

Migration of citizens of North Vietnam to South Vietnam after the Geneva Agreement on Indochina (1954 - 1955)

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Abstract

After the Geneva Agreement was signed, with the provision that Vietnam was temporarily divided into two regions, taking the 17th parallel as a temporary military boundary, the time for gathering, moving, and migrating between regions was also stipulated. Northern Vietnam and Southern Vietnam within 300 days. The regulations from the Geneva Agreement along with the complicated situation of the Indochina war were mainly in Vietnam, between the Viet Minh army and the French army. This made the migration extremely complicated and caused many historical consequences. Migrants from North Vietnam to South Vietnam were mainly Catholics, the southern government led by Ngo Dinh Diem as Prime Minister arranged to settle them in some areas in South Vietnam. The issue of migrants also caused disturbances and had a strong impact on the Vietnam War (1954 - 1975). The research is based on historical research methods and actual historical methods to describe the migration process after the Geneva Agreement, thereby clarifying an important period of Vietnamese history. The issue of migration has also left important historical lessons in building socio-economic policies today in Vietnam.

Keywords: *Geneva Agreement, Migrants, North Vietnam, South Vietnam.*

1. Introduction

The Vietnamese war against the French colonial invasion lasted more than 80 years. With the fall of the French colonialists at Dien Bien Phu, the war basically ended. With the support of allies from both sides, the Geneva Agreement was signed, France was forced to leave Vietnam, Vietnam would be an independent country. However, when the Geneva conference took place, the Cold War had a strong impact on the conference's results. The content of the Geneva Agreement stipulated that Vietnam was temporarily divided into two regions, taking the 17th parallel as the temporary military boundary. The provisions of the Geneva Agreement clearly stated migration between North and South Vietnam. Accordingly, people who are pro-French will migrate to South Vietnam, people who follow Viet Minh or are pro-Communist will go to the North (Karnow, 1997). By 1956, elections will be held in both regions and Vietnam will be unified. That's why a large migration took place, mainly Northern citizens going to the South because of the influence of France's long rule in Vietnam. The majority of them are Catholics. Migration was also associated with the later US war in Vietnam, it was the beginning of extensive US intervention in Vietnam and led to later war. The government of South Vietnam led by Ngo Dinh Diem as Prime Minister made efforts to settle groups of people from the North to the South. The results of migration and settlement have significantly changed the appearance of some lands in the South, forming new settlements and deeply influencing Vietnamese history.

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2. Results and Discussion

2.1. Geneva Agreement and migration issue

After the battle of Dien Bien Phu, the Geneva Agreement were signed, temporarily dividing Vietnam into two military concentration zones at the 17th parallel. The system of civil apparatus and military forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam government. The peace system is concentrated in the North and the civil apparatus and military forces of the French Union government are concentrated in the South, waiting for the free general election expected to take place on July 20, 2019. 1956. According to Article 14 of the Geneva Agreement, people on each side were allowed to migrate to the other side and required the management side to create conditions for them to migrate within 300 days after the armistice agreement (Article 2), i.e. ended on May 19, 1955. People in Hanoi had 80 days, Hai Duong had 100 days, and Hai Phong, the last point of concentration for migration, had 300 days.

Article 14 of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities stipulates: “During the period from the date of entry into force of the Agreement until the date of completion of the military transfer, if there are citizens in an area controlled by the Vietnamese side who want to move to an area of The other side is under French management, the officials performing their official duties must allow and assist that movement” (Frankum, 2007). To monitor the implementation of the Geneva Agreement, the International Commission for the Control of the Armistice in Indochina was established under article 34 of the agreement with representatives of three countries: India, Poland, and Canada.

Many people believe that Vietnamese Catholics were “forced” or “lured” to emigrate by the French, American and pro-American governments. According to US documents, during this time Edward Lansdale, an American intelligence expert operating in North Vietnam, was tasked with weakening the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in every way possible. Edward Lansdale and his team ran a propaganda campaign portraying that the coming conditions under the Viet Minh government would be as harsh as possible. But a study shows that almost none of those interviewed had ever seen any leaflets or documents calling for migration to the South. They left because of the influence of the parish priest, word of mouth stories, or for personal reasons, not because of the influence of anti-Communist propaganda documents.

Edward Lansdale and Lucien Conein conducted a psychological warfare campaign to encourage North Vietnamese people – especially Catholics – to move to South Vietnam. The posters and slogans that Lansdale's group coined – “God has entered South Vietnam” had a decisive influence on the thinking of Vietnamese Catholic civilians who migrated.

Edward Lansdale described his successful propaganda campaign as follows: “If in the years 1949-1953, priests turned gentle Catholics into passionate soldiers thanks to the slogan “Destroy Communism” (Karnow, 1997), then They also had no difficulty in creating the “great migration” in the years 1954-1955”. Obviously, Vietnamese farmers live closely with their ancestral lands, with their homes, with their gardens, to the church and village much more than farmers in other countries. But they dared to give up everything to protect their faith, especially when their parish priests assured them that in South Vietnam There is a Catholic prime minister, Ngo Dinh Diem, waiting to welcome them and will give them fertile lands to grow crops.

2.2. Causes of migration from North Vietnam to South Vietnam

- Political and economic reasons

According to Time Weekly, migrants to South Vietnam, especially Vietnamese Catholics, claim that they have suffered religious persecution under the Democratic Republic of Vietnam government. Many people actually left for economic and political reasons: they were people working for France, or the bourgeoisie did not sympathize with the Viet

Minh and the Communists. The fact that Ngo Dinh Diem, a Catholic, became Prime Minister of the “National Government of Vietnam” and then President of the Republic of Vietnam (from October 26, 1955) also motivated Catholics to migrate to the South in the hope of I hope they will be protected by a Catholic. Some people migrate because they fear famine will happen in the North like in 1945 and hope that when they come to the South they will have a more prosperous life.

- Religious reasons

Many North Vietnamese emigrated out of fear that their ability to practice their religion might be restricted under the Viet Minh government. In addition, this fear is also reinforced by the previous experiences of many Catholic communities when many times in history, the Nguyen Dynasty openly opposed Catholic activities. Besides, there was a conflict between the Viet Minh and the Catholic Church because the Church supported the French army. In fact, after 1954, there was no persecution of Christians in the North as they feared.

In many Catholic communities during the French colonial period, Priests held civil and spiritual leadership roles. In many rural areas, Catholics listen to the priests very much. Priests often used ceremonies to call for immigration to South Vietnam. Many priests used arguments to convince believers, but there were also many priests who also created fear of a not bright outlook under Viet Minh leadership. Some priests threatened their followers that if they did not go, they would be exposed to American bombs in the North. Some people even declared: “God has entered South Vietnam” to attract people to follow them. Some people just announced: “Tomorrow I and some people will go to the South” or “I will go to the South” to the hesitant believers (Jacobs, 2004). This is the reason why many respondents answered that they voluntarily went to the South. One point to note is that the rate of priests migrating is greater than the rate of believers migrating. Believers often follow priests and stay where the priest ends his journey. Poor believers are often more vulnerable because they do not have assets in the North, people who have property often do not want to lose their property by leaving, and because they have higher knowledge than poor people consideration time is longer.

2.3. Process migration

Catholics in Northern Vietnam began to migrate to big cities like Hanoi and Hai Phong before the Geneva Agreement was announced, when French troops withdrew from Bui Chu and Phat Diem parishes to consolidate their actions. Hanoi - Hai Phong corridor after the defeat at Dien Bien Phu. When the Geneva Agreement was announced, many people in Northern Vietnam began to migrate to the South. In addition to those who migrated to the South, most of whom were Catholics for many different reasons (about 800,000 out of a total of 1 million migrants from North to South were Catholics), the remainder were people of religious orientation, anti-Communist politics, people connected to the French government or the national government, urban bourgeoisie and rural families worried about the Viet Minh's new policies. In addition, there were ethnic minorities who had followed the French army against the Viet Minh. Among them are about 45,000 Nung people from Mong Cai region and 2,000 Thai and Meo people from Son La and Dien Bien.

On August 9, 1954, the “National Government of Vietnam” led by Ngo Dinh Diem as Prime Minister established the “General Committee for Refugee Migration”, an agency that acts as a Ministry in the Government. In addition, the Settlement Assistance Committee, a private relief organization, helped. For university students, the French Command reserved 12 flights on August 12 and 13, 1954 to bring about 1,200 North Vietnamese students to the South. It is estimated that only about 1/3 stay while 2/3 choose to emigrate.

Because there were not enough means for people to migrate to the South, the French government and Bao Dai had to call on other countries to help with transport and settlement. The governments of Great Britain, Poland, West Germany, South Korea, the United States, Japan, the Philippines, New Zealand, the Republic of China, Australia and Italy responded along with the organizations UNICEF, Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Church World Services (CWS), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), International Rescue Committee (IRC)...

On August 4, 1954, the air bridge connecting Tan Son Nhat airport, Saigon in the South with Gia Lam, Bach Mai, Hanoi and Cat Bi, Hai Phong airports in the North was established. That effort was considered the longest airlift in the world at that time (about 1,200 km as the crow flies). Tan Son Nhat Airport became crowded; On average, a plane lands every 6 minutes and every day there are from 2,000 to 4,200 migrants arriving. The total was 4,280 landings, bringing in 213,635 people.

Landing Ship picks up people on shore and then transfers them to a large ship anchored outside the waters of Northern Vietnam. As soon as the ships landed, hundreds of people scrambled to get on board. Ships from Vietnam, France, England, the United States, China, Poland... helped 555,037 people “go to the South”. “South” is understood to mean the entire southern coastal strip of Vietnam, from Da Nang to Vung Tau. Because the number of migrants was too large, the French High Commission asked for a three-month extension and Hanoi agreed, so the last day was changed to August 19, instead of May 19. During the extension, An additional 3,945 people crossed the route to the South. The last ship of the exodus arrived in Saigon on August 16, 1954. In addition, there are 102,861 people who find their own way by road or by boat and private vehicle.

By October 1955, according to data from the Republic of Vietnam, there were 676,348 Catholics (76.3% of the total number of Northern migrants), 209,132 Buddhists (23.5%) and 1,041 Protestantism (0.2%) migrated to South Vietnam. As of between 1954 and 1956, over 1 million people migrated from North to South, including about 800,000 Catholics, or about 2/3 of the Catholics in the North who left for the South. To carry out migration, the US Government sent many planes and 41 warships of the 7th Fleet to transport migrants to the South and provided \$55.785 million for their resettlement.

Table 1. Number of migrants by religion

<i>Number</i>	<i>the faithful</i>	<i>number of migrants</i>	<i>(%)</i>
1	Catholic	676.348	76,3%
2	Buddhism	209.132	23,5%
3	Protestantism	1.041	0,2%

Source: Peter Hansen (2009). "Bac Di Cu: Catholic Refugees from the North of Vietnam, and Their Role in the Southern Republic, 1954–1959", *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 173 -211.

2.4. Settlement of migrants

Resettlement for people from the North has become an urgent requirement for the Ngo Dinh Diem government. At the time of arriving in the South, the position of Northern migrants in their new home was determined by their relationship with the Ngo Dinh Diem government. The overrepresentation of Catholics in the military and civilian forces of the Diem government has always been one of the topics in debates about the role of northerners who migrated in 1954. The excesses of these Catholics profoundly influenced the political process of the Republic of Vietnam both during and after the Ngo Dinh Diem era.

The task of integrating Northern migrants into the early South was not simply the responsibility of the Ngo Dinh Diem government. The majority of migrants are Catholics, so the Catholic Church in the South also has to deal with the challenges associated with assimilating large-scale Catholic immigration. According to US statistics, in 1954

Vietnam had more than 1.9 million Catholics, of which more than 1.4 million were in the North (Nguyen, 2020). The Church in Southern Vietnam still faces difficulties when the cultures of believers in the two regions are very different. The fear of being threatened by non-Christians and of religious isolation among Northerners is greater than that of Southerners because France intentionally created more religious conflicts in the North than in the South and also because the Nguyen Dynasty did not support Christianity. In addition to the difficulties, the Church has an advantage: all believers follow a system of dogmas and rituals.

Migrants will be moved to areas around Saigon for resettlement, only a few choose their destination, most follow priests or are arranged by Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem. As early as August 1954, the Diem government gave Bishop Peter Maria Pham Ngoc Chi a 25,000 hectare area of land for Bui Chu parish to resettle in Xuan Loc and Bien Hoa. With the support of the United States, the Ngo Dinh Diem government built 40 new villages with 2,500 people/village (Jones, 2003).

As for Phat Diem Parish, the Saigon government and Bishop Le Huu Tu advocated bringing them to Gia Kiem. By April 1954, the population here was nearly 500,000 people (Trần, 2005). By December 1955, the Saigon government had established 257 resettlement areas. The establishment of resettlement areas is to avoid cultural and economic conflicts between migrants and indigenous people, while also reducing the pressure of population growth on the pre-existing service system.

For resettlement areas, the Saigon government sets certain economic, political and security goals. Ngo Dinh Diem used the migrant force to build economic potential in the places they arrived (Jacobs, 2006). Ngo Dinh Diem wanted these to be the lands most loyal to him and most willing to fight against Communism. Resettlement areas are often located in strategic locations, gateways to large cities. In particular, to preserve the Central Highlands, Ngo Dinh Diem organized many resettlement areas near Buon Me Thuot, Pleiku and Da Lat. Many immigrants were reluctant to implement Diem's plan because they realized that the conditions in their new places were not as good as those in the cities, and they had to directly face the forces of sects such as Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and even Hoa Hao. even the Viet Minh. In the Mekong Delta region, where the Viet Minh were very strong, Diem government also organized resettlement here. Ngo Dinh Diem wanted to create steel belts to protect Saigon. This is the opening step for strategic hamlets with posts around the village.

2.5. Some comments on migration issues in Vietnam after the Geneva Agreement

Migration of the Catholic community of Northern Vietnam to the South is a consequence of complex historical issues in Vietnamese history. It concerns issues not only of migration but also of economics, politics, culture and society. The consequences it left for Vietnamese history are important, it contributes to the nation's overall historical process. It also shows a typical example of international migration related to war and the Peace Agreement that has elements of territorial division, a product of the Cold War. We can point out 5 points about migration from the North to the South of Vietnam from 1954 to 1955 as follows:

First, they are quite passive in the process of migrating and deciding their fate. Some people believe that the Catholics migrated because they were lured to become a real shield wall to protect the Saigon regime against internal and external threats. The history of the Vietnamese Catholic Church often ignores the internal conflicts between Christians from the North and Christians in the South as well as the events after the unification of the Northern Catholic community. settlers and Southern Catholics. At the same time, many people migrated because they listened to the words and followed the actions of the priests.

Second, 75% of Catholic migrants come from two dioceses, Bui Chu (Nam Dinh) and Phat Diem (Ninh Binh). This number is partly due to the two bishops Thaddeus Le Huu Tu and Peter Maria Pham Ngoc Chi, who since the late 1940s have become sworn enemies of the Viet Minh (Lindholm, 1959). These bishops had their own paramilitary army and always fought alongside the French against the Viet Minh.

Third, the migration activities of the Catholic community began before the Geneva Agreement was signed. With the Viet Minh's victory, they feared retaliation even though history later showed that there was no retaliation. Besides, after the defeat at Dien Bien Phu, France also wanted to move its forces from Phat Diem and Bui Chu dioceses to strengthen France's important control corridor from Hanoi to Hai Phong. Bishops Le Huu Tu and Pham Ngoc Chi also left with paramilitary forces and their followers.

Fourth, according to documents from the Republic of Vietnam, the proportion of Northern migrants who are Catholic accounts for 76.3%. According to US data, only 30% of Catholics in Hanoi migrated to the South even though their moving conditions were much more favorable than those in Bui Chu and Phat Diem. Many people believe that this is because the Catholics in Hanoi and Hai Phong are nationalist, they rejoice at the defeat of the French. At the same time, these people are more knowledgeable, so it is more difficult for the bishops to convince them than people in the countryside (Trân, 2013).

3. Conclusion

Migration from North Vietnam to South Vietnam is the result of discussions at the Geneva Conference and the contents agreed upon by the countries attending the conference. In particular, the cold war factor is an important and inseparable part when it comes to this issue. The migration process in Vietnam is associated with the Northern Catholic community and their settlement in several areas in Southern Vietnam. The impacts of this migration on political, cultural, and social changes in Vietnam in the 20th century are important and have long-lasting effects. It can be seen that a long history under French rule and the struggle for independence contributed to the consequences of the war in Vietnam, including migration factors. Since the historical story of migration in 1954 - 1955, after the Vietnam War (1954 - 1975), the issue of Vietnamese migration abroad has emerged again as a hot issue of world history.

Vietnam has a very tragic history, having been the epicenter of the Cold War and having a complex history of migration. Today, Vietnam is transforming into a developed country. Lessons from the past need to be made clearer, thereby contributing to creating a more united and developed Vietnam in the future.

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