

Improving Students' "Resistance" to Malicious Information on Cyberspace

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Abstract: *Hostile forces are increasingly advocating activities against the Party and State in cyberspace with a special focus on students - the nation's future owners and frequent Internet users. Therefore, it is a top priority to secure the Party's ideological foundation, effectively combat wrong and hostile viewpoints, and build up "resistance" for students against malicious information in cyberspace.*

Keywords: *resistance, students, malicious information, cyberspace.*

Protecting the Party's ideological foundation is a key part of the Party's ideological and theoretical work, a core content of Party building. Throughout the process of leading the Vietnamese revolution, our Party has always attached great importance to protecting the Party's ideological foundation. Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW dated October 22, 2018 of the Politburo clearly defines: *Firmly protecting the Party's ideological foundation is a basic and vital content of Party building; it is the most important task of the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire people, of which communication forces at all levels are the core; it is also the voluntary and regular work of Party committees, Party organizations, authorities, the Vietnam Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations at all levels, of each locality, agency, unit and each cadre and Party member.*

However, with the rapid development of the scientific and technological revolution, the work of protecting the Party's ideological foundation is facing new difficulties as hostile forces are taking advantage of every gap in cyberspace to infiltrate and release malicious information and distorted arguments, affecting people's thoughts and awareness, promoting "self-evolution" and "self-transformation" internally. Along with the trend of social network coverage worldwide, in Vietnam, social networks have not only grown in quantity but have also changed dramatically in quality. According

to statistics from the Vietnam Digital Report 2021, as of January 2021, there were 68.72 million Internet users in Vietnam, accounting for 70.3% of the population, of which the proportion of Vietnamese people using websites social networks is 73.7%⁽¹⁾. And the overwhelmingly dominant force as “net citizens” and “netizens” operating on that platform is mainly young people, most of whom are students.

1. Current situation of students accessing malicious information on cyberspace

In today's conditions of socio-economic development and increasingly deep international integration, students have many conditions and opportunities to promote the tradition of revolutionary heroes of previous generations, to rise up and assert themselves in all areas of social life. But the new conditions also pose many challenges to the young generation, especially the impact of the negative side of the market economy, when their life experience is not sufficient to be able to filter and immunize against multi-dimensional and complex social negativities. Taking advantage of the psychological characteristics of the age group that is eager to explore and learn new things, to assert themselves, but still has limited awareness and unstable political mettle, the hostile forces are absolutely seducing and inciting students to participate in activities that bring down the reputation of the Party and State, and sabotage the government. At the same time, they inject hybrid, “so-called democratic” cultural currents, review the past, sow doubts, discouragement, etc., to influence students' thinking, causing them to have distorted, confused thoughts, passively receiving malicious information, thereby losing trust in the Party and the regime. Just like the human body, in order to prevent diseases and repel dangerous agents from outside, each individual must build a “resistance” and “immune system” which is sturdy enough. In the context of hostile forces taking advantage of cyberspace as an effective weapon to sabotage the Party and State, strengthening the resistance of each student is extremely important.

Recently, hostile forces have constantly used different tactics to incite “self-evolution” and “self-transformation” among students. Notably, they take advantage of every loophole in cyberspace, constantly changing forms

and tricks, causing hardship to management and control by competent authorities. Hostile forces lurk under websites with names that seem legitimate at first glance: “*Catholic Youth*”, “*Patriotic Diary*”, “*Lawyer X*”, “*Gospel for the Poor*”, “*Youth with Compassion*”, etc. Videos posted on these websites are elaborately edited, with big and thrilling headlines to attract the community’s attention. What’s more worrying is that they use the same articles and images on official sites, only editing a few contents to guide public opinion, making it impossible for easy-going readers to recognize that this is distorted and false information. Due to failure to differentiate, users accidentally share that malicious information with many others, leading to hostile views spreading strongly in the community.

In addition, hostile forces post information that degrades and defames the honor of high-ranking cadres of the Party and State, delving into corruption and negativity cases in society to direct public opinion and incite students to express their dissatisfaction with what they called “the country’s tragedy”. They often use the form of “thrilling headlines” to attract the attention of the online community. The content of the article is distorted rhetoric, directing public opinion, praising democracy and freedom in bourgeois countries, bringing down the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Socialist Rule-of-Law State of Vietnam, and expressing its opposition to the path to socialism. Young people like students, with a multi-dimensional, progressive vision but limited socio-political awareness and unstable political mettle, will be easily influenced, impacted, and distorted in their thinking and action when approaching the title and article content as stated above.

Taking full advantage of the loopholes in cyberspace, hostile forces, mainly abroad, also establish groups and events to induce and gather students to participate in protest and riot activities, causing a loss of security and order. One of the methods and tricks of the Viet Tan reactionary organization is to incite protests to disrupt security and rehearse for “color revolution” and “street revolution” in Vietnam. They take advantage of information about the National Assembly discussing a draft law on Special Zones, sea pollution at Formosa, and disruptive gatherings in Binh Thuan, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Tam, etc. to provoke protests and riots. In many

cases, they also pay gullible students to get down to the streets to protest. If students are not alert and knowledgeable enough about the laws, they will immediately fall into the trap and accidentally “assist the enemy”, causing unpredictable consequences.

2. Some solutions to improve students’ “resistance” to malicious information on cyberspace

For the physical body, to form an immune system and sufficiently strong resistance to repel dangerous external diseases, a specific dose of vaccine is needed to prevent that agent. So for the work of protecting ideological foundations, the most effective vaccine is to raise awareness and forge political mettle. Only with sufficient knowledge and capacity will each student have the ability to filter information, choose official sources and, above all, criticize and refute the false and distorted allegations of the hostile forces. Therefore, in the coming time, in order to improve students’ resistance, contribute to the effective fight in cyberspace, and firmly protect the Party’s ideological foundation, it is necessary to focus on the following solutions:

First, each student must self-forge their lifestyle, ethics, strong political mettle, and raise awareness when using social networks:

This is a solution that is decisive in its effectiveness in enhancing students’ resistance against the plots and tricks of hostile forces. Students today need to improve their level of political theory, master the ideological foundation, policies and guidelines of the Party, policies and laws of the State. In addition, students must constantly study and research to improve their knowledge, have critical thinking, have passion and a deep understanding of the national culture. Furthermore, it is necessary for them to actively participate in social activities, especially activities organized by the Youth Union to gain more experience and improve living capital. These are the “weapons” that each student needs to equip himself/herself to be able to form “resistance” against malicious information and distorted arguments of hostile forces.

When using social networks, students must always be alert and conscious because hostile forces have many increasingly sophisticated methods and tricks to seduce and entice the younger generation. Before

receiving information, students need to select official, inspected and verified sources of information. When detecting distorted or hostile allegations, it is necessary to take specific actions such as reporting to the authorities, arguing, and refuting, but it is also necessary to maintain a civilized and polite attitude.

Second, Party committees at all levels and leadership boards of universities and colleges need to pay attention to innovating and strengthening leadership and direction to protect the Party's ideological foundation on social networks among students:

Party committees at all levels and leaders of universities and colleges need to continue paying closer attention and direction to political-ideological education and training of political mettle for students. It is necessary to develop educational and training plans for students and include those plans in annual resolutions and work programs for effective implementation. Attention should be paid to and favorable conditions should be created in terms of mechanisms and operating funds for Youth Union work and youth movements, creating a suitable environment for students to forge and strive. The Colleges' and Universities' Party Committees and Boards of Directors regularly organize forums, dialogues, and exchanges with students to grasp the ideological situation, thoughts, aspirations, and correct political ideological orientation for students, while building a democratic and open learning and working environment.

The education of political theory subjects such as Marxist-Leninist Philosophy, History of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh Thought, etc. need to be paid more attention. Current events at home and abroad, information about the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the election of the 15th National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in curricular and extracurricular programs should be regularly updated.

Third, promoting the Youth Union's proactive role in protecting the Party's ideological foundation in cyberspace:

The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union must regularly focus on popularizing and educating the Party and State's guidelines, policies and laws through specific projects and tasks. Each Youth Union organization needs

to thoroughly grasp and organize the serious implementation of Directives and Resolutions of the Party and Youth Union, especially Directive No. 42-CT/TW dated March 24, 2015 of the Secretariat on *“Strengthening the Party’s leadership in the work of educating revolutionary ideals, ethics, and cultural lifestyle for the young generation in the period of 2015 - 2030”*; Directive No. 05-CT/TW dated June 15, 2016 of the Politburo on *“Promoting studying and following Ho Chi Minh’s thought, ethics, and style”*; Resolution of the 4th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (12th tenure) on *“Strengthening the building and rectification of the Party, preventing and repelling the deterioration of political ideology, ethics, lifestyle, and “self-evolution”, “self-transformation” internally”* and Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW dated October 22, 2018 of the Politburo (12th tenure) on *“Strengthening the protection of the Party’s ideological foundation, fighting wrong and hostile views in the new situation”*.

The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union needs to further promote its role in attracting youth union members and students to useful activities, in order to foster love for the homeland, country, trust in the Party, State and regime. The organization of “returning to traditional moral values” activities should be increased to targeted addresses, seminars, discussions, and exchange of experiences for students participating in protecting the Party’s ideological foundation on social networks. The Youth Union’s information pages need to constantly update examples of exemplary and advanced people with good deeds, outstanding and “people and country devotedly serving” Union members to inspire and spread positive values, and at the same time have struggling articles, raising students’ awareness. All levels of the Youth Union need to actively and proactively grasp the ideological and psychological situation of Union members and students in the face of plots and tricks of sabotage forces. In addition, the Youth Union should continue to promote the role of clubs and groups, promoting information technology application activities associated with the activities of the Steering Committee 35 at all levels.

Fourth, enhancing exchanges between school units and Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union organizations.

The protection of the Party's ideological foundation in cyberspace cannot be the work of an individual or an organization but requires the cooperation of the entire political system and the entire community. Especially, social networks are a unique space with very broad-scale connections. To achieve the most effective management, there needs to be a connection between units of colleges/universities and Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union organizations.

It is necessary to build a movement of emulating and learning from each other, praising typical individuals and groups and effective operating models to encourage and replicate good examples. It is necessary to coordinate the development of publications on content and effective communication methods to protect the Party's ideological foundation on social networks among students. Units of colleges/universities and union organizations should share experiences and information with each other, thereby gaining a more objective and comprehensive view, offering new solutions, contributing to adjusting the practical and effective content and methods of communication.

In short, the struggle in cyberspace of the ideological battlefield, although silent, is becoming tougher and fiercer, requiring the cooperation of the entire Party, the entire political system and the masses, especially the students of universities and colleges across the country. When participating in cyberspace, each student needs to be aware of the responsibility to play a key, proactive role in directly fighting malicious information on social networks. Thereby, they can make an important contribution to fighting, preventing, and defeating all plots and tricks of hostile forces in the "peaceful evolution" strategy, making efforts to study and forge to become good citizens, actively contributing to the cause of building and protecting the Fatherland./.