

**Hungarian Embassy to North Vietnam, Report, 26 January 1955.
[Summary]**

It is based on a conversation between a Hungarian diplomat and North Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ung Van Khiem about religious and church issues. Khiem obviously knew much about the situation of the Catholic church in the East European "people's democracies". He flatly stated that one of the main reasons of the mass emigration of North Vietnamese to South Viet Nam was that hitherto the regime had treated Catholics very "rigidly". Even Catholic members of the resistance movement fell under suspicion. Actually, the decisive majority of the emigrants was composed of poor and middle peasants. In the beginning, it happened very frequently in the newly liberated areas that local party cadres organized "re-education courses" for the priests, and they attempted to force priests and nuns to marry. This was all grist to the mill of hostile propaganda. Another reason of the mass emigration was the famine that had struck the Catholic population of Annam (caused by drought, floods and war damages). The DRV had hitherto received 4,000 tons of rice from China, but this was far from enough. The regime decided to display more caution in treating Catholic believers. The lands of Catholic emigrants was not to be seized during the land reform campaign. [Note: eventually this principle was not followed in 1955-56.]

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