père, Norodom Suramarith. Politique de stricte neutralité. Le Cambodge refuse toute aide militaire, il n'est pas membre du SEATO, organisation du S.E. Asiatique.
- 1960 : à la suite d'un referendum Sihanouk devient chef de l'Etat.
- 1966 : formation de deux mouvements anti-gouvernementaux: les "Khmers Libres", soutenus par la Thaïlande et les "Khmers Rouges", soutenus par la Chine.
- 1970, 18 mars : Prise de pouvoir par le Général Lon Nol, premier ministre. Le prince Sihanouk est destitué. Exilé à Pékin, il forme le GRUNK ("Gouvernement Royal d'Union Nationale Khmère").

- : Extension du conflit indochinois au Cambodge: invasion par le Nord Vietnam et le Vietcong, violentes persécutions des Vietnamiens au Cambodge, intervention des USA au Vietnam.
- 1970 - 1975 : la guerre s'étend, les Kmers Rouges se rendent maîtres de la plus grande partie du pays, Lon Nol garde la majorité de la population en son pouvoir.
- 17 avril 1975 : Prise de Phnom Penh par l'"Armée populaire nationale pour la libération de Kampuchéa". 600.000 morts, 600.000 blessés. L'ensemble de la population du Cambodge est emmenée vers les camps de travail collectif.
- 5 Janvier 1976 : Publication de la Loi Fondamentale pour le Kampuchéa Démocratique (nouveau nom du Cambodge).
- 20 mars 1976 : Election de l'Assemblée Nationale.
- 2 avril 1976 : Le prince Sihanouk est destitué; nouveau gouvernement, excluant les non-communistes.

SITUATION ACTUELLE

Etat démocratique. Khieu, président du présidium d'Etat. Nou Chea, premier ministre. Ieng Sary, vice-premier, chargé des affaires étrangères.

Désir d'une totale indépendance économique, allant jusqu'au refus explicite de toute aide économique. Indépendance autarique, basé sur la culture de la terre, avec une attention maximale à la production du riz. Construction d'un gigantesque système d'irrigation. Rétablissement des usines. Exploitation renouvelée des plantations de caoutchoux nationalisées.

Le Bouddhisme Hynayana est le culte traditionnel de la plupart des Khmers. Avant 1970 : 60.000 Bonzes. En plus il y a encore 250.000 Musulmans; 80.000 Animistes (culture Kmère originelle); 3.000 Protestants et 5.000 Catholiques.

La liberté de culte est garantie depuis 1975, mais en fait tout culte est abrogé.

CAMBODGE CATHOLIQUE

Quelques chiffres

Pour 5.000 catholiques il y a un évêque, deux prêtres séculiers, un père et deux frères bénédictins, cinq religieuses, dont trois vietnamiennes et une quarantaine de catéchistes.

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HISTOIRE

- 1554 : Fernando Mendez Pinto, Jésuite, visite le Cambodge.
- 1555 : Gaspar de Cruz, Dominicain, séjourne dans la capitale.
- XVII^e s. : Jésuites, Dominicains et Franciscaïns fondent quelques postes de mission.
- 1665 : Le P. Chevreuil, m.e.p., se rend à Colompé (Phnom Penh) et à Pinhalu. Difficultés pour les missions à cause des faits de guerre.
- 1768 : Le P. Levasseur reprend le travail de conversion et traduit un catéchisme en Khmer. Dispersion des chrétiens à cause de la guerre avec le Siam et le Vietnam.
- 1842 : Mgr Miche amène ensemble deux groupes de 500 chrétiens.
- 1850 : Erection de la Préfecture Apostolique du Cambodge (Phnom Penh) qui comprend la Cochinchine (partie Sud du Vietnam) habitée par des Khmers.
- 1861-1865 : Arrivée de beaucoup de chrétiens vietnamiens, chassés de leur pays par la persécution.
- 1955 : La Préfecture Apostolique de Phnom Penh, érigée en Vicariat Apostolique en 1924, est ramenée aux frontières politiques du pays.
- 1957 : Ordination du premier prêtre cambodgien.
- 1968 : Erection de trois districts ecclésiastiques. Mgr Paul Tep Im Sotha Samath, premier Préfet Apostolique cambodgien à Battambang.
- 1970 : Catholiques 61.000 (Khmers: 3.000; Chinois: 1.500; Vietnamiens: 56.500). Prêtres: 64 (Cambodgiens: 4; Vietnamiens: 15; Français: 45).
- mai-août : Plus de 40.000 catholiques vietnamiens sont expulsés du pays. Le clergé français et vietnamien les accompagne.
- 1970-1972 : Cinq prêtres français et deux vietnamiens sont tués.
- 1975 : Mgr Joseph Chhmar Salas (37 ans) est ordonné évêque de Phnom Penh.
14 avril
- 30 avril : Tous les étrangers, parmi lesquels les missionnaires français, sont expulsés du pays. Mgr Tep Im et le P. Jean Badré sont condamnés et exécutés.

Remarques

Depuis le début, XVI^e s., les chrétiens sont des catholiques étrangers. D'abord les soldats portugais qui prirent une femme cambodgienne. Au XVII^e s. viennent les catholiques japonais, qui furent les persécutés, et les métis portugais-indonésiens, qui s'enfuirent des Célèbes à cause de l'intolérance des calvinistes hollandais. Au XIX^e s. il y eut une invasion de catholiques vietnamiens. Ils ne se mêlent pas à la population cambodgienne et forment dans le domaine intellectuel une église pauvre.

Depuis 1970, après le départ des catholiques vietnamiens, un effort se fait pour l'acculturation de l'Eglise au Cambodge: langue, usages et coutumes, clergé, catéchistes... Des efforts sont entrepris pour former un laïcat responsable. Une coopération sincère au développement du pays. Ils cherchent à se rapprocher des protestants.

Depuis 1975 les Chrétiens, ainsi que l'ensemble de la population, sont dispersés. Les structures ecclésiastiques ont complètement disparu. Sur les chrétiens repose la lourde tâche d'être levain parmi les hommes.

voir aussi; "Sous la conduite de l'Angkar" par François PONCHAUD m.e.p., dans ETUDES fev. 1977 p. 167-180.

(traduit du texte hollandais par les Pères Oblats).

Courses:

"China, Ideology and the West" - July 23-29, 1978, International Summer School at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Fees including accommodation and meals £90. For information write Europe - China Association 7 Square de la Quétude, B-1150 Brussels. (There is a brochure in the Sedos "Course" file).

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* Have you send material on your General Chapter *
* to the Documentation Centre? *
* It could be very useful to other *
* congregations preparing for Chapters. *
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INTERNATIONAL STUDY DAYS FOR A SOCIETY OVERCOMING DOMINATION

(As we have recently printed material from the International Study Days for a Society overcoming Domination, we now share with Sedos readers a circular letter from Bishop Padin, Co-ordinator to the participants of the Project.)

March 10, 1978

As those responsible for co-ordinating the "International Study Days" project which was launched by National Conference of the Bishops of Brazil, we would like to express our delight in the way it has been, and still is, received by different groups and institutions. These are people who are seriously undertaking constructive action to overcome unjust situations of domination and oppression which exist throughout the world.

The idea of this project arose from our desire not to confine ourselves to denouncing violations of human rights. We wanted rather to set in motion the dynamic of a pedagogical process which would have something to contribute to popular "conscientising" education concerning the global problem of different types of domination. We understand "conscientising education" as that which changes people and groups into subjects of their own destiny. To be consistent with this principle, the project required that the analysis of situations of domination be done by those who suffer domination and that these same people describe, if possible, the means they have found to overcome their oppression.

As co-ordinators of the project, the C.N.B.B. has facilitated inter-communication, in order to deepen understanding through shared experiences; This has been done through case studies and Discussion Texts which have helped the critical analysis of these experiences.

The C.N.B.B., in developing this service, was moved by the gospel of Jesus Christ, who fills us with love for people, made in the image and likeness of God. We are brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ without any distinction, because our destiny is to be children of God. This is why the project is open to all who desire to promote the fundamental dignity of persons, regardless of any religious distinction, and as a sign of the mutual respect of the beliefs of all.

All of this constitutes the principal objective of the project which must be realised by means which are educative and "conscientising", rather than violent or oppressive.

The reason for this circular letter is to reinforce these essential principles, and consequently to reconsider the means proposed by the

C.N.B.B. to fulfill its commitment, which was planned to run until the end of May.

We were conscious of the different kinds of difficulties that could arise out of a project of this nature, including the reaction of those who are disturbed by the way in which their comfortable situation is questioned by the project. Even within the churches is no unanimity concerning such problems. And on the other hand, certain political regimes were not sympathetic to our manner of acting. C.N.B.B. has received, therefore, various protests from critics and malcontents as a result of the realization of the project. It is even maintained that the project is an interference in the work of other bishops' conferences, or other churches. The C.N.B.B., in fact, only invited the other to share in a common reflection and action, and everyone was entirely free to participate, or refrain from doing so. However, we recognise that the participation of certain groups in the project could create difficulties within local churches where attitudes towards the project are not unanimous. Such difficulties were even addressed to the C.N.B.B. through the Holy See, which is very concerned with its mission of convergence and universal understanding within the Church.

All aspects of this problem have been weighed by the president of C.N.B.B. with his Episcopal Pastoral Commission. The commitment to the principle objectives of "conscientization" through an intercommunication facility being maintained, it was concluded that it would be appropriate to propose to the next assembly of C.N.B.B. (which will take place on 18-25 April) that they review the means of fulfilling this commitment. Taking into account, however, the difficulties of realising a final international meeting promoted by a national bishops' conference, the President of C.N.B.B. will propose to the general assembly that the final phase of its mission within the framework of the project, without realising the final meeting itself.

It seems that the holding of local, regional or national meetings will provoke among those interested in the process created by the project, reflections closer to the situations in which they live.

At the same time, participants organising such meetings might more easily understand what difficulties might exist at the local or national level.

By the end of May 1978 this stage of the project will be completed as planned, with the handing over of all conclusions of the meetings to the co-ordinators of the project, for publication.

Even though the C.N.B.B.'s service to the project will end, there is nothing to prevent the development of interest among participants in taking responsibility for continuing the dynamic created by the project.

(Signed D. Candido Padin, bishop of Bauru)

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Compiled by Sr. Agnetta, S.Sp.S.