

## **Vietnam today: the State and the Catholic Church at Central and Local levels**

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*ABSTRACT: Catholic mission was carried out in Vietnam since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There are now over six millions Catholics, accounting for about 8% of the Vietnamese population. Not like some other Southeast Asian countries, there has been in Vietnam no religious conflict. There are, however, some gaps between the authorities and religious organizations. Since the collapse of communist block in former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, both the State and the Catholic Church in Vietnam have improved their relationship at both national and local levels. The distance between both sides at these three aspects: cultural-religious, socio-political and organizational, which used to be long-term problematical, has now step by step been narrowed.*

The Vietnamese Catholics have always had difficult relationship with the political authorities under different historical periods for various reasons. From the beginning of the Catholic mission, its ban of ancestor worship prompted oppositions. The Nguyễn kings disliked the presence of European missionaries. The fight against French colonialism at times became Catholic massacres. Then the Marxist-style land reform of 1954-1957 confiscated Church properties. The tensions between state and Catholic Church remained until the collapse of Communist block in former Soviet Union and East Europe. An overview of the relationship between Vietnam and the Holy See and the Vietnamese Episcopal Committee, on one side, and at the local levels with the case of the Phùng Khoang village,<sup>1</sup> on the other side, provides a detailed example for the situation of Catholic community in Vietnam today. It could be analyzed in three aspects: cultural-religious, socio-political and organizational.

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## I. Christian and non-Christian Cultural-Religious Views

*At the national level*

Most of personal staff members of political authorities are non-Christians and have other world outlooks than Christians. From a cultural-religious point of view, two Christian and non-Christian communities here remained relatively independent from each other, as displayed in the following table:

<b>Traditional non-Christians</b>	<b>Christians</b>
Under influences of traditional East Asian Confucian culture	Under influences of Christian-European culture
Loyal to emperor is foremost	Loyal to emperor, but Christ comes first
Patriarchy: male conducted ancestor veneration and property inheritance	Gender equality: Woman is emancipated; monogamy
Parents-children: piety with ancestor veneration	Parents – children: piety but without ancestor veneration <sup>2</sup>
Cultural-religious life: polytheism, not devout to any religion	Cultural-religious life: monotheism, devout
Religiously inclusive and tolerant	Religiously exclusive
Religious activities: private, without church organization	Religious activities: collective, with church organization
Relationship with God: a relative distance	Relationship with God: an absolute distance
Hierarchy: by age and social position	Hierarchy: by church position

There have been changes in both Christian and non-Christian communities in the last few decades. The Second Vatican Council opened the Catholic Church up to other religions and cultures. Vietnamese Catholics are allowed to venerate ancestors. Nowadays the Catholic Church in Vietnam is very active in supporting a cultural integration. On the non-Christian side, in context of the Renovation (*Đổi mới*) and the collapse of the Communist block in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Vietnam carried out a more open policy regarding religion with the Resolution No.

24 of Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in November 1990. However, significant differences between Christians and non-Christians still exist. We will briefly examine the ritual differences.

The “ritual question” has not been systematic analyzed. It appeared in Vietnam since the beginning of the Christian mission. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the issue became more serious because the Nguyễn dynasty considered Confucianism the “state religion.” In a Confucian state, the emperor has absolute power, which is not acceptable to Christians. If Vietnam became more Christian, the legitimacy of the emperor and his dynasty would be challenged, thus the question about ritual was also political.

#### *At the local level*

Before the question was intensified, Christians and non-Christians in Phùng Khoang coexisted peacefully, and even collaborated well through several centuries. Non-Christians helped Christians build the parish church. On three steles by the church there are national, *Nôm* and Chinese scripts.<sup>3</sup> Some Christians have non-Christian relatives, and they celebrate together on numerous occasions, such as death anniversaries and New Year. Marriages between Christians and non-Christians were common.

There were differences even during those old days. Before the Second Vatican Council, Catholics were not allowed to venerate their ancestors. Even now some Christians in Phùng Khoang do not have an ancestor altar. They had another concept of piety than Confucians. Non-Christians valued sons more than daughters, which was not true for Christians. Except for New Year (*Tết*) and Mid-Autumn festival (*Trung Thu*), Christians did not participate in the village’s traditional festivals<sup>4</sup> such as the *Nguyen Tiêu* on the 15<sup>th</sup> January, the *Thanh Minh* on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March, the *Đoan Ngọ* on the 5<sup>th</sup> May and the *Vu Lan* on the 15<sup>th</sup> July of the lunar calendar. The lunar calendar was not important for them. Instead, they celebrated Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter. On Sundays they go to church and do not work. Christian family parties are usually frugal.

Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the formation of the Christian parish, Christians and non-Christians in Phùng Khoang have lived in two separate quarters (*xóm, giáp*). Christians conduct weddings and funerals differently. Except for the first death anniversary, Christians in Phùng Khoang do not carry out other customary rituals, such as on the 49<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> day after the death. Unlike their non-Christian

relatives, they do not exhume and move the remains of the deceased. They have a planned cemetery called the “Holy Garden”. Nearby is a cemetery for non-Christians. A Christian is responsible for Holy Garden and a non-Christian cares for the other one. The Holy Garden has strict regulations and preferences, so that not all Christian villagers are equal after they die.<sup>5</sup>

The long-time cultural-religious differences between Christians and non-Christians did not decline after August Revolution in 1945. Viet Minh’s Marxist doctrine had a philosophical, cultural and religious outlook contrary to that of Christians, somewhat similar to the situation under the Nguyễn dynasty. The two words “Christian” (*giáo*) and “ordinary civilian” (*lương*) continued to be used in official statements, just like under the Nguyễn dynasty.

The “ritual question” is understandable because of unavoidable differences between Christianity and Vietnamese traditional religions and beliefs. It is an excuse to divide Christians and non-Christians but it alone could not account for eventual hostilities between the two groups.

## **II. State and Catholic Church from Socio-political Point of view**

### *At the National level*

During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Christian missions in Vietnam were all closed with trade. European missionaries gone to Vietnam usually in trading ships and Christian mission stimulated in fact trade between Vietnam and Europe at that time. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Bishop Pigneau de Behaine had a lot of political activities to support Prince Nguyễn Ánh in a civil war against the Tây Sơn. He was an author of the Versailles agreement in 1787 between France and Vietnam. Since then a closed relationship between Christian mission and colonialism became clearly. That the Nguyễn kings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century carried out a policy of Christian prohibition was understandable. Thousands Christians, among them some French and Spain missionaries, were executed. However, Napoleon III had used this factor to invade Vietnam in 1858. It caused a hostility between non-Christian and Christian. In the eyes of non-Christian the Catholics were collaborators of colonial authorities.

Communist conquest to power in 1945 did not improve the situation. Although Hồ Chí Minh's government carried out officially a policy for religious freedom and for Christian and non-Christian solidarity, some gaps still remained between Catholic Church and communist regime. On one side, at the beginning, the Catholics had

supported the independence and Hồ Chí Minh's coalition government. But they had no contact with the Việt Minh. Under the guideline of *divini redemptoris* in 1937 of the Holy See, the Holy See supported in 1950 officially not Hồ Chí Minh's, but the pro-French regime of Bảo Đại. Any collaboration between Catholics and communist was not allowed by the statement of the Bishop Conference Indochina's in 1951.<sup>6</sup>

On the other side, the communist leaders once considered Catholic Church as a reactionary force, as communist mass medium used to say, although since 1960<sup>th</sup> the Holy See under John XXIII, especially Paul VI, had a more open outlook to other religions, beliefs and to communist block. At the end of 1950, last European missionaries had to leave North Vietnam, among them was Apostolic delegate John Dooley. In 1970 Paul VI had a wish to visit both North and South Vietnam, but he did not receive positive reply of the communist leadership. There was no contact between authorities and Catholic Church. It is no exaggeration to call it as a "silent Church". There was no delegate of Catholic Church in North Vietnam in Second Vatican Council. Meanwhile the Catholics in South Vietnam especially under the Ngô Đình Diệm's regime had a lot of privileges from the authorities, the Catholic Church in North Vietnam before 1975 had no opportunity to contact with outside world. A frozen relationship between State and Catholic Church in fact remained until 1980. Vietnamese authorities were not pleased with the appointment for 117 martyrs to Saints by John Paul II in 1989.

The collapse of communist block was automatically a good opportunity for Vietnam to carry out an open policy regard religions in general, Catholic Church in particular. Since 1990, both sides have had contacts to decide issues of Christian community, for example, appointing a bishop, etc. The annual reports of US Department of State or International Amnesty Organization which complains the situation of the human right and religious freedom in Vietnam receive no active support of the Holy See. Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng has his first visit to the Holy See in January 2007. It is no doubt that the relationship between Vietnam and the Holy See is getting better.

#### *At the local level*

By the end of colonial time, Phùng Khoang warmly welcomed the Hồ Chí Minh's government.<sup>7</sup> A meeting in village's communal house was held on 23 August 1945 to welcome national Independence. That year, Phùng Khoang suffered hunger, which killed 40 people, mostly non-Christians. But Phùng Khoang collected fifteen tons of

rice in a “gold week” for the Việt Minh.<sup>8</sup> Communist cells and the Saving the Fatherland Groups were founded, with participations of Buddhist monks.<sup>9</sup> Some young men who worked in a printing factory in Hanoi played a role in spreading the Communist propaganda. The Việt Minh founded an Administrative Resistance Committee of the Trung Vãn commune. Hundreds of men were mobilized into the patriotic movements against the French.<sup>10</sup>

*Exodus to South Vietnam.* Meanwhile, Christians feared the Communist Việt Minh. During the First Indochina War, most village officials and militia were Christians. The parish priests in Phùng Khoang actively co-operated with the French. More than thirty men (among them Christians and non-Christians) were recruited into pre-colonial troops of Bảo Đại’s regime. A bunker was built there. Some native Communist guerrilla were disclosed and killed by their villagers. Many villagers who worked for Việt Minh were arrested and tortured in the First Indochina War. Although Bishop Joseph Maria Trinh Nhu Khue decided to remain in Hanoi with his believers, a priest and more than three hundred Christians, about 40% Christian population in village Phùng Khoang at that time, left their home village for South Vietnam after the Geneva Agreement in 1954.<sup>11</sup> In comparison, only 9% of the Christian population in Hanoi diocese left home.

*Land Reform.* After 1954, Phùng Khoang was a “problematic Christian village” in the eyes of the Communist cadres from the security point of view. It had to come through difficult years of land reform.”<sup>12</sup>

Before land reform Phùng Khoang had a relatively good land situation in comparison to other neighbor villages in suburbs Hanoi. It had 585 *mẫu*<sup>13</sup> for only 1,123 men (1926), and each young man was allotted a *sào*<sup>14</sup>. There were not many changes until 1954. By the beginning of land reform, all worship places (church, pagoda) in Phùng Khoang owned 28 *mẫu*. They rented land and received land rent, so they were pretty well to do<sup>15</sup>.

Two teams implemented land reform in Trung Vãn in January 1956. Overall, it was a repression. By the middle of 1956 all land of landlords were confiscated and distributed to poor peasants. All church and pagoda properties were liquidated. Two persons in Phùng Khoang were classified as landlords. They owned 50 *mẫu*, including 33 *mẫu* of ponds and lakes, which was less than 10% of the total land area in Phùng Khoang at that time. They inherited their estate from their fathers, and received land rent. These two landlords, both Christians,<sup>16</sup> were executed.

Without land, the church and pagoda could not support their religious activities. Among people who were classified to the “extortion class” (*giai cấp bóc lột*) were communists who had fought the French. Without detail investigation people accused some Communists of belonging to the oppositional Vietnam’s Nationalist Party. Two hundred men in the Trung Văn commune were considered working for the colonial authorities, among them many Catholics. Hundreds of people were in prison because they or their relatives had connections to the “exploiting class”. All the property of two landlords was confiscated so that their relatives had a lot of difficulties to live. People who were chosen as core cadres were illiterate.

After these serious errors, a “correction” was implemented. Many people were released from prison and reinstated, among them some Christians.<sup>17</sup> In many cases their properties were returned. The parish church was allowed to own two *mẫu*, including ponds. The Buddhist temple was allowed to own 5,880 m<sup>2</sup>. Although land reform was denounced by the middle of 1957, until now Christians as well non-Christians here cannot forget land reform days.<sup>18</sup>

*Coop Farming.* Since October 1959, Christian as well as non-Christian peasants in Phùng Khoang was mobilized to found a co-operative farm (*hợp tác xã*). The following year, 90% of villagers had to join a lower-level coop farm. Catholic Church considers privately owned property as an inalienable human right that was contrary to Marxist concept. Most Christian peasants had to take part into coop farm “voluntarily,” although they did not want to. Only eight families did not join the coop farm, among them were some Christians. In 1964 Phùng Khoang had a crop failure and had to call the help from capital authorities. Although 50% of peasants wanted to leave the coop farm, it is an ironic that the Communist cell in Phùng Khoang was so proud that it admitted twenty new members in 1965 and lobbied the upper Communist organization to award it “the Communist cell of four virtues.”<sup>19</sup> Both the communal house and one part of the parish church were used for public works. The church was used as a school. The communal house was used for storage and a preschool plus kindergarten. In short, socio-economical situation as well as cultural-spiritual life in Phùng Khoang before Renovation was catastrophic.

Since 1990, Phùng Khoang becomes a “student village”. Some four thousand tertiary students find their accommodation here. The life standard of both Christian and non-Christian has been improved. All worships are free to practice. Buddhist temples, commune house and parish church were maintained and repaired. But peasants have now their other issues: no land and no other occupation than building

rooms for rent. Both Christian and non-Christian could not free from a lot of social evils such as gambling, prostitution, drug, etc.

### **III. State and Catholic Church as two Different Institutions**

#### *At the Global and National levels*

Until now most scholars have examined the relationship between the state and the Christian Church from the social-political and cultural-religious points of view. We will examine them as two different organizations at the village levels.

The Communist Party and the Christian Church were two disciplined and basically closed organizations with different histories, philosophical outlooks and ideologies. There was no contact between Hồ Chí Minh's government and Catholic Church in Vietnam for several decades. Bishop Francois Chaize (“Thinh” in Vietnamese) did not cooperate with the Việt Minh during the First Indochina War. Since 1950, Phùng Khoang was under the See of Bishop Joseph Maria Trinh Nhu Khue, who had no contact with the Hanoi regime after the land reform.<sup>20</sup> During the Vietnam War, there was no contact between Christian Church in North Vietnam and outside world, even with the Holy See.

Recently, the relationship between state and Catholic Church in context of Renovation and Second Vatican Council has been radical improved. One could be optimistic to say about a diplomatic relations between Vietnam and the Holy See in the near future. The Catholic Church in Vietnam is active to support a cultural integration. Yet many historical consequences of this relationship can not be solved in short time such as land, church property, etc.

#### *At the Village level*

There existed a big gap between the State and the Church at the village level in the post-colonial period.<sup>21</sup> There was no contact between the Việt Minh guerilla and Phùng Khoang parish during the First Indochina War. After 1954, in principle, all religious worships were not prevented, but they were restricted, and local authorities discriminated against Christians in Phùng Khoang, as in the post-colonial period.<sup>22</sup> Every religious activity, even to stage a procession for the Blessed Virgin or for Christ could only be on the parish ground.

Vietnamese traditional religions and beliefs were in the same situation. The last village's festival was carried out in 1939 and they were only restored in last two decades. The relation between local authorities and parish in the first years after Geneva Agreement was worse because of the power struggle between the State and the Church at the village level during the exodus and the land reform. The land reform team denounced the priest in Phùng Khoang parish Paul Tran Dinh Thuy publicly by a core Christian woman, but did not classify him to the landlord rank.<sup>23</sup> He was isolated from Christian peasants and in hunger. By mistake, the correction officer treated toward him lighter. He died in 1957 at the age of seventy. His death in the eyes of many Christians was considered as an indirect consequence of the land reform.

After the land reform, the tense relation between local authorities and the parish Phùng Khoang did not improve. Christians lacked pastors after the exodus and many seminaries were closed, including Saint Joseph Seminary in Hanoi.<sup>24</sup> One priest said that mass at various parishes and his travel was restricted, though not prevented. Sometimes there was no mass on feast days, even Christmas.<sup>25</sup> The appointment of every priest and catechist must be approved by the State. A catechist in Phùng Khoang, Peter Nguyen Van Nghi (born in 1942), was ordained to the priesthood without permission, because his curriculum vitae was "problematic". As a result he was under house arrest for nine years. Only at the beginning of 1990 he was sent to study at Saint Joseph Seminary and was appointed officially in 1994.

Some points should be emphasized in the analysis of the relation between local authorities and parish.

Firstly, although there was officially no religious discrimination of Communist Party of Vietnam, in fact a Christian Communist received no support from either the Christian church or the Communist organizations. Thus, most Christians had no motivation to join the Party. During 1954 – 1975, four Christians joined the Communist cell in Phùng Khoang. They were not practicing and received no support from the parish.<sup>26</sup> After 1986, the situation improved somewhat, but there were few Christian Communists. Among four hundreds members of the Central Committee of CPV now there is no Christian. Among fifty-six Communists in Phùng Khoang in 2006 only four were Christian. Among seventeen secretaries of the Communist cell in Trung Vãn during 1945-1995, there was not a single Christian.<sup>27</sup>

Secondly, there were few Christians who had a good position in local government. The appointment of local cadres is supposed to follow a policy structure

that mobilizes both Christians and non-Christians.<sup>28</sup> However, there were few Christians in leadership position in local institutions such as the Commune Administrative Committee, The Hồ Chí Minh's Working Youth Union (today the Hồ Chí Minh's Communist Youth Union), and so on. Among nineteen chairmen of Commune Administrative Committee in Trung Vãn before 1986 there was no Christians, though Christians made up two-fifths of the total population of Trung Vãn. Among eight heads of the co-operative farm only two were Christians.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes Christians serve as second in command. The situation after the Renovation improved somewhat, but not radically better. Christians take part in church youth organizations and have no time for other organizations. Some Christians take part in local social works and are appointed to the Fatherland Front, People Committee, and People's Inspection Committee and so on.<sup>30</sup> The role of Christians in Phùng Khoang in resistance struggle of Việt Minh against the French colonialists was almost not recognized.<sup>31</sup> Today some villagers still consider their Christian neighbors collaborators of colonial authorities, although in a hushed voice.

Thirdly, there was no co-operation between local authorities and parish to decide local common issues (for example, against social ills or building of new life). Although the activities of parish committee in Phùng Khoang were not limited or under control and investigations as it was before the Renovation, but there is no co-operation between them to decide common local issues.

On the one side, the representatives of local authorities and parish have to visit each other on some occasions (New Year, Christmas). Some of them have relative relationship with each other. The representatives of parish committee attend to village's annual festivals in Buddhist pagoda or Commune House. The marriage between Christian and non-Christian are more and more often. But on the other side, there is no doubt a distance between local authorities and the parish. The parish priest in Phùng Khoang is not interested in a pro-governmental Catholic Solidarity Committee. He goes to diocese or other parishes weekly, but has "no time" to visit his "own" Commune People's Committee, although these seats are in a distance only some hundred meters far from each other. He was sometimes invited by local authorities to take part in a meeting of the Fatherland Front or similar events, but he only sends his representatives.

It is clearly, the presence of non-Christians in their relative family festivals is limited because of their different cultural-religious rituals and outlooks. In context of current market economy there is a lot of factors to divide local authorities and parish. Distance between the rich and the poor increases and it causes political instability in

countryside. Because of urbanization the peasants lost their land and are fret with local authorities as a "new village tyrant strata" who are not free from corruption and other social evils. The social-moral decline departs from those local staff members. The distance between peasants and local authorities increases.

Besides, the parish priest and Catholic peasants have themselves other issues with the local authorities. They have a feeling of a religious discrimination. The educational level of staff members of local authorities is problematical. While the parish priests studied in a priest seminar and some of them have even an opportunity to study abroad, most of staff members of authorities have only a high school level.<sup>32</sup> The more staff members are "addicted" to meetings, the more they could not improve the relationship with the peasants. Many of them have no idea on Christian outlooks and rituals although they have contact with their Christian neighbors daily.

Christian peasants are still caught in a power struggle between the state and the church at the village level. In many cases the Christian peasants obey the parish priest rather than the secretary of the Communist cell, and the local authorities are not pleased about this.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In post-colonial period, there existed hostility between the State and Catholic Church in Vietnam as consequences of relationship between colonialism and Christian mission. First and Second Indochina Wars increased the conflicts between communist authorities and Catholic Church in Vietnam at the central as well as at village levels.

Since the collapse of communist block in former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the State and Catholic Church have improved their relationship at both national and local levels. The distance between both sides at all three aspects: cultural-religious, socio-political and organizational which used to be long-term problematical, has now step by step been narrowed. The relation between Vietnam and the Holy See is in forward and in context of contemporary international and national situation after Cold war we could be optimistic to discuss on the relationship between the State and the Catholic Church in Vietnam.

**Reference** (see next page):

**Reference:**

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- <sup>1</sup>. A Catholic village in the Từ Liêm District has a land of about 120 ha and a population of 2,100, among them was 1,064 Catholics (2005). It is less than ten miles from Hanoi center. Phùng Khoang is an old village which was found in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The first groups of Christian missionaries, with Alexandre de Rhodes, might have reached Phùng Khoang because of its proximity to the Thăng Long capital. Therefore the Christian parish of Phùng Khoang was not founded until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The present parish church was built in 1910.
  - <sup>2</sup>. The Vietnamese Catholics were allowed to carry out their ancestor veneration only after the Second Vatican Council.
  - <sup>3</sup>. The oldest of those steles was built in 1893, the other was in 1913 and the last in 1927.
  - <sup>4</sup> Nguyễn Thị Minh Quý. *Some changes in cultural-religious life in the Catholic village of Phùng Khoang today*, KL-CN. 2115, Hanoi, 2006, pp. 22-23.
  - <sup>5</sup>. This is discrimination among the Catholics in “Saint Garden”, especially against an un-devout or a pre-Communist Catholics.
  - <sup>6</sup>. There were at that time only five Vietnamese among thirteen bishops in Indochina.
  - <sup>7</sup>. Before 1945, Phùng Khoang had belong to Hà Đông province.
  - <sup>8</sup> *Lịch sử cách mạng xã Trung Vãn* (Revolutionary History of Commune Trung Van), Hanoi, 2005, p. 37.
  - <sup>9</sup> *Lịch sử cách mạng xã Trung Vãn ...*, *ibid.*, p. 38.
  - <sup>10</sup>. Local Việt Minh had a plan to destroy the Church in Phùng Khoang, however this plan was not carried out.
  - <sup>11</sup>. *Lịch sử cách mạng xã Trung Vãn*, *ibid.*, p. 57, 60-61. Many villagers say that the number of Catholics who went to South Vietnam was more. Most of them went into the of South Vietnam in 1954.
  - <sup>12</sup>. Edwin E. Moise. *Land reform in China and North Vietnam*, Consolidating the Revolution at the village Level, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill/London, 1983, p. 193.
  - <sup>13</sup>. A *mẫu* is equal to 3,600 square metres.
  - <sup>14</sup>. A *sào* is equal to 5,03 square metres
  - <sup>15</sup> The church in Phùng Khoang owned 18 *mẫu* while the church in the neighboring village Trung Vãn owned only 6 *mẫu*. The pagoda in Phùng Khoang owned 10 *mẫu* while the pagoda in Trung Vãn owned only 2 *mẫu* 6 *sào*.
  - <sup>16</sup>. *Lịch sử cách mạng xã Trung Vãn*, *ibid.*, p. 13. Many villagers reported that one of these landlords was Mr. Chanh Than. He was a speaker of the rural assembly, a herbal doctor, who did not do anything bad, and received sympathy from his villagers.
  - <sup>17</sup>. Among those people who were sentenced by land reform was a chief of Communist cell. He was by mistake correction classified to resistance landlord rank. After land reform he became Vice Chairman of district Hoài Đức.
  - <sup>18</sup>. See: Hoang Van Chi. *From Colonialism to Communism: A Case History of North Vietnam*, Preager Publishing House, New York, 1964.
  - <sup>19</sup>. *Lịch sử cách mạng xã Trung Vãn*, *ibid.*, p. 73.

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<sup>20</sup> Bishop Joseph Maria Trinh Nhu Khue refused to take part into a meeting in 1958 with the initiative of Premier Phạm Văn Đồng to look for a co-operation between the State and the Catholic Church.

<sup>21</sup> A Catholics co-operating with Việt Minh during First Indochina war must leave the church.

<sup>22</sup> The discrimination between Catholics and non-Catholics was first under the Nguyễn dynasty. Non-Catholics were called as ordinary citizen (*luong dân*) in contrary toward Catholics who was called as believer of “evil cult” (*tà đạo*). Those words in official state documents and curriculum vitae were popular until 1986.

<sup>23</sup> Some villagers reported that she later became insane maybe because of remorse.

<sup>24</sup> A lack of priest is improved in last decades. Saint Joseph Seminary is allowed to accept students every year.

<sup>25</sup> Although the situation is somewhat improved after Saint Joseph Seminary re-opened in 1982, there were only 33 priests in the Hanoi Diocese by 1995. See: Trương Bá Cần. *Catholicism in Vietnam in 50 years (1945-1995)*, ibid, p. 151-152.

<sup>26</sup> Among a hundred Communists in the Trung Văn cell there are only seven Catholics.

<sup>27</sup> The village of Cổ Nhuế (Từ Liêm, Hanoi) has the same situation. Among 780 Communists there, only two are Catholic (0.3%) though Catholics are about 20% of its total population.

<sup>28</sup> The representatives of religious organizations in National Assembly are very limited. There are only three representatives of Buddhist and two of the Catholic Churches.

<sup>29</sup> The situation after 1986 has been slightly improved. First Catholic chairman of Commune Committee was a woman in 1989. But because of some mistakes (not concerned to religious factors) she and some other colleagues were sentenced in prison for two years. She was not a devout Catholics.

<sup>30</sup> The village Cổ Nhuế has the same situation.

<sup>31</sup> The role of Catholics in Phùng Khoang village in the First and the Second Indochina Wars as well as the consequences of land reform are omitted in a monograph on the history of the village.

<sup>32</sup> The educational level of villagers Phùng Khoang is relative high, but that of the staff members of local authorities in Trung Văn is low. The situation in Commune Cổ Nhuế, neighbour to Trung Văn is not better although some of its staff members take part into part-time program at universities.