

Missions of Communication Staff in Safeguarding the Party's Ideological Foundation

Assoc. Prof, Dr. Duc Ngoc MAI

Abstract: *Since its inception, communication work has always held a particularly important position and role in the Party's activities, bearing the mission of construction and protection of the Party. In each revolutionary period, the contingent of cadres engaged in communication have played important roles, contributing to historically significant and meaningful achievements in the construction and defense of the Fatherland especially in the present context when our country is facing numerous difficulties and challenges, including the threat posed by the "peaceful evolution" schemes of reactionary and hostile forces both domestically and internationally. This situation requires our communication staff to elevate their professional competence and expertise to meet the demands of their tasks under new circumstances.*

Keywords: *communication work, communication staff, Party's ideological work, safeguarding the Party's ideological foundation.*

1. Protecting the Party's ideological foundation is the political mission of the communication staff

The Party's communication work is essentially the work of "political and ideological orientation and education among cadres, Party members, and the masses"⁽¹⁾, including such activities as "building, developing, popularizing Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, guidelines and policies of the Party and State for cadres, Party members and people; at the same time, ensuring the Party's solid leadership in the fields of culture, arts and science and education"⁽²⁾. In particular, the communication staff is the force that directly contributes to creating ideological and political unity within the Party, social consensus, and strengthening people's trust in the Party, the State and the regime. This is the root of communication work, the key factor that directly determines the results of this work.

It can be affirmed that from its inception until now, communication work has always been associated with the mission of protecting the Party,

becoming a key area in all activities of the Party. This is demonstrated through the core force of communication staff with their important contributions throughout the decisive historical periods in the development process of our country's revolution.

Nguyen Ai Quoc, along with his revolutionary predecessors, were the first soldiers of ideological work in our country's revolutionary history to spread Marxism-Leninism and the path to national salvation in Vietnam, actively contributing to the founding of the Communist Party of Vietnam. After the Party was established, in order to continue to popularize and enlighten the masses about Marxism-Leninism, the Party's Brief Political Platform, Brief Strategy and revolutionary guidelines, to encourage and mobilize people of all walks of life so that they were enlightened, understood, supported and trusted the Party, followed the Party to make revolution, the Central Party Committee issued a decision to establish the Promotion and Communication Committee - an advisory agency in charge of directing the Party's ideology work. Shortly after its establishment, the Promotion and Communication Committee undertook the publication and distribution of the document titled *The International Red Day, August 1*, which communicated and encouraged the masses to stand up and fight against imperialism, oppression, exploitation, aggressive wars, and support the national liberation movement. At this stage, the Committee's mission was to let people know the Party's purpose and opinions on important events, to "popularize and promote communism in a planned and practical way, to implement slogans and Resolutions of the Party among the workers and peasants so that they would follow the Party"⁽³⁾, the Party cells had to "recruit and train new Party members, and distribute Party communication items; provided political and cultural training to Party members, workers and farmers"⁽⁴⁾ by means of communication and promotion such as: publishing books, newspapers, leaflets, giving speeches according to the Resolution of the Party Central Committee...

During the August Revolution of 1945, the Promotion and Communication Committee developed and continued to make an important contribution to "positioning" Marxism-Leninism, and its creative application by Uncle Ho and the Party to the reality of the Vietnamese revolution, through communication and enlightenment,

arousing the tradition of patriotism, building a great national unity bloc following the Party to overthrow the yoke of French colonialism and Japanese fascism. Especially, the communication staff carried out a political mission to quickly convey historical orders in the true spirit of President Ho Chi Minh, which was, “no matter how great the sacrifice, even if we have to burn the entire Truong Son range, we must resolutely win independence”. That historic order of Uncle Ho was quickly transmitted by communication staff to all fronts at night, contributing to arousing the entire Vietnamese people’s spirit of solidarity to fight to the death for homeland independence, creating the landslide power of the August Revolution. Thus, at this revolutionary time, the communication sector in general and communication work in particular fulfilled its mission for the Party by “bringing traditional patriotism to proletarian internationalism, dispelling low self-esteem, helplessness, the attitude of fate surrender, and encouraging our people to nurture big dreams, that was, to reclaim the right to life, freedom and the right to pursue happiness, with the ultimate goal of gaining national independence”⁽⁵⁾; making an important contribution to realizing the noble ideal goal of our Party, which is to lead our compatriots to overthrow imperialism and feudalism, making Vietnam completely independent. In fact, that noble ideal became a reality when Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought penetrated deeply into the awareness and turned into revolutionary actions of the patriotic masses.

During the Dien Bien Phu campaign, communication work closely followed reality with practical contents focusing on communication and timely dissemination of letters regarding the victories of our people, the dangerous situation of the enemy, and the fighting merits of troops and individuals along with examples of heroes who overcame difficulties to complete the task from Uncle Ho, General Vo Nguyen Giap, the Front Command and the mass organizations. Through various forms, such as distributing leaflets, slogans, bulletin boards, and posters with the following contents: “eliminate all enemy troops in Dien Bien Phu”, “the enemy is entrenched, we are determined to fight”, “determined to fight, determined to win”, “you are not cannon fodder for the French enemy”, “abandon the French enemy and return to the homeland”... During the communication

work, the communication staff promptly encouraged the morale and fighting spirit of revolutionary soldiers, gained practical results, and contributed to many victories in the battlefields.

After our 9-year resistance war against the French colonialists, the North was liberated and entered the period of building socialism, the South was still under the yoke of American imperialism and the Saigon puppet government. At this time, to liberate the South and unify the country had become a sacred mission of the entire Party, entire people and entire army. Bearing its mission for the Party and the country, the promotion and communication work was developed in many rich, vivid, diverse, creative and flexible forms and methods such as: organizing political activities, opening training classes, compiling documents, communication outlines, disseminating oral communication, communication through the press, publications to all social classes in liberated areas and temporary war zones, urban areas, among students... Consequently, it helped the people understand and trust the Party, grasp the Party's resistance lines, and clearly expose the imperialist plot and its puppet government. At the same time, the communication work helped to condemn and denounce the barbaric crimes of the US and the puppet regime in South Vietnam, arousing strong patriotism and deep hatred toward the enemy, and encouraging the spirit of fighting and the determination to win the war against the American mighty empire. Particularly, facing the enemy's brutal suppression, a part of the people and soldiers inevitably wavered, confused, lost their will, and some even betrayed their comrades. To cope with that situation, the Party's communication staff promptly focused on popularizing and correcting deviant, pessimistic, wavering viewpoints, the fear of disadvantages, suffering, sacrifice, and at the same time lit up faith among the people and cadres in the Party's leadership and the strength of our people. Thanks to the perseverance and contributions of the Party's communication cadres, many revolutionary soldiers of this period, despite being captured by the enemy, being brutally tortured in prison, and even close to death, remained steadfast with the spirit of "determination to die for the undying country". Furthermore, under the light of the Party's ideals, extensive communication work fanned the flames of revolution, stirred up such movements as "emulation to kill the enemy", "five voluntary acts", "all

for the front line, all to defeat the American invaders”, “one tries as much as twice for the South”, “Three ready”, “Three good”, “provide enough rice and person for the army”. Those had become a thread connecting the spirit of solidarity of the entire people to expel foreign invaders, to win national independence, and unify the country. Particularly, through the press, films, poetry and international forums, the communication cadres contributed to let people around the world, including the peace-loving and progressive forces understand the righteous struggle of the Vietnamese people, thus becoming sympathetic and supporting our resistance war against the American to save the country, liberate the South, and unify the country.

Looking back at our country’s revolutionary history, we can see that the Party’s communication work has always been closely linked to the task of Party’s building and safeguarding. In each historical period, communication staff bear missions depending on the fluctuations of the situation in the country and the world. When the country was completely liberated, the Party’s communication work continued to disseminate the Party’s guidelines and policies on the national construction and safeguarding toward the path to socialism, particularly in the context that our country is facing many difficulties and challenges, including challenges of the “peaceful evolution” plot of reactionary and hostile forces who have constantly attempted to prevent the progressive development of our country with many tricks of distortion and defamation to sabotage our Party and our people’s initial achievements in society construction. This requires our country’s communication cadres to be truly professional to fulfill their assigned tasks in the new situation.

2. Actual situation and requirements for communication staff in safeguarding the Party’s ideological foundation

As mentioned above, the contingent of communication staff is the root of communication work, a particularly important component of the whole Party activities. Therefore, in order to promote the role and tasks of the Party, communication work requires the building of a professional and modern communication staff. Especially, in the country’s new development conditions, the communication staff must develop accordingly to meet practical requirements.

First, the communication work today is facing global challenges and difficulties, for example, the collapse of the model of real socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries was the reason why a part of the population is skeptical about the Party's ideological foundation as well as our national goal of building socialism. This was also one of the reasons that hostile, reactionary, and opportunistic forces attempted to distort and conspire against our Party and State. This "difficult problem" requires the Party's communication staff to find appropriate answers to continue to build the people's confidence in the regime and the path to socialism of our country. To solve this problem, the communication staff must be knowledgeable about political theory and skilled in professional expertise, so as to scientifically prove, based on the nature of the times, that the nature of the times remains unchanged, "mankind will definitely move towards socialism"⁽⁶⁾ and Vietnam's path to socialism is the most appropriate choice of history.

Second, besides political upheavals, the influence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution has deeply changed the "roots" of human life, at the same time, posed many challenges for the communication staff. For example, social networks have created not only favorable conditions for people to easily search and exchange information but also a "silent front" for hostile forces, reactionaries, and opportunists to take advantage to distort and sabotage our Party and State. Being aware of both huge benefits and risks of social networks, each and every Party communication staff must be fully equipped with professional knowledge background to be able to both popularize and receive information, at the same time, to distinguish, prevent and handle threats that can come from countless different sources of information, then to orient public opinion and safeguard the Party's ideological foundation.

Third, at any stage of the process of revolutionary history, from the Party's birth to the present, communication work has always made great contributions to all the Party activities. However, this work is currently facing difficulties and challenges, especially the deterioration of ideology, ethics, and lifestyle of a large number of cadres, Party members, together with corruption, negativity, and group interests are one of the reasons that reduce people's trust in the Party and the regime, become an endogenous hindrance to the Party's communication work. This reality requires the

communication staff to exert more efforts in bearing the mission entrusted by the Party and State.

Fourth, the communication staff is currently being influenced by the personnel downsizing policy, while the work conditions are increasingly demanding, leading experts in the field are reaching retirement age. This has caused a shortage in both quantity and quality of the staff. Furthermore, a number of current communication cadres are not properly trained in their specialized fields and this has posed difficulties and challenges to this work. Therefore, despite great achievements in the history for the struggle for national liberation, Fatherland's construction and defense, especially nearly 40 years of implementing the reform policy, and although communication staff have "fulfilled an important role in popularizing, protecting, applying and creatively developing Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, the Party's policies and guidelines, and the State's policies and laws", effectively participated in the work of building and rectifying the Party and the clean and strong political system, improved the Party's capacity and fighting strength"⁽⁷⁾, currently the Party's communication work still has some inadequacies and limitations. Particularly, "fighting to refute and prevent harmful information, wrong and hostile views is at times and places not strong and effective; the grasping of public opinion in response to unexpected events and situations is not timely. Innovating the content and methods of communication work has not met the requirements; applying information technology and achievements of science and technology to carry out communication tasks is still difficult. Some localities have been at the initial stage of digital transformation. The preliminary review and summary of a number of resolutions, directives and conclusions of the Party is not of high quality, has not found bottlenecks to propose solutions to overcome, and has not been generalized into useful lessons at theoretical level. The contingent of communication staff is still thin; the professional qualifications and political mettle of a part of the cadres have not met requirements for their assigned task in the new situation"⁽⁸⁾.

To turn challenges into opportunities, tasks into results, the Party and the communication work need to build a contingent of professional communication staff with strong capabilities and outstanding political

qualities, ethics and working style to meet requirements for their assigned task in the new situation. In terms of *capacity*, communication staff must be proficient in political theory, knowledgeable in expertise, professionally proficient and have political sensitivity to be able to explain emerging issues from reality in a correct, scientific and revolutionary way. Therefore, this helps people understand the Party's guidelines, policies, and trust, follow the Party, at the same time, to respond promptly and accurately foresee domestic and foreign issues to support the Party's role. Regarding *ethics and working style*, communication staff must be truly firm in political ideology, pure and clean in ethics and lifestyle, and absolutely loyal to communist ideals and socialism orientation and the country's innovation cause. They must stand firmly on the Party's viewpoints and stances to orient the goal of safeguarding the Party's ideological foundation and rely on their own practical understanding as well as a close relationship with the people to enlighten the people, strengthen the great solidarity of the entire people and unity within the Party, convince the masses to believe and follow the Party. Besides, communication staff must have a democratic, scientific and effective working style. They know how to listen to the people's opinions, to understand the people, to talk and discuss with the people, to work scientifically, and always combine theory to practice. In addition, in the current conditions, the communication staff also needs to be proficient in using foreign languages and information technology to be able to achieve the highest efficiency in their field of work. In particular, each and every communication staff must love this job, be truly dedicated to this profession and passionate about it so that they not only fulfil their duties but also inspire the people, help the people continue to understand, believe and follow the Party.

3. Some solutions to build professional communication staff to meet the Party's political mission requirements in the new situation

As the requirement of reality for communication work, the communication staff must reach an appropriate level of professionalism to be able to fulfill the task of safeguarding the Party's ideological foundation in the new situation. Accordingly, in order to standardize this staff in a professional manner, besides the close coordination between relevant agencies and units, some following solutions need to be implemented:

Firstly, it is necessary to have cognitive unity in our entire political system regarding the position and role of ideological work, to create favorable conditions for communication staff to perform their roles and responsibilities and assigned tasks, because ideological work is a key and extremely important area in the Party's activities, in which communication work is considered a guideline to help the communication staff carry out the task of popularizing and encouraging people of all walks of life, turning the Party's spirit into material strength, contributing to the successful implementation of the national construction and safeguarding course. With the unity in each cadre and Party's members in terms of ideology, the Party's ideological work will no longer be a single individual's business but a shared responsibility related to the survival of the entire nation and the regime. Consequently, each cadre and Party member will be more aware of their own responsibilities, so that when interacting with the people, they can be a communication officer of the Party. This empowers the communication staff but also inspires the entire society, helps people increasingly believe in the leadership and direction of the Party.

Second, it is important to improve the quality of training and fostering at official training establishments to improve the professionalism of communication staff. To accomplish this, *first of all*, Party committees at all levels, depending on requirements and work tasks, develop annual long-term or short-term training plans for communication cadres, so that the Party's communication staff must be trained systematically and formally and regularly update their knowledge. *Second*, before developing the training content, training institutions must rely on the capacity and quality criteria, as well as on the needs and requirements of practice. It is necessary to build programs and content which are suitable to the needs of learners, satisfy what learners need, and ensure a full and diverse amount of knowledge in areas that learners must master. *Third*, it is needed to change training methods from one-way imposed communication to a form that enhances interaction between teachers and learners. Instead of conveying available information, the teacher should provide hypothetical situations and problems that need to be solved, so that students can exchange, discuss, and feel motivated to proactively build lessons and be creative in their receiving information. This helps learners have more opportunities to improve their careers through

practicing situation-handling skills, while creating a creative passion effect for learners. *Fourth*, training institutions need to focus on combining theory and practice so that learners can practice their skills from the beginning and be stable and proactive when working. *Fifth*, it is necessary to combine and diversify training types (regular, non-regular, remote, short-term...) according to the position or task requirements of the locality in the certain time so that each communication staff, no matter what level they belong, can easily update knowledge and improve their professional qualifications.

Third, in order to *improve political awareness, ethics, lifestyle and working style* of communication staff, it is necessary to provide specific evaluation criteria to evaluate the quality of the work. These criteria will be the basis to set an individual's task in cultivating, training and striving. In the Party's personnel work, talent and morality are two aspects that are closely and organically linked. For the Party's communication staff, revolutionary ethics, lifestyle and working style are even more important criteria. Because, to make people believe, understand and follow, each communication staff must truly be a shining example of moral qualities and lifestyle. Communication staff must have all three elements: conscience, virtue, and vision, being knowledgeable about political theory, being loyal to the Party's ideals, being an honest and transparent cadre. Especially, strong political mettle and loyalty to the Party's ideals are demonstrated through all actions and jobs that originate for the common benefit of the Party and in accordance with the Party's guidelines and policies. Conscience and virtue are expressed through an attitude of being close to the people, knowing how to listen to people's voices, and having a sense of work responsibility; Vision is demonstrated by political sensitivity through accurate and early forecasting by grasping the actual situation. Furthermore, each communication staff needs to constantly improve learning and acquiring knowledge, by self-study and self-acquisition of political theoretical knowledge and skills occupations, career support skills such as computing technique... to be able to proactively and early prevent all situations that are potentially harmful to the Party's ideological foundation.

Fourth, the Party and State need to further increase investment in physical and technical facilities and means for communication staff, especially those who work in remote, disadvantaged areas. This is imperative, because

in reality “financial investment is not commensurate with the role of communication and practical requirements. In particular, the lower the level, the smaller the budget for communication”⁽⁹⁾. Moreover, this is even more important in the context that hostile and reactionary forces are increasingly using sophisticated and modern technical means to sabotage our Party and State. Therefore, equipping adequate physical and technical facilities to be able to prevent and promptly handle bad and toxic information is an urgent requirement. In addition, to ensure continuity in all stages of personnel work, the recruitment, promotion, appointment and rotation of staff in this field also need to ensure objectivity, openness and transparency. In addition, plans to increase the exchange and sharing of professional skills between generations of officials, creating conditions for young officials to learn from the experiences of their predecessors are needed. In particular, the Party and State need to implement a number of specific mechanisms and policies for communication staff so that they can feel secure in sticking to their profession and dedicatedly devoting themselves to the profession. This also helps to encourage and attract talented people, those with high qualifications and expertise in communication profession, to contribute to inspire generations of officials working in communication work, to improve the position and reputation of this job and successfully complete the tasks assigned by the Party and people./.

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