

Revolution and Religion in Vietnam

ĐỖ QUANG HƯNG*

ABSTRACT: By analysis on rich and original materials regarding government's attitude and policies on religion, the author asserts that the August Revolution 1945 had scored initial achievements in solving at the first step the religious issue Vietnam, together with many other issues of the national warfare and the people's livelihood in and after the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The Vietnamese Communists, guided by the doctrine on religion of Marxist-Leninism and by the thought of Hồ Chí Minh, had chosen the right approach toward religious issue thus created the base for religious policies of the State of Vietnam up to present.

The August Revolution (1945) and Religious Issues

The August Revolution was a great event, the launching pod for important leaps forward of our nation, our country in the era of National Independence and Socialism in the 20th century.

The deep characteristic feature of this revolution was above all, in the national character, in the National liberation of a staunch nation, determined to preserve its cultural identity, its national independence, unification and sovereignty.

When leading this revolution, the Communist Party of Vietnam highlighted by Marxist-Leninism and Hồ Chí Minh's thought was all the more conscious of this matter.

Even in "the eve of the revolution", in the war-base of Việt Bắc, when opening the National Conference of Tân Trào, among 60 delegates representing political parties, national salvation organizations from North to South, delegates of different ethnic groups and religions were present¹.

*. Prof., Dr. Institute of Religious Studies, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences.

The Indochinese Communist Party (the previous name of the Vietnamese Communist Party) by then had issued a proclamation consisting of 10 points, as an uprising program. In this proclamation, the 5th point stipulated: "To promulgate the rights of the people, for the people: human rights, rights of property (rights of ownership), civic rights, rights of universal suffrage, democratic liberties (freedom of religion, of thought, of speech, of reunion, of circulation), equality of rights between nationalities, between men and women.")²

On 25 August 1945, in Hanoi when the power was just in the hands of the Việt Minh, Hồ Chí Minh, President of the National Liberation Committee, signed a decision changing this Committee into the Temporary Government in which a famous Catholic personality Nguyễn Mạnh Hà was the Minister of the National Economy.³

The August Revolution, personified by Hồ Chí Minh, had attracted many other famous Catholic intellectuals like Ngô Tử Hạ, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of War Invalids, Doctor Vũ Đình Tụng, the Minister of the Ministry of War Invalids (at the end of the anti-French Resistance), Lawyer Nguyễn Thành Vĩnh, Director of the Finance Office of South Vietnam, Chairman of the Organization of Catholics for the Salvation of South Vietnam, Trần Công Chính, of the Redemptorists at Thái Hà village, Hanoi, Secretary of the Central Committee of Catholics for the National Salvation⁴, Lawyer Thái Văn Lung, representative of Gia Định at the National Assembly, Vice Chairman of the Seventh Military Area (he died on the first days when the French provoked hostilities in South Vietnam).

There were also many remarkable Catholic personalities in the National Assembly such as Dr. Nguyễn Tấn Gi Trọng (Official member of the Standing Committee in the National Assembly), Ngô Tử Hạ, who acted as Chairman of the first session of the National Assembly on 2 March 1946, especially the role of the Priest Phạm Bá Trục, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly since December 1946⁵.

In the National Assembly of the National Resistance there was still Cao Triều Phát (Member of the Standing Committee), whose contributions had been long since recognized.

On two other notable personalities Lê Hữu Từ and Hồ Ngọc Cẩn, two bishops and Supreme Advisers of the Government, their activities and positions had been clearly appraised in the revolutionary history.

The religious policy of the August Revolution had been dealt on in many documents. People still recall the first session of the Temporary Government on 3 September 1945, one day after the State of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam came into being, in which President Hồ Chí Minh pointed out 6 urgent issues, among which the sixth issue was especially reserved for the policy on religious beliefs: "Colonialists and feudalistic made use of the policy of dividing non-Catholic and Catholic compatriots for their domination. I propose the Government to issue a proclamation: Freedom of beliefs and solidarity between Catholics and non-Catholics"⁶.

In September 1945, many important sessions had been organized by the temporary Government under the presidency of Hồ Chí Minh. Among them, there were up to 4 sessions on the religious issue. The record of the session on 20 September 1945 noted: "Freedom of beliefs being a principle of the democratic republic regime, our Government stipulates: "First, temples, pagodas, imperial tombs, churches, any places of religious character, any religions should be respected by the people, and they cannot be violated."⁷

The author of this article has published a number of decrees of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1945-1946 in a recent article⁸.

The thought of Hồ Chí Minh on the great national union, on the freedom of religious beliefs had been deeply impregnated in the highest power organ. In his concluding speech, Tôn Đức Thắng, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, First Session, on 9 November 1946, said: "If anybody had class, party, religion prejudices, when coming to this room he would ... let his heart follow the highest and most sacred call among all other calls in ordinary occasions: the call of the Fatherland. This atmosphere has completely reflected the general situation... the general unity of will and action..."⁹

In this article, I made public a number of other important documents of the Indochinese Communist Party.

One should say immediately that the August Revolution was successful at a date, which seen from the religious angle, was not favorable.

The anti-Communist tendency was increasingly clear and cynical under the reign of the Popes such as Pius XI, Pius XII (in and after the II World War).

Even until 1951, in the Message of the Evangelic Messenger, Pope Pius still reaffirmed: “The Church has condemned many different sects belonging to Marxist socialism. The Church still maintains this verdict for the duty and eternal interest of the Church is to stop short strong and dangerous flows of the present Communist doctrine which are being propagated everywhere.”¹⁰

Meanwhile, leftist viewpoints of Stalin and the International Communism (1919-1943) on religious issues, still had a strong influence in Eastern Communist Parties.

After the August Revolution, some localities of our country, were more or less influenced by these viewpoints.

On the *Sự Thật* (The Truth) issue No. 30 (6 April 1946,) under the pen-name of T.C, Trường Chinh wrote an important article under the title “*To overthrow an erroneous tendency, Not to intrude into the people’s beliefs*” covering the whole page 5.

The author began by pointing out two concrete affairs after the August Revolution.

- The village P.G in the outskirts of Hanoi, in the recent Tết celebration (1946), the village Administrative Committee, forbade the selling of votive papers at the market, it meant that it forbade the people to make offering to their ancestors in the Tết celebration.

- The village X.C. in Bắc Ninh province, on the pretext of making use of the communal house to open a handicraft workshop, ordered to move out cult objects for the guardian spirit to the communal house of a neighboring hamlet, and villagers complained: “Under the democratic regime, the guardian spirit has to evacuate.”

Then, the author gave a deep analysis:

“These manifestations expressed a conspicuous reform spirit, wanting to revolutionize also culture, beliefs, customs... This is an expression of the excessive revolutionary spirit, of the leftist infantilism. Our August revolution also brings about its leftist infantile errors.”¹¹

Trường Chinh also rejected ideas holding that in this manner, Marxists advocated corrupted things in the old regime. The issue was “to educate the people to understand why superstition is erroneous, bad habits are silly. But one should not forbid in a hurry.” Moreover, on political aspect, the author concluded: “If in order to reform customs and beliefs, we create division in the Unified Front of the People

(even within the limit of a village), the majority of the people will misunderstand the Revolution, and have animosity with the new power, this is an unforgivable crime. What the villages P.G and X.C have done is harmful. It shows that these two villages have not understood the policy of Hồ Chí Minh's Government.”¹²

It should be said, however, that at the first stage of the August Revolution, in the relationships with religions, the most arduous issue was still the relationship of the Catholics and the Communists.

To refute viewpoints slandering Communists in the religious issue, Trường Chinh wrote an unusually long article, full of reason and feeling under the title Communism and Catholicism, in *Sự Thật*, No. 105 (25 December 1948)¹³.

Let me introduce a document in relation to the issue, to see Marxist viewpoints of the Party on the religious issue which had an increasingly good influence in the resistance. In *Sự Thật*, No. 110 (18-4-1949), under the pen name T.C, Trường Chinh published the article “On the Occasion of the article ‘Communism and Catholicism’”, asserting further these viewpoints. Under the form of answering the letter of a reader, the author wrote:

“1. Communists do not believe in God, but they never prohibit those who believe in God. The Soviet Union has followed the proletarian dictatorship over 30 years, but Catholicism still remains. Fascist extinguished religions but Communists never extinguish religions.

2. We do not believe in God, but we have never abused the God of Catholicism.

3...

4. We hold: “The Church separated from the State, and the School separated from the Church”, because we want that the administrative power does not interfere into beliefs and religions, it does not make use of beliefs to force the followers to follow the will of the administrative power. Nobody has the right either to take advantage of teaching to make propaganda for a religion, or to change the education program of the State for religious interests. Only in following this way, religions and beliefs can enjoy freedom, and are not falsified.

5...

6. We have not any intention to draw out the issue “Communism and Catholicism”. For we see that: When bandits enter our houses we have to unite to fight them ... Union goes along with criticism, we have to fight the enemies, at the same time we have to eliminate the traitors who have wormed their way into the resistance ranks to bring the resistance to a rapid success.

The Indochinese Communist Party proclaimed its “self-dissolution” in November 1946 on account of historical circumstances at that time. But Vietnamese Communists still have The Society for Studying Marxism and its paper *Sự Thật*.

In the important issue “In Memory of the Christmas-day”, on 25 December 1948, beside the familiar Letter of President Hồ to Southern Compatriots, was the article Letter of Vietnamese Communists to Catholic Compatriots. The article had a part as follows: “We hold to evict colonialists and eliminate “Catholic traitors”, who have dishonored the religion, against the will of God. Today, in an atmosphere of incense mixed with smell of powder of the third Christmas celebration in the resistance, we solemnly vindicate in a few words with Catholic compatriots and together with them, we strive to evict completely French aggressors out of our boundaries, so that our whole people may enjoy happiness, the country may enjoy independence, and freedom of belief.”¹⁴

The idea of the great union of the nation and religion by Hồ Chí Minh on the base of finding constants in the relations between Religion and Life similar ideological points in the national movement of our country had a strong attractive force toward many personalities, intellectuals in different religions.

On the same newspaper *Sự Thật*, in the issue on 15 October 1948, we find the article titled Catholicism and Communism by Ng. V. K, “a Catholic follower, son of a traditional Catholic family” as the introduction of the paper said.

After presenting effective documents on the policy of coalition, of great union of the Vietminh Front, as well as comparing “words in the Bible and Communist works”, the author concluded: “Thus God supported laborers against capitalists, hated exploitation, approved common property. Probably Colonialists and Vietnamese traitors call Him a Communist... When colonialists have been driven out, when independence has been restored, the situation would be exactly like the sentence in Apocalypse XXI:1 “Then I see a new sky, a new earth, for the ancient sky and earth have been renovated.”¹⁵

Evidently, on account of the resistance, the Party and the Government at that time had not conditions to perfect the line and policy on religions. But if we compare with the period 1930-1940, on the awareness aspect, the Indochinese Communist Party had made a rather long progress in this specific domain.

The Party and Government had equally made constant, creative efforts to realize their policy of national, religious union.

In the first days of the revolution, hostile forces by every possible means had made use of religion to sabotage the power. The sabotage began by the Cao Đài, Hòa Hảo in the dangerous plan of “autonomous South Vietnam”. Then came the “Catholic issue” of Bùi Chu-Phát Diệm, etc.

The policy of building the National United Front was a great policy of the Party when the revolution was in the condition of “a desperate crisis”. With religions, this was a vital, extremely important policy.

After pointing out historical lessons on dissensions between Catholics and non-Catholics when “our kings had been trapped by colonialists”, experiences in India, confused situations in South Vietnam, the author M.C wrote: "All these lessons from past experiences are not wasteful. In North and Center Vietnam, we see that Catholic followers have a quite different attitude¹⁶. On Easter, Catholics at Quần Phường had the rite of “sedan-chair parade”, Catholics and non-Catholics kowtowed, On the birthday of President Hồ, the Buddhist Association organized the ceremony of wishing him a long life in Quán Sứ Pagoda. Representatives of Catholic groups were present at the ceremony. A telegram of the bishop¹⁷ and Representatives of Catholic priests of 11 provinces in North Vietnam was sent to the Pope, the slogan of acclaiming the Democratic Republic of Vietnam resounding everywhere on the Buddha birthday was a testimony... We hope that the spirit of solidarity between believers (Catholics, Caodaists, Buddhist Hòa Hảo, Protestants) as well as the solidarity between believers and compatriots will be firmer and firmer. We cannot miss any opportunities to preserve the unification of the country, to win the national sovereignty as a base for the success.”¹⁸

It was interesting that only 5 months after this article on *Sự Thật*, a very enthusiastic article, appeared on the nationalist movement of religious compatriots in South Vietnam:

"A great number of compatriots after going the wrong way to follow the Nguyễn Văn Thiệu puppet government had wakened up and turned against

the French. The agents in the local puppet administration of Bạc Liêu villages and other villages in VII and VIII areas in the South Vietnam had voluntarily broken up and declared their fidelity to the Hồ Chí Minh government, and together with the nation, they were ready to fight for the unity, freedom, independence and prosperity of Vietnam.

The whole Cao Đài compatriots under the leadership of Cao Triều Phát and the Central Committee of this religion have declared their oath of allegiance to the Hồ Chí Minh Government and were united to fight for the independence and unity of fatherland.¹⁹

With such a right and united line in the most severe and complicated trials in the relationships between the State and Church in our country, our Party and revolutionary State could still declare "... Which party had fought these 20 years with thousands of communists who had scarified themselves in the prisons, on the battlefield, on the scaffolds to regain the liberty of conscience and society many other freedoms for the people? Which party? It is the Communist Party of Indochina and only the Communist Party of Indochina can bring forth the religious freedom to the people."²⁰

Religions toward the August Revolution in 1945

Priest Trần Tam Tĩnh in the famous study of *Thập giá và Lưỡi gươm* or *The Cross and the Sword* (in Vietnamese text, Hồ Chí Minh City, 1988) had very fully told on a "colonialism inside the religion".

The August revolution was too attractive, it arose the feelings of religious compatriots. Recalling the days of a South Vietnam in the resistance, even in Saigon before 1975, Prof. Lý Chánh Trung wrote: "In that August, history was like a tidewater drawing us back to the nation. A whole nation stood up and we witnessed the scene. Now, wherever we live, whatever we do, it is sure that we (though studying in Catholic schools, in French schools) cannot forget the Autumn of that year."²¹

After all, believers of different religions could not get rid of perplexity, especially because of the socio-political turmoil after the first minutes of excitement.

A Catholic author remarked: "Not only the Japanese forced the French severs to cluster together. Spanish Dominicans were also dubious and clustered together, for they thought that general Franco was also considered as near to the Axis block, the

mark of anti-Communist was all the clearer, while in Vietnam it was impossible to know who was a Communist, who was a member of the Vietnamese Nationalist Party? The rampart separating believers of God from the patriotic movement included two aspects: First, the Missionaries had a feeling of respect, but they were very afraid of the political and atheistic attitude somewhat like their attitude toward the scholar movement in XIX century; Second, the impression of the period under the Chinese domination ruling over Vietnam through a thousand years. Now, Vietnamese parties, though under the cover of Communism or nationalism, they had been raised and trained mostly in South China. The attitude to express the love of the country and the people could be expressed under a hundred reforms, though cautious toward political parties, they cooperated in many activities.”²²

The above remark though not quite exact, revealed partly the psychology of Catholics toward the Revolution.

It is true that the religious dogma and law sometimes were hindrances to come to the revolution. Pastor Lê Văn Thái, the head of the Protestant Church in Vietnam was present in the reception at the Northern Palace on 8 September 1945, related: “In the first contact with the President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the following issue was discussed: Would the Protestant Church in Vietnam set up the Protestant Organization for National Salvation and would Protestant Churches display flags?”

When Hồ Chí Minh proposed the Protestantism to set up this organization, pastor Lê Văn Thái refused, for according to him: “This proposal cannot be accepted, because it is not conform to the principle of the organization... The principle of the Protestant Church should be entirely without political tinge, it does not admit politics and does not accept political propaganda from anybody.”²³

Though the proposal was denied, President Hồ still created conditions to provide him a passport so that he could go South in a very difficult situation to ensure security. And in the beginning of October 1945, he was in Saigon and in various provinces in the Western Region, he had met many leaders of South Vietnam: Dương Bạch Mai, Tôn Đức Thắng, Trần Văn Giàu, Phạm Văn Bạch, etc.

These revolutionary personalities had converted him though the distance still existed. Pastor Lê Văn Thái also noted: “The aim of the government was then to understand the church, that was why when I presented it neatly and in every detail, they were very sympathetic and understanding... Afterwards, when I was back to Hanoi, I invited Tôn Đức Thắng for a dinner in my house at No. 1, Nguyễn Trãi St.,

to return call. On that day, there was also the priest WC. Cadman and profited by this occasion to explain further on Protestantism...”²⁴

These memoirs nevertheless could not totally reflect the attitude of the Vietnamese Protestants at that time because of many reasons. Allow me to present another document. On 8 May 1948 the vice chairman of the Protestant Church participating to the Resistance War in South Vietnam(!) had sent a letter to “Old father President Hồ and Elders Brothers in the Central Committee”, in which a part said: “We are very glad for we already have a wise Old Father, Elder Brothers who know how to conciliate parties, and enjoys the confidence of all sections of the population, all unified religions, apart from too extremist elements.”

“Following were evidences. Among Catholics, father Luật, father Sáng, father Kinh. Father Phiên, and nearly 90 per cent of Catholics supported the resistance war, the Cao Đài with 12 sects of Cao Triều Phát supported the resistance war. A hundred per cent of Protestants joined the resistance war: Dear Father, we are concerned more with the truth than with theory, with parties. Who participates to the resistance together with us, enjoys our confidence and support, what is black is black, what is white is white.

“We pray God to grant favor to the Father and Elder Brothers in the Ministry of Defence, all of us, in the Protestant Church in South Vietnam, support our Father and the Vietnamese Government of war resistance as long as we still remain on the earth. We kindly send our regards to our beloved old Father.”²⁵

For the Catholics, the August Revolution has also the meaning of a liberation of their status from “the yoke of the religious colonialism”.

The Đa Minh review of Bùi Chu parish under the leadership of Bishop Hồ Ngọc Cẩn was probably the paper which reflected many important facts of the Church in its relationship to the State. Exactly like the remark of the missionary Nguyễn Thế Thoại: “Probably, within the stage of 1945-1946, in the Đa Minh review more than everywhere else, we see the mentality of Vietnamese Catholics in the Vietnamese Church. Many pens had dialogued unambiguously, without any reserve with other members, even with the collective of religious servers.”²⁶

The Đa Minh review, in the issue on 15 September 1945, published in extensor the text of The Declaration of Independence on page 1, over the background of the red flag with a yellow star with the line of words Admiring God - Loving the

Country, on the one side was the map of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and on the other side was Rome, Headquarters of the Church.

Especially, a short news in rich imprint was found in the middle of page 2:

The Group of Catholic Representatives Pays a Visit to Hồ Chí Minh

In answer to the Catholic delegation stating that over a million of Catholics is always ready to cooperate with the Government, Ho Chi Minh said: “Without independence the yoke of slavery will prevent the development of religion. We have only to look at the number of bishops. Actually among 16 bishops, there are only 4 who are Vietnamese. If our country is completely independent, of course all these 16 bishops will belong to Vietnamese having sufficient talent and virtue to assume this heavy task.”²⁷

The ‘love of the country’ and ‘patriotism’ were “subtle” words in the pre-Revolutionary church.

Many commentaries, poems published on Đa Minh had gleefully dealt on this topic, the most typical ones were the article In the New Atmosphere dealing on the abdication ceremony of Bảo Đại, or the article Spirit of Independence, with the sentence: “Many of our Catholics have the duty to love the Fatherland, not only because the Fatherland but also because our God. No doubt, two millions of Catholics are united to 20 millions of non-Catholic compatriots in the bottom of their hearts. But before, the French colonialists had the evil intentions to sow the seeds of dissention between non-Catholics and Catholics to satisfy the base policy of “dividing to rule”.

This time the colonialist mask had fallen down.

Catholics had the duty to wash out in the minds all their compatriots all unrighteous ideas on themselves.”²⁸

The issue of The Right of the Church had been never been so forcefully spoken. The bishop of Phát Diệm diocese, Nguyễn Bá Tòng, was famous when, despite Drapier, the minister of the Holy See, in the name of Vietnamese priests and missionaries, he sent to Pope Pius XII a letter on 9 September 1945, in his anxiety that the Holy See would take the French part and negate Independence and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam²⁹.

On the same day of 23 September 1945, Bishop Nguyễn Bá Tòng together with bishops Hồ Ngọc Cẩn (Bùi Chu), Phan Đình Phùng (vice- Bishop of Phát Diệm) and

Ngô Đình Thục (Vĩnh Long) sent a letter appealing the world Christians, especially the people in two countries England and the United States to "support the Independence of the Vietnam Fatherland".

The whole text of this message was printed in the *Đa Minh*, issue 159, (11-5-1945), in which a segment said:" At this time , in our country Vietnam, a dangerous conflict is taking place. The heroic, unflinching patriotism of Vietnamese is pushing them to "the Warfield", braving arrows and bullets. For supporting justice and freedom, many Vietnamese are being killed, though Vietnam badly needs them to construct and pursue happiness for themselves."³⁰

Thus, Hồ Chí Minh's sensitive ideas were immediately responded to by progressive elements of the Catholic church. And this was the base for another just policy of Hồ Chí Minh and the young revolutionary State. This fact was analyzed very clearly long after by J. Lacouture: Hồ had supplemented his strategy by a gesture toward the Holy See of Vatican. In the beginning of March 1946, he sent Nguyễn Mạnh Hà to Huế to study the transport of rice from Center Vietnam to North Vietnam. By then, the Holy See had set the Apostolic Delegation in Huế. Hồ Chí Minh transferred to Hà a letter to meet Your Grace Drapier and try to know the opinion of the Representative of the Pope when he was invited by the Government to visit Hanoi and possibly to settle definitively in the North.

In foreign policy, Hồ Chí Minh thought also of father T. D'Argenlieu, French High Commissioner, and of Ministers of the Popular Republican Movement of France. It meant that he had thought of making use of Catholics to carry out the policy of national concord.

But Your Grace Drapier tried to refuse his proposal."³¹

In the above part, we have recalled the names of many Catholic personalities participating to the National Assembly, the Government, the power at various levels even in the military level at the first stage of the revolution. Many had sacrificed their lives on the Warfield, in their activities like lawyer Thái Văn Lung, fathers Nguyễn Bá Luật, Gabriel Thọ, etc. We have not yet recalled priests whose names were joined to the resistance war against both the French and the Americans like Hồ Thành Biên, Võ Thành Trinh, Nguyễn Hiếu Lễ, Trần Quang Nghiêm, Lương Minh Ký, etc.

No doubt, another part of the Catholic church still tried to keep their “faith” against atheistic Communism of the Message of Divini Redemptoris that Pius XI issued in 1937.

Typical of the tendency of “struggling against communism to preserve Catholicism” were acts betraying the resistance war by Lê Hữu Từ since the beginning of 1947, that drew “Catholics for the national Salvation” and then Catholic leagues.

Many Catholic papers expressed clearly this attitude. For example the paper *Đạo Binh Đức Mẹ* (The Virgin Mother’s Army), organ of Catholic propaganda, communication of Hanoi diocese. In the article The Catholic Attitude toward Parties, or in the article The Church and the Secular Life, Thượng Chí affirmed that Vietnamese Catholics should resolutely: “abstain from participating to branch organizations of Communists because in theory as well as in action, Communism tolerates and advocates the destruction of religions and the destruction of the Catholic church.” Or the best way was “to stand apart, though it does not mean to cut off with the work in the secular life.”³²

Conclusion

Thus we may assert that the August Revolution 1945 had scored original achievements in solving at the first step the religious issue in our country, together with many other issues of the national warfare and the people’s livelihood in and after the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Vietnamese Communists were guided by the doctrine on religion of Marxist-Leninism and by the thought of Hồ Chí Minh, since the day of seizing the power, they had a right orientation the religious issue should be placed within and under the national issues: this issue did not begin either by the existence or non-existence of spirits, or by unambiguously asking the right of freedom to be atheist in the constitution and to exert this right to become revolutionary or non-revolutionary; the issue does not lie in the mystical dome of heaven, but in the real land one has to struggle to safeguard and build the young revolutionary power; the religious issue is also above all to arouse and win over patriotic forces in various religions, at the same time to defeat maneuvers to make use of religions by imperialist forces and their reactionary agents, to get rid of anti-national, political influences in religions.

This right approach from the first days of the August Revolution – one of the most heroic pages of the Vietnamese national history in the 20th century – was not only an experience but also the base for the religious policy of the Party and Government since then up to now. That is the right policy on freedom of religious belief on the base of solidarity between religious persons and non-religious persons in the block of National union that President Hồ Chí Minh had paid great pains to foster up.

Reference:

¹. *History of Vietnamese National Assembly 1946-1960*, National Policy Publishing House, Hanoi, 1994, p. 19.

². See *Document of the Party 1930 -1960*, tome 3 published by the Office for Studying the History of the Party, Hanoi, 1997 p. 535.

³. Nguyễn Mạnh Hà afterwards still participated to the *Committee for Elaborating Rules and Regulations of the General Election (on 26 September 1945)* and participated the *Temporary Government (on 1 January 1946)* with the above-said function.

⁴. On this person, the author was thankful of the researcher Nguyễn Đình Đầu who had provided his document.

⁵. On this person, the book *Catholicism on the Native Land of Vietnam*. Book 2, 2001 without the publication place, by the priest Nguyễn Thế Thoại wrote: "The Bishop of Hanoi (Chaize Thịnh) had agreed to let Giuse Phạm Bá Trục, PhD. in Theology, in charge of Khoan Vĩ diocese to participate to the election and he was elected to the National Assembly, session I (p. 368). Phạm Bá Trục died in October 1954 in Việt Bắc. His funeral oration was written by Hồ Chí Minh. Many other Catholic priests to the Revolution and the War of Resistance like Priest Nguyễn Bá Luật, Priest Vũ Xuân Kỳ, Priest Hoàng Quang Tự, Priest Gabiel Thọ, etc. We should study further on them.

⁶. *Hồ Chí Minh Complete Works*. National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1995 Tome 4 p. 7-8.

⁷. National Center for preservation III. *Decrees of the Government of Vietnam 1945- 1946, fill No 97*.

⁸. See the article by the author *Hồ Chí Minh and the Issue of law on Religion* in *Religious Studies Review*, No. 1, 2003.

⁹. *History of the Vietnamese National Assembly 1946-1960*, Op. cit., p. 112.

¹⁰. See *Circular of Evangelic Messenger* (in the Vietnamese translation), Bửu Chu Publishing House in 1951, p. 31.

¹¹. See *To overthrow a False Tendency* in *Sự Thật*, 4 June 1946, p. 3.

¹². *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹³. *Religious Studies Review*, No. 2, 2001.

¹⁴. The article bore the name of Vietnamese Communists. This article also added sentences in the manner of Hồ Chí Minh, of the Indochinese Communist Party, of Trường Chinh on Christianity "We do not believe in the existence of God, but we pay a great attention respect to Christ, a martyr for the ideal of equality, charity and freedom."

¹⁵. The integral sentence in the conclusion of the article extended over 2 pages, 6 columns in small letter of the *Sự Thật*

- ¹⁶. The author wanted to speak of the state of disintegration, a part of Cao Đài followers was suspect of the war of resistance.
- ¹⁷. The fact in relation to Bishop Nguyễn Bá Tòng will be spoken of hereafter.
- ¹⁸. MC. *United National Front and Religious issue*, in *Sự Thật*, 5 May 1946.
- ¹⁹. *United National Movement in South Vietnam* in *Sự Thật*, No. 59, 10 October 1946.
- ²⁰. Chân Thành. *Where is the Indochinese Communist Party? Review of Propaganda*, special number in memory of 20th year of ICP (1930 -1950). The propaganda Office of the First Interzone No 2, in December 1949. The article in extensor was printed on p. 24-29.
- ²¹. Lý Chánh Trung. *A return to the Nation*, Presented in Saigon, 1957 p. 43.
- ²². See priest Nguyễn Thế Thoại. *Catholicism on the Vietnamese Native Land*, Op cit. p. 352.
- ²³. Pastor Lê Văn Thái. *46 Years of Office*, published by Protestant office, Saigon, 1971, p. 160.
- ²⁴. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
- ²⁵. Document preserved by *The Vietnamese Revolutionary Museum*, in 2 typed paged mark K. 18. We can not find the identity of the three last signed persons.
- ²⁶. Priest Nguyễn Thế Thoại. *Catholicism on the Vietnamese Native land*, *Ibid.* p, 355.
- ²⁷. This document is very valuable. Though Pope Pius XI had spoken of the transfer of charges in dioceses to local people servers, the situation did not record any improvements. It was not without reason that after the birth of DRVN, The Holy See appointed Lê Hữu Từ and Nguyễn Bá Tòng as Bishops – Lê Hữu Từ was a superior of Châu Sơn – Nho Quan- Ninh Bình line and Trần Hữu Đức succeeded to Bishop Eloy of Vinh diocese.
- ²⁸. See the full text of this article by Minh Châu in *Đa Minh*, 10 March 1945.
- ²⁹. This letter Trần Tam Tinh introduced in Jesus and the King, it means *The Cross and the Sword* Hồ Chí Minh Publishing House 1998, p. 53.
- ³⁰. This message was written first and signed first by Bishop Nguyễn Bá Tòng. See the *Đa Minh* on 11 May 1945).
- ³¹. See Jean Lacouture (ed). *Ho Chi Minh*, du Seuil 1967 Paris, p. 108- 109.
- ³². See *The Virgin Mother's Army*, issues No. 106, 4 March 1945 and No. 107, 4 October 1954.