

Identifying and Directing the Fight against Distortion of the Party's History on Social Media Today

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Abstract: *The Communist Party of Vietnam has a “golden history” that was built and developed during the revolutionary process. It expresses the infinite pride and gratitude of the People to the Party, of descendants to ancestors. It is of great significance to clearly identify the distorted claims, then have resolute and effective solutions to protect the Party, State and regime. The article introduces concepts and identifications as well as suggests some solutions to fight for and protect the Party's history on social media today.*

Keywords: *social media; identify; protect; Party history.*

1. Some concepts

- “Social network” is an information system that provides users with various services for storing, providing, using, searching, sharing and exchanging information with each other. This includes services for creating personal web pages, forums, online chats, sharing audio, images and other similar services⁽¹⁾. A “social networking service” is a service that connects members with similar interests on the Internet for various purposes regardless of space and time. Participants in social networking services are called social network residents⁽²⁾.

In Vietnam today, social networks have become an effective means of information provision and communication, and a new tool in communication work. However, they are also a tool that hostile forces, reactionary elements, opportunists, and politically dissatisfied individuals use to increase their subversive activities, especially against the ideological foundation of the Party.

The history of the Party is a specialized field and a part of historical science, accompanying the history of the Vietnamese people since 1930 to this day. This is a “golden annal of history”.

This golden annal of history is increasingly nurtured, enriched, and records the outstanding achievements and great victories of the Vietnamese revolution; demonstrating the rich and vivid struggle of our people in the heroic, resilient,

and indomitable resistance against the French colonialists, the American imperialists, in building and protecting the Vietnam socialist motherland.

- *Struggling to refute the distorted narratives of the Party history*: Along with leading the revolutionary cause, our Party has continuously focused on building the Party in terms of politics, ideology, organization, and ethics. Protecting the Party's ideological foundation, fighting against wrong and hostile views, has always been valued and promoted, including the struggle to refute the distorted narrative to protect the Party's history. This is a regular task of the Party committees, Party organizations, government, fronts, political and social organizations, and each locality, agency, unit, cadre, and Party member, especially those in leadership positions⁽³⁾.

Fighting against the distorted narratives to protect the Party and its history is not only to safeguard the ideological foundation, revolutionary achievements, organization, and cadres and Party members of the Party, but also to safeguard the reputation and credibility of the Party in the eyes of the people and to strengthen the people's trust in the Party and the communist regime. It is also a struggle against the "self-evolution" and "self-transformation" within the Party, which involves "downplaying and denying revolutionary achievements; exaggerating shortcomings of the Party and the State; distorting history, fabricating and slandering the senior leaders of the Party and the State"⁽⁴⁾. Methodologically, in all circumstances, we must protect the "golden historical heritage" as the treasure of the nation, the property of the country, a source of pride and a responsibility for each and every cadre, Party member, and people in the cause of building and safeguarding the Vietnam socialist motherland.

2. Recognizing the distortion of the Party's history

In terms of origin: the distorted information and arguments come from the "peaceful evolution" forces, political opportunists, interest groups, "self-evolving" and "self-transforming" forces, dissatisfied Party officials, Party members, and people dissatisfied with the regime...

In terms of manifestation: in the form of articles or comments posted on forums and social networking sites, they are manifested in purposes or tools, or exploit limitations, weaknesses, and mistakes in the Party's revolutionary leadership.

In terms of impact mechanism: direct impact is easily noticeable because it is a direct and blatant distortion. This form can affect and incite groups of people with similar interests or low awareness. Indirect impact mechanisms include

indirect manipulation, distortion, cutting, organizing the dissemination of information, and using misleading comparisons⁽⁵⁾.

In terms of subject: anti-communist and anti-revolutionary nations and international organizations against Vietnam in general; reactionary organizations in exile abroad; those who are anti-regime, reactionary, political opportunistic with complicated views in the country; those who spread false information for personal gains; those who have violated Vietnamese law and hold grudges against the regime; “self-evolving” and “self-transforming” forces...

In terms of motivation and methods: distortion of the Party’s history arises from many motivations, primarily political. They dream of restoring the country’s leadership by Western-style democracy. Their main methods are to undermine the ideological foundation, eliminate the leadership role, and lower the status and credibility of the Party and the socialist revolutionary path in Vietnam.

Regarding the distortion method: With respect to the past, they distort the historical revolutionary developments under the leadership of the Party, deny their value and significance, and exaggerate failures. With respect to the present, they deny the achievements of the revolution, focusing on negative aspects, slandering and fabricating against Party and State leaders, and utilizing forums, especially social media, to distort and sabotage. Previously, they mainly used Vietnamese-language media abroad to publish and disseminate distorted information. Currently, they are making extensive use of the Internet, social media, linking within and outside the country, and opening many websites to implement the conspiracy of distortion and sabotage. Overseas enemies take advantage of the difficult circumstances of the country to tightly collaborate with dissatisfied minorities within the country, attacking through books and domestic media. Some political opportunists who have violated Vietnamese law, “self-evolve”, “self-transform”, take advantage of “spreading rumors on the street”, posting statuses on Facebook, personal Zalo, etc., disseminating distorted information, and participating in interviews with anti-communist media. In addition, there are some seminars, forums, and international conferences held in countries with a large Vietnamese diaspora.

Regarding the content of the distortion, it can be identified in some of the following issues: *firstly*, distorting and denying the ideological foundation of the Party; opposing Ho Chi Minh Thought with Marxism-Leninism; calling for the abandonment of communist ideals and the path to socialism in Vietnam.

This type of argument often distorts that “The Communist Party of Vietnam’s adoption of Marxism-Leninism is the cause of the two wars against France and the United States”, “The Party’s use of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought as the ideological foundation is mistaken, conservative, and dogmatic”, “Socialism is only an illusion that can never be realized”⁽⁶⁾, “Marxism-Leninism is outdated”, “Ho Chi Minh Thought is not the result of applying and developing Marxism-Leninism in Vietnam”, “Choosing the path to socialism in Vietnam is a historical mistake, following in the footsteps of the Soviet Union”⁽⁷⁾...

Secondly, distorting the Party’s political lines, orientations, and principles; denying the Party’s leadership role and contributions; demanding a change in the Party’s name and calling for “political pluralism”, “multi-party opposition” and “non-politicization” of the armed forces. This type of argument often uses fallacies to demand “changing the Party’s political lines, abandoning the erroneous socialist ideology”, “switching to a nationalist and democratic path, focusing on the transition of the political system from totalitarianism to democracy”; fabricating “Vietnam lacks democracy, violates freedom of religion and belief”⁽⁸⁾; “cannot violate the law, ignore the capitalist system, but should develop capitalism under the Party’s leadership”; “the Party is not the vanguard of the working class, so it cannot lead the construction of true socialism in Vietnam”; “implementing the market economy is Vietnam Communist Party drinking bitter medicine”⁽⁹⁾.

At the same time, the Party’s organizational and operational principles are distorted and sabotaged, especially the principle of democratic centralism. From the argument “To make Vietnam truly democratic and developed, it is necessary to implement political pluralism and multi-party system”, it crosses the line and distorts the law, especially the Criminal Code, Article 88 “communication against the State”; calling for the revision of the 2013 Constitution with erroneous proposals such as “eliminating Article 4 on the Party’s leadership role; implementing political competition, establishing a multi-party system”⁽¹⁰⁾. From the accusation that “Vietnam’s Communist Party holds power over the people, violates democracy, human rights, authoritarian, and Party dominant”, it claims that “the Party has fulfilled its mission in the two resistance wars against France and the United States”⁽¹¹⁾.

Thirdly, distorting, falsifying, and denying the victory and revolutionary achievements of Vietnam under the leadership of the Party. This type of discourse asserts that “The August Revolution in 1945 was just a stroke of luck”

and “this revolution only transferred power from the king to the party”. They distort the righteous nature of the resistance war against French colonialism (1946-1954), belittle the significance of the Dien Bien Phu victory, and discredit historical icons. They also distort the truth of the “people’s war against the US to save the country led by the Communist Party of Vietnam”, claiming it was a mistake with no winners or losers, and everyone lost. They falsely claim that it was a “fratricidal war, boiling the flesh and blood of brothers”; fabricate “the invasion of the North into the South” and deny the achievements of the country’s renewal process, claiming that “after 35 years of reform, Vietnam still remains backward, and the people are hungry and poor”⁽¹²⁾.

Fourthly, distorting, falsifying, and exaggerating the mistakes and shortcomings of the Party during the leadership process of Vietnam’s revolution. This type of discourse often highlights the limitations, deficiencies, and errors of the Party Central Committee in the mid-1960s, such as the policy of “uprooting the intellectuals, wealthy people, landlords, and those with power”, distorting the mistakes in the land reform campaign from 1953 to 1956 and the post-1975 reform campaign as a “bloody purge”. They exaggerate the losses of the Party during the Tet Offensive and Uprising in 1968, the limitations of building the country according to the Soviet model from 1975 to 1985, and the decline in political ideology, morality, lifestyle of cadres and Party members today. From the exaggeration of these shortcomings, they generalize that “the Party only protects its own interests”, “has no leadership capacity in the revolution, cannot bring peace, prosperity, freedom, and happiness to the people”, and “the Party establishes a relationship with China only to protect its existence”⁽¹³⁾.

Fifthly, distorting and fabricating the unity and identity, career, revolutionary ideology, and personal life of some Party leaders and State officials. This type of argument is often exploited when investigating and handling corruption cases to concoct the narrative that “this is just an internal power struggle, competing for power among factions of the Communist Party of Vietnam”. They take advantage of incidents that compromise political security and social order in some areas to sow discord between the military and police, the people and the Party; and incite internal disunity by distorting the Party’s democratic and human rights policies and foreign policies during the renovation period, such as “to maintain independence and sovereignty, we must boycott Chinese goods and people”; “If the Party and State still hold the ‘three no’s’⁽¹⁴⁾ policy, then the people go their way, the Party goes its way”⁽¹⁵⁾.

On many forums, hostile forces fabricate distortions such as “Ho Chi Minh is a nationalist” or “has Chinese roots”; and falsely accuse some Party and State officials of having compromising thinking, selling land and peninsulas to China.

3. Some solutions to fight for and protect the Party's history

Firstly, there should be a campaign to promote the achievements, significance, and experience of the Party, as well as to emphasize the importance of protecting the Party's history in the current context.

(1) Strengthen communication to raise awareness among cadres, Party members, and the people about the Party's role, position, contributions, and glorious traditions. At the same time, to a certain extent, it can also specify limitations, shortcomings, and openly address how to overcome them. It is necessary to explain that the limitations and negative phenomena currently occurring are only those caused by the subjective actions of some corrupt cadres and Party members, not the essence of the Party. This will awaken the misunderstanding of some people who only focus on the current limitations and forget or deny the good side and contributions of the Party, leading to a false conclusion about the Party's essence.

Promote the role models of cadres and Party members who have fought and sacrificed their lives for the Party and the people during the revolutionary periods, especially those who were imprisoned and even faced death sentences for the Party's interests and the nation's interests. For example, during the period from 1930 to 1945, among the Party Central Committee members, 14 comrades were shot, beheaded, or beaten to death in prison by the French colonial regime or the 31 members of the Party's Central Committee were sentenced to a total of 222 years of imprisonment by the French colonial government before the uprising⁽¹⁶⁾.

(2) Enhance the protection of the Party's ideological foundation: valuing and promoting communication to raise awareness among Party members, cadres, and people about the position, role, significance, and importance of safeguarding the Party's ideological foundation, and combating distorted arguments against our Party's history. This task is not only for historians or Party members but for all people, as protecting the Party's history is a principle of self-defense for the Party, the State, and the regime, which is equivalent to protecting the peaceful life of the people.

Secondly, there should be solutions that focus on improving the “resistance,” “immunity,” and building the “argumentative human beings” to protect the Party's history.

(1) Improve the quality of research, teaching, and learning about Party's history in the Party school system and national education system. This will help Party members and students to "immunize" themselves against distorted arguments against the Party's history. An accurate and comprehensive understanding of the Party's history is the most practical and certain way to overcome distorted historical arguments in all circumstances.

In conducting research and compilation of the Party's history, objectivity and scientific rigor should be ensured, avoiding empty rhetoric and speculative theories. The work should be engaging and captivating, drawing on the experiences of specific individuals and highlighting lessons learned and how they can be applied to current life, particularly the experiences related to handling tasks at the same time, creating opportunities and seizing opportunities, and adapting to changes.

Regarding the teaching of the Party's history, it must be truly lively, emotional, and motivating, so that learners can understand, believe, and take positive actions. In each lesson, specific distorted arguments should be identified and refuted. Examples include arguments such as "the victory of the August Revolution in 1945 was a stroke of luck", "exaggerating and deepening mistakes in the land reform in 1953-1956", "Communists in the North invaded the South during the period of 1954-1975", and so on. In addition, revolutionary idealism, ethics, and lifestyles should be emphasized and instilled in the younger generation. Through this subject, learners will develop a genuine appreciation and gratitude for the classes of cadres and Party members who fought and sacrificed for the country's peace and development today.

(2) Strengthen the Party building work, focus on the Party cells, grassroots organizations, and Party members. In regular Party cell meetings, importance should be placed on the ideological work of Party members, with specialized activities to safeguard the Party's ideological foundation and exemplary historical events. Education for cadres and Party members must focus on becoming role models who are worthy of the people's trust and emulation. Resolutely pushing back against negative elements within the Party will make the Party stronger, self-sufficient, and maintain the people's faith. Exemplary advanced individuals, good people doing good deeds, especially cadres and Party members who fulfill Uncle Ho's teachings of "Understanding Marxism-Leninism means living together with love and understanding. If we read so many books but live without love and understanding, how can we claim to understand Marxism-Leninism?"⁽¹⁷⁾ must be promoted.

Thirdly, there must be a set of solutions for some technical and operational tasks to fight against distorted communication and protect the Party's history.

(1) Actively identify distorted communication against the Party's history and predict issues that are likely to be distorted, particularly on the internet. From this basis, specific counter-arguments must be built to create a "repository of arguments" to serve proactive struggle (fighting) efforts. Simultaneously, there must be solutions to self-improvement, overcoming limitations, and maintaining (building) personal integrity.

(2) Mobilize the strength of the entire political system and positive factors within every citizen. However, it is essential to develop a professional core group, including cadres and Party members who not only understand the Party's history and have firm political qualities but also possess practical experience, good public speaking skills, and excellent writing abilities. Apart from the Party's issuance of resolutions, directives, and organizational instructions to carry out work to protect the Party's ideological foundation, each cadre, Party member, and the political system must actively participate in concrete, certain, and clear actions.

(3) Diversify forms of struggle, including scientific research topics, organizing seminars, round-table discussions, integrate them into the curriculum, writing small essays/theses/dissertations, compile special topics for regular cell meetings, organize anonymous and public writing contests. These efforts must be integrated into the activities of trade unions, youth organizations, clubs, teams, and groups. Organizing contests to study, public speaking, and storytelling about exemplary individuals who have good morals, good manners, and excellent work ethics must be emphasized.

(4) Utilize multiple mediums, especially emphasizing direct struggle on cyberspace through various forms of rich and diverse content that is engaging and effective, including articles, poems, literature, music, video clips, paintings, photos, and information sharing/comments. Take advantage of influential figures in the online community to disseminate information about what is good and to oppose what is bad. Employ timely encouragement and strict disciplinary measures. It is necessary to have proactive and effective methods of struggle, with forecasting, early warning, and proactive measures, and not be passive.

4. Conclusion

Historical knowledge, including the history of the Party, provides insights into the past to serve the present and anticipate the future. Therefore, ancient

Greek historians once concluded: “History is the teacher of life, the torch of truth that illuminates the way to the future”. K. Marx and F. Engels believed that history is the only science because all other sciences must rely on historical events. V.I. Lenin affirmed that history is a part of social science combined with the working class to become a powerful weapon. President Ho Chi Minh was a history research student when he was in the Soviet Union, and he once urged us: “Our people must know our history. Our history teaches us the glorious traditions of our ancestors”⁽¹⁸⁾. General Vo Nguyen Giap, before becoming a renowned military leader, was a history teacher at a high school. The Russian writer Sergei Tretyakov once wrote: “You may not know or feel passionate about studying math, Greek or Latin languages, chemistry, or thousands of other sciences, but as an educated person, if you don’t love history, you can only be someone who is not fully developed intellectually.”⁽¹⁹⁾ Even Thomas Polgar, a senior US embassy officer in Vietnam and one of the last Americans to evacuate from Vietnam in 1975, later wrote: “Whoever learns nothing from history is forced to repeat its mistakes”. The three defeats of the Northern feudal armies in the battles on the Bach Dang River (in 938, 981, 1288) were also due to their lack of sincerity with the past.

“To eat the fruit, you must remember the one who planted the tree. In our peaceful life today, we must remember the heroes and martyrs of our Party and our people... The blood shed by these martyrs makes our revolutionary flag even more brilliantly red. The heroic sacrifice of these martyrs has prepared our country to blossom with independence, to achieve freedom. Our people remember the contributions of the martyrs from generation to generation, and we must always learn from the courageous spirit of the martyrs to overcome all difficulties and hardships, to fulfill the revolutionary cause that the martyrs have passed down to us”⁽²⁰⁾. This teaching of President Ho Chi Minh reminds us to raise our sense of responsibility to protect the Party, the State, the regime, firmly protect the “golden pages of history” of the Party; firmly believe in the Vietnamese revolutionary path led by the Party towards socialism./.

(1) Decree No. 72/2013/ND-CP dated July 15, 2013 of the Government on management, provision, and use of internet services and online information.

(2), (5), (10), (13), (15) Central Department for Communication and Education, *The impacts of negative and harmful information on the internet on ideology and social*

psychology - situation and solutions, Scientific Research Project Code KHBĐ (2016)-01, pp.16, 33-35, 39, 40, 41.

(3) Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW dated October 22, 2018 of the 12th Party Central Committee “*on strengthening the protection of the Party’s ideological foundation, refuting erroneous and hostile viewpoints in the new situation*”.

(4) Resolution No. 04-NQ/TW dated October 30, 2016 of the 12th Party Central Committee *on strengthening Party building, preventing and pushing back the deterioration in political ideology, ethics, lifestyle, and the self-evolution and self-transformation within the Party*.

(6) Central Theoretical Council (2014), *Criticizing erroneous and hostile viewpoints*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp.123, 137, 161.

(7) People’s Public Security Political Academy (2017): *Struggle against distortion of Marxist-Leninist ideology, Ho Chi Minh’s thought*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp.141, 227, 245, 256, 268.

(8) Central Theoretical Council (2014), *Criticizing erroneous and hostile viewpoints*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp.401-404.

(9) Vu Van Hien (editor, 2021), *Some arguments to refute incorrect, hostile views that oppose the 13th National Congress of the Party*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, Vol. 1, pp. 21-22.

(11), (12) Vu Van Hien (editor, 2021), *Some arguments to refute incorrect, hostile views that oppose the 13th National Congress of the Party*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, Vol. 1, pp. 21-22, pp. 26-28.

(14) Do not participate in military alliances or become a military ally of any country; not allow any country to establish military bases in Vietnam; not rely on this country to oppose another. <https://vnexpress.net/chinh-sach-ba-khong-cua-quoc-phong-viet-nam-2173776.html>.

(16), (21) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Complete Works*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, Vol. 12, p. 401.

(17) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *ibid*, Vol. 15, p. 668.

(18) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *ibid*, Vol. 3, p. 255.

(19) Phan Ngoc Lien (1983): *Ho Chi Minh’s notes on historical research*, Education Publishing House, Hanoi, pp. 8, 30, 31.

(20) <https://www.qdnd.vn/phong-chong-dien-bien-hoa-binh/xuyen-tac-lich-su-chinh-la-pha-hoai-tuong-lai-572280>.