

Inheriting Ho Chi Minh Thought on Revolutionary Journalism to Contribute to Building the Ethics and Culture of the Party

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Abstract: President Ho Chi Minh laid the foundation for revolutionary journalism in Vietnam, and throughout his revolutionary career, he always regarded the press as an important part of the revolution. He repeatedly emphasized that the press was a sharp weapon in the struggle for national independence and the creation of a new life for the people. Inheriting and developing Ho Chi Minh Thought on the role of revolutionary journalism, the Resolution of the 13th Congress of the Party has confirmed “Building a professional, humane, and modern press and media”⁽¹⁾, while our Party always stresses the need to study, supplement, and refine the values of revolutionary ethics in the spirit of “Our Party is ethical, is civilized”. In the current era of deepening international integration, studying Ho Chi Minh Thought on the role of revolutionary journalism in Vietnam to promote the cultural and revolutionary ethics of Vietnamese journalism, thereby contributing to the building of the Party’s ethics and culture, is increasingly meaningful and practical.

Keywords: Ho Chi Minh Thought, Vietnamese journalism, revolutionary ethics.

1. Ho Chi Minh Thought on the principles and purpose of revolutionary journalism in Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh always had a deep understanding that: “I have only one desire, a strong desire, which is to make our country completely independent, our people completely free, so that everyone can have enough food and clothing, and everyone can receive an education”⁽²⁾. Therefore, according to his thought, the overarching topics that journalists need to explore and promote are: “fighting against colonialism and imperialism, fighting against feudalism and the landlord class, advocating for national independence and socialism”⁽³⁾.

Ho Chi Minh’s view of revolutionary journalism as a weapon of struggle requires characteristics such as combativeness, orientation, and mass appeal. The ultimate purpose is to promote, encourage, educate, and organize the people to share the same ideals of resistance and nation-building. For this reason, Ho Chi Minh pointed out that the guiding principles of revolutionary journalism

in Vietnam should be: “Our journalism must serve the working people, serve socialism, serve the struggle for the unity of the country, and for world peace”⁽⁴⁾. Broadly speaking, journalism does not only serve the construction of socialism and the defense of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam but also contributes to global peace, with national independence linked to socialism. Therefore, it is especially important that our journalism always follows the correct political line, as only with the right political line can journalistic works serve the Party’s revolutionary cause and the nation’s interests effectively.

2. Ho Chi Minh Thought on the mission of revolutionary journalism in Vietnam

One of the core values in Ho Chi Minh Thought on revolutionary journalism in Vietnam, and also the foundation that distinguishes revolutionary journalism from counter-revolutionary journalism, is that journalism is politically correct only when it is led by a political party. The foundation of that Party is based on Marxism-Leninism, embodies the working class, and is deeply connected to the nation and the people.

Revolutionary journalism is closely tied to the cause of building and protecting the homeland

In his revolutionary career, President Ho Chi Minh always harnessed the immense power of journalism as a tool for revolutionary struggle. Ho Chi Minh Thought on the role of revolutionary journalism is the result of creatively applying Marxist-Leninist views on journalism to the specific conditions of Vietnam.

During the journey to find a way to save the country, through comparative methods and practical surveys, he realized that the national issue must always be addressed from the perspective of the most progressive class. Fully adopting the principles of Marxism-Leninism, he clearly understood the historical mission of the working class when he asserted that for the revolution to succeed: “First, there must be a revolutionary Party, to mobilize and organize the people inside, and to establish connections with oppressed nations and the working class everywhere. The revolution can only succeed if the Party is strong, just as the boat can only move forward if the helmsman is steady”⁽⁵⁾. Ho Chi Minh understood deeply and addressed correctly the relationship between the role of revolutionary journalism and the role of the Communist Party, which is why he founded *The Thanh Niên* (the Youth), the voice of the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth League. The newspaper’s mission was to spread Marxism-Leninism in Vietnam, thereby raising political awareness among the people to establish the Communist Party of Vietnam in 1930. From the moment the Communist Party

of Vietnam was established, it not only ended the deadlock in the national salvation path and national liberation struggle but also became the decisive factor for many important victories in the Vietnamese revolution. Thus, Ho Chi Minh Thought on the mission of revolutionary journalism in Vietnam is based on recognizing the immense power of journalism, which plays a crucial role in contributing to the success of the revolution and the cause of building and protecting the homeland.

Revolutionary journalism plays an important role in protecting the Party's ideological foundation

Protecting the ideological foundation of the Party and fighting against erroneous, hostile viewpoints is a fundamental and crucial content and is the most important task in Party-building work. It is a regular task for party committees, organizations, and all of society, with journalism and media serving as the vanguard and front-line force in protecting the Party's ideological foundation.

Furthermore, revolutionary journalism is a sharp weapon in the ideological battlefield, playing a significant role in combating political, ethical, and lifestyle degradation, as well as the phenomena of "self-evolution" and "self-transformation." There are various levels of "self-evolution" and "self-transformation" among some cadres and Party members. Firstly, there is a portion of individuals who have shown signs of diminishing faith in Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, and the goals and path of national independence and socialism set by the Party. Secondly, there are those who show signs of gradually departing from the principles and objectives of socialism. These individuals may not yet deny the principles and revolutionary goals, but their political belief has severely weakened. Thirdly, there are those who have completely degenerated politically, abandoning Marxism-Leninism and socialist ideals. These are cadres and Party members who have seriously degenerated in terms of political ideology. Therefore, in addition to regularly monitoring the ideological situation of cadres, Party members, and the people, the mission of revolutionary journalism is to promptly identify and correct any wavering in ideological awareness and beliefs, thereby mobilizing the strength of the entire nation to safeguard security on the ideological and cultural front.

Revolutionary journalism plays an important role in building a new morality and new people

In his works, Ho Chi Minh emphasized that the mission of revolutionary journalism is not only to expose the enemy and false views, but also to promote the good and protect what is right. He emphasized: "For those of us who write for the press, the pen is a sharp weapon, and the newspaper is a revolutionary

manifesto to mobilize the masses to unite in the struggle against both old and new colonialism, imperialism, headed by American imperialism, for national independence, social progress, and world peace”⁽⁶⁾. Moreover, journalism should also serve as a forum for the people, where Party media can offer collective intelligence, multiple perspectives, and insights from talented intellectuals, thus enhancing the appeal of journalistic works. Furthermore, the people-oriented nature of journalism is especially reflected in media agencies listening to and valuing the opinions of the people. The people are not only the subject of service for revolutionary journalism but also contributors and critics of the press. Ho Chi Minh taught: “... each newspaper, such as those for farmers, workers, youth, women, etc., should have its unique characteristics”⁽⁷⁾. Therefore, each piece of information in every newspaper must have a clear awareness of its target audience, ensuring that news is reported not only accurately in terms of the event but also with the internal connection between events and in line with the Party’s guidelines and perspectives. He always stressed: “Politics must be in charge. Only with the correct political line can other matters be correct. Therefore, our press must always follow the correct political line”⁽⁸⁾.

3. Promoting the role of revolutionary journalism in enhancing the culture and morality of the Party according to Ho Chi Minh Thought

With its functions, the press has always contributed to propagating and spreading the noble cultural and ethical values of the Party throughout society. The system of revolutionary policies and viewpoints of the Party has embodied the Party’s noble cultural and ethical values in its leadership of the country and the training of cadres and Party members across the political system. Deeply understanding the mission of revolutionary journalism, the most important aspect of the Party’s noble cultural and ethical values has been widely propagated and disseminated through journalistic works that are both accessible and profound. This includes:

Information in the press must always have a clear purpose, one of which is to propagate and popularize the Party’s policies so that the people know, trust, and voluntarily act to serve the cause of national renewal. From the perspective of Party building, when the press propagates and disseminates the Party’s policies and viewpoints to ensure that the people trust, maintain faith, and remain absolutely loyal to the Party’s ideals, it contributes to creating high consensus within the Party and the people. In this case, revolutionary journalism has been and continues to be instrumental in spreading the Party’s noble cultural and ethical values. This process helps form political awareness among the people, which is a foundational element for the Party’s existence

and development. Regarding this great mission of revolutionary journalism, V.I. Lenin also emphasized: “The press is the propagandist, the mobilizer, the organizer, and the general leader”⁽⁹⁾. In a letter to the class of studying Huỳnh Thúc Kháng journalism, Ho Chi Minh stressed that the most important task of a newspaper should be: “To propagate, mobilize, educate, and organize the people to lead them to a common goal”⁽¹⁰⁾. His viewpoint is consistent with the mission of revolutionary journalism: journalists must deeply understand their political mission, using each journalistic work to ensure that all social classes genuinely absorb the Party’s thoughts, viewpoints, and directives, helping the people develop strong political awareness.

Currently, in the field of culture, journalism helps the people understand the scientific basis of policies, the meaning of policy implementation for the people, and for the development of society. Journalism not only helps the people understand the advantages and challenges in implementing policies but also makes them aware of the consequences if such policies are not enacted or implemented timely and effectively. The ultimate noble goal of revolutionary journalism is to create consensus based on scientific trust in the Party’s cultural development policies, which then motivates effective action in implementing these policies.

Moreover, for President Ho Chi Minh, construction and opposition are two sides of the same coin, and one must build to oppose and oppose to build, with construction being the most fundamental aspect. Therefore, journalism is not only about reflecting the good and beautiful things about our people, our soldiers, our officials, and our friends, but also about pointing out and criticizing the shortcomings that still exist in ourselves, our officials, the people, and the military. Revolutionary journalism must not just write about the good while ignoring or even concealing the bad. However, journalists must be clear about when to criticize, ensuring it is done correctly, honestly, and sincerely, to avoid giving the enemy material for counter-communication. At the same time, when writing about the good, it should be measured and not exaggerated. Only when journalism fulfills both tasks—constructing and opposing—can it truly be revolutionary journalism, fulfilling its glorious mission in the revolutionary cause of the people and the nation.

4. Promoting the role of revolutionary journalism in contributing to building the culture and morality of the Party in the new revolutionary cause today

First, the press agencies must always imbue the primary task of revolutionary journalism, which is to propagate and disseminate Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi

Minh Thought, the Party's viewpoints and policies, and the laws of the State. These must include important current issues both domestic and international, as well as emerging issues in the renovation process. This helps raise political awareness among cadres, Party members, and the people. From there, a strong political consciousness is formed within the Party and the people, so that everyone is united and focused on fulfilling political tasks effectively. This is especially crucial in the current period of international integration, where the press becomes a sharp tool in the struggle to protect the truth, combat all schemes and tactics of "peaceful evolution" by hostile forces, and criticize false and deviant viewpoints emerging within the Party, among its members, and among the people in the process of implementing the Party and State's renovation policies.

Second, media agencies must correctly assess the role of culture and acculturation in the development trend of all countries and nations globally today. Traditional culture and ethics are not immutable; they evolve alongside the process of national development, renewal, and international engagement. However, during this evolution and exchange, there must be careful selection, inheritance, and development based on the good and modern aspects. This inheritance can only be fully realized when the core values of national culture are preserved. Therefore, media agencies, when performing their communication functions, must carefully select methods of communication, content, and form that align with the tastes and awareness of the people to achieve the highest effectiveness. The goal is to maintain the balance between preserving and affirming the cultural and ethical identity of the nation while avoiding blind imitation or idolization of foreign values that are unsuitable for the nation's context and circumstances. The media should point out the negative aspects of Western culture, such as lifestyles that neglect traditional ethical norms, promote selfishness, materialism, and individualism, and emphasize the pursuit of personal gain over collective or community welfare. The media must also address the growing materialistic mindset and practical "money talks" mentality, which disregards the traditionally deep-rooted Vietnamese sense of community and humanity. In the context of globalization and international economic integration, it is crucial to reconcile the preservation of national cultural identity with the positive values of modern development from other countries. A nation can only prosper when its cultural and ethical values are safeguarded and promoted by its people, contributing to the growth of the economy, culture, and society while affirming the nation's independence and autonomy.

Third, building the culture and morality within the Party should involve continuous and consistent communication of the Party's guidelines on shaping and developing the character and morality of Party cadres and members. The culture and ethics within the Party, as reflected in the work of media agencies, refers to the rules and obligations that these agencies acknowledge or adopt based on adherence to the Party's political program, the Party's statutes, and the State's laws on media. The goal of constructing culture and morality within the Party through media agencies is to ensure that those working in this field understand the noble mission of revolutionary journalism: to best serve the Party's objectives and ideals. The welfare of the country, the working class, and the laboring people must always come before personal interests; party discipline must be obeyed, and unity within the Party must be preserved. Each Party member and Party organization within media agencies must be a model for practicing culture and ethics. Through these efforts, revolutionary journalism plays an essential role in strengthening the moral fabric of the Party and society, ensuring the Party's guidelines are effectively communicated and adhered to, thereby contributing to the overall success of the revolutionary cause.

Fourth, media agencies need to innovate methods, content, and forms of communication on the culture and morality of the Party.

Regarding methods, Party leadership and media agencies, from central to local levels, especially the major Party and government press organs, must fully realize their political responsibility in enhancing the Party's culture and morality. It is necessary to develop strategies and specific plans for information and communication on the Party's culture and ethics.

First, the information and communication plan needs to clearly define these key elements: the subjects of the information and communication (which media agencies and propagandists); the target audience (which public groups); the scope of time and geographical area for the information and communication; the content of the message (the key themes and keywords in the main message); the communication forms (e.g., articles, conferences, seminars, training sessions, special talks); the communication channels and media products; and the material conditions to ensure effective information and communication (equipment, finances, human resources).

Second, regarding content, the theme of "Party's culture and morality" must appear continuously and diversely in the media. Each theme should correspond to each stage and its specific goals. In the initial stage, the focus should be on raising public awareness. These themes can be divided into two basic groups: the first group covers concepts, nature, criteria, and components

of the “culture and morality of the Party”, while the second focuses on the roles and responsibilities of Party members and organizations in building and developing the Party’s culture and morality, so that all Party members and the public understand thoroughly. In the subsequent stages, the themes should aim to change public attitudes and behaviors, such as highlighting exemplary Party members and Party organizations in every aspect. The goal is to help Party members and the public recognize the value of virtuous actions and continue striving for them. By promoting exemplary models, positive actions will multiply, while negative behaviors will gradually diminish.

Third, regarding forms, the articles and communication on the Party’s culture and ethics should be presented more diversely, using new media formats such as infographics, long-form articles, newsgames, and podcasts to refresh the political communication format. This will make the messages more relevant to contemporary public tastes.

Throughout history, revolutionary journalism in Vietnam has been a powerful tool for propagating Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, the Party’s guidelines, and combating negative forces. In the context of the new revolutionary stage with growing demands, revolutionary journalism needs to rigorously implement Ho Chi Minh’s viewpoints on the mission of journalism, which is to promote, protect, and develop the nation’s cultural and ethical traditions. This includes critically inheriting, selectively receiving, and integrating valuable elements from other countries and peoples to enrich the culture and morality of the nation and the Party, ultimately serving the goal of national development./.

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(10) Ho Chi Minh (2011), Complete Works, the Truth National Political Publishing House, Vol. 6, p. 102.