

# **Vietnamese Students and The Protection of The Party's Ideological Foundation in the New Context**

**Luong Thi Thuy Nga**

*Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Vietnam*

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Protecting the ideological foundation of the Party and combating erroneous and hostile viewpoints is a central, ongoing, and long-term task. Vietnamese students, as a vital segment of Vietnamese youth, are both a reliable reserve force for the Party in the revolutionary cause and a target that hostile forces constantly seek to exploit to undermine the Party, the State, and the People. Fostering and promoting the role and responsibility of students in safeguarding the Party's ideological foundation in the new context is a critical task.*

**Keywords:** *students, ideological foundation, new context.*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Vietnamese students constitute a segment of Vietnamese youth. They are individuals studying at universities and colleges, representing an age group with a certain level of maturity in terms of biology, psychology, and social awareness. Students are the force that inherits and advances the nation's intellectual resources, serving as the primary human resource in the era of the knowledge economy and technological advancement. They play a pivotal role in national development and are a significant force in preserving and building socialism in Vietnam today.

## **CONTENT**

In any historical period, youth and students have been a crucial social force, one of the decisive factors in shaping the future and building and defending the homeland. Without the involvement of youth, the nation's critical tasks would be challenging to accomplish. Inheriting the values of Marxism-Leninism, during the process of seeking national salvation and leading the revolution, Ho Chi Minh highly emphasized the position and role of youth in the country's development. He regarded youth as both the present and future masters of the nation: "Whether the country prospers or declines, grows strong or weak, depends largely on the youth." Youth are the vanguard of the revolution, the capable arm, and the reliable reserve force of the Party. He wrote: "In all tasks, our youth are always enthusiastic and pioneering, and they are truly the Party's capable arm". At the same time, youth play a significant role in organizing, guiding, and mentoring younger generations, such as teenagers and children, helping them study, play, and develop in a healthy manner. He stated: "Youth are the ones who carry forward the revolution for the older generation while also taking responsibility for guiding the future generation of youth—namely, the children".

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has been profoundly impacting all aspects of social life, and the rapid development of information technology has created opportunities and advantages but also negative consequences affecting young people. Students, as a youthful force and the future reserve for the intellectual workforce, are still inexperienced and susceptible to being swayed, enticed, or provoked. As society progresses and opportunities for exchange and cooperation expand, particularly in the context of Vietnam's market economy and international integration, the influx of external cultural and moral values will become more intense and rapid.

A significant portion of students have become immersed in the virtual world, showing indifference to politics, waning faith and revolutionary ideals, and lacking firm ideological stances, with vague awareness of protecting the Party's ideological foundation. Additionally, some students exhibit moral and lifestyle degradation, such as a lack of direction in their aspirations, engaging in academic dishonesty like cheating, grade inflation, or degree chasing, and showing apathy toward collective activities. Due to an aversion to hardship, some adopt a pragmatic approach to career choices, while others pursue a lifestyle driven by materialism, hedonism, extravagance, and indulgence, leading to legal violations, breaches of ethical standards, and entanglement in social vices. These moral and lifestyle deteriorations not only harm current social life but also adversely affect the nation's future and the students themselves.

Nowadays, social media use has become an essential need for most students. While the majority utilize social media to support their studies and activities, a small group is swayed by it, unable to control their thoughts and behaviors online, leading to involvement in negative activities that undermine the Party's leadership and the State's governance. With sophisticated and cunning tactics, hostile forces aim to negate the role of youth, particularly students, in the revolutionary cause by spreading false or misleading information on social media to deceive readers. They also propagate distorted narratives to diminish the role, functions, and tasks of youth and student organizations, defame youth leaders, and erode the credibility of these organizations, thereby undermining young people's trust. Some actors infiltrate dormitories, lecture halls, academic seminars, and career guidance sessions to incite, provoke, and mobilize collective unrest, aiming to create political and ideological instability among students. Through scholarships and international conferences, they approach and recruit overseas Vietnamese students to join reactionary exile organizations or disguised religious groups, encouraging them to participate in collective protests or disruptive demonstrations.

Thus, through strategies like "peaceful evolution," riots, and subversion, hostile forces attack on multiple fronts, primarily targeting culture and ideology, to erode the people's trust in the Party's leadership and undermine the nation's moral values, lifestyle, and fine traditions. Students are a direct target of these adversaries, who exploit their vulnerabilities, using every means to lure and provoke students into abandoning their roots, turning against the regime, the people, and the nation, and encouraging a pursuit of hedonism devoid of noble purpose.

At the 11<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Youth Union, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong noted that a portion of today's youth exhibit declining trust, fading revolutionary ideals, and a tendency toward pragmatism, urging the avoidance of "fading Party loyalty, disengaged Youth Union participation, and detachment from politics". These negative manifestations among students provide opportunities for hostile forces to exploit, incite, and provoke, aiming to implement their "peaceful evolution" strategy to undermine the Party and the State.

The 13<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Party emphasized: "Strengthen the education of the younger generation on revolutionary ideals, morality, and cultural lifestyles, enhance patriotism and national pride, nurture dreams, ambitions, and aspirations to rise; and promote a sense of responsibility toward the country and society." To fulfill this task, youth must continuously strive in their studies and self-improvement, actively participate in social activities, and contribute to building a generation of Vietnamese youth who are patriotic, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, and capable of meeting practical demands, while maintaining strong political resolve amid changing circumstances. Therefore, educating students on revolutionary ideals, morality, lifestyle, and political steadfastness is crucial in the context of the Party, the State, and society's efforts to implement Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW, dated October 22, 2018, of the 12<sup>th</sup> Politburo, "On strengthening the protection of the Party's ideological foundation and combating erroneous and hostile viewpoints in the new context".

To enhance the political core role of students in contributing to the protection of the Party's ideological foundation and combating erroneous and hostile viewpoints in the new context, the following measures should be effectively implemented:

*First, strengthen education on Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's Ideology, Party guidelines, and state policies and laws for students*

The political awareness of students is a long-term cultivation process through propaganda and education on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's ideology, the Party's guidelines, and State laws. This aims to equip students with fundamental political and legal knowledge, thereby building a scientific foundation for their steadfast belief and trust in the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the path toward socialism. This effort is directed toward fostering generations of students with upright character, firm political stances, and significant contributions to the nation's integration and development.

To contribute to protecting the Party's ideological foundation and countering erroneous and hostile viewpoints, students must first possess political understanding, demonstrated through a deep awareness of the goals and ideals of national independence and socialism, the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, and especially Ho Chi Minh's ideology—learning from Uncle Ho to both fulfill their admiration for him and refine themselves.

Furthermore, students must cultivate correct political sentiments, expressed through patriotism, love for the people, devotion to the Party and the socialist regime, loyalty to the revolutionary cause, the Party, the nation, and the people, and appreciation for the sacrifices of previous generations who gave their lives for the country's independence and freedom. They must courageously combat wrongdoing, falsehoods, and evil, while harboring resentment toward forces that undermine and harm the nation and its people.

Students also need to forge a resolute revolutionary will, remaining steadfast and unshaken amid complex developments and the frenzied sabotage of hostile forces. They must not heed, follow, or be deceived by reactionary or distorted information, while maintaining scientific trust in the Party's and State's leadership, the strength of the people, and the inevitable victory of the nation.

*Second, Youth Unions and Student Associations should proactively and creatively engage in propaganda to help students identify erroneous and hostile viewpoints*

Efforts should be intensified to promote Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW of the Politburo among students, innovating methods and enhancing the effectiveness of propaganda and education to foster revolutionary ideals among students in a creative, flexible, and engaging manner. Vietnam today has achieved historically significant milestones: the homeland's appearance has truly transformed, people's living standards have steadily improved, and the nation's prestige and position are increasingly respected by the international community. The 13th National Party Congress affirmed: "Our country has never before possessed such a foundation, potential, position, and international prestige as it does today". These achievements validate that Vietnam's path to socialism aligns with reality and the developmental trends of the era, affirming the correct leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Currently, erroneous and hostile viewpoints manifest in various specific forms:

- Denying, distorting, and diminishing the role of President Ho Chi Minh in the Vietnamese revolution, thereby criticizing and rejecting Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's ideology. Hostile forces use baseless arguments, such as claiming that "Marxism-Leninism is outdated", to call for abandoning Marxist theory and separating Ho Chi Minh's ideology from Marxism-Leninism.
- Criticizing and negating the Party's guidelines and policies, as well as State laws; distorting history, slandering revolutionary leaders, and denying the great achievements of the Vietnamese people. Hostile forces frequently intensify their efforts to distort and oppose, claiming that Article 4 of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam "eliminates democratic freedoms", opposing the Cybersecurity Law, and advocating for the abolition of the socialist-oriented market economy.
- Exaggerating and highlighting the shortcomings and mistakes of the Party and State in their leadership and governance. Hostile forces, posing as genuine communists, deliberately emphasize flaws that the Party has already acknowledged and self-criticized, while embellishing and exaggerating the achievements of capitalism to steer the Party's guidelines and State policies toward capitalism, gradually drifting away from socialist ideals.
- Exploiting and distorting sensitive events, slandering, fabricating, and defaming the morality and lifestyle of Party cadres and members to cause social instability and erode public trust.

Therefore, staying vigilant and identifying erroneous and hostile viewpoints is a critical task for students to protect the Party's ideological foundation and counter such perspectives effectively.

*Third, enhance the quality and skills of Vietnamese Students in using cyberspace and social media*

Youth Unions and Student Associations should establish dedicated platforms to guide public opinion and combat erroneous and hostile narratives on social media, leveraging modern information technology to produce publications and content that refute such viewpoints.

Today, Vietnamese students demonstrate agility in accessing information, adeptness with modern technology, and the ability to keep pace with advancements in information technology, digitalization, social media, and the achievements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Social media, designed to facilitate connectivity and information sharing among organizations and individuals on various issues and events, contributes to community development. It attracts users with its versatile features, such as messaging, file sharing, video and image posting, voice and video calls, enabling rapid updates on events without spatial or temporal constraints. Social media also serves as a vast and valuable global information resource.

In addition to fostering foundational knowledge, regular training sessions should be organized for students on skills for using the internet and social media in activities aimed at protecting the Party's ideological foundation. Simultaneously, each student must equip themselves with the knowledge, skills, and resilience to navigate cyberspace and social media, building sufficient immunity against fabricated and distorted information targeting the Party's guidelines and State policies and laws.

Fourth, build a core student force to protect the Party's Ideological foundation and combat erroneous and hostile viewpoints

- Strengthen the team of rapporteurs and propagandists; develop practical, flexible, and creative solutions to foster strong resilience, enabling students to be "immune" to the dangerous schemes and tactics of hostile forces.
- Implement educational, training, and mobilization activities, as well as recognize, reward, and commend exemplary students who are key in protecting the Party's ideological foundation and countering erroneous and hostile viewpoints. These efforts should be led by the Communist Youth Union and Student Associations in collaboration with political theory lecturers in educational institutions.
- Enhance the role of guidance and widespread, close-knit connections to engage students in protecting the Party's ideological foundation, such as organizing forums for learning and sharing experiences in combating misinformation on cyberspace.
- Establish information pages and fan pages to attract students to design and disseminate compelling messages about Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's ideology, the Party's guidelines, State policies and laws, and inspiring examples of good deeds and individuals, creating a widespread societal impact.
- Develop a nationwide network of communication teams in educational institutions dedicated to protecting the Party's ideological foundation and countering erroneous and hostile viewpoints on cyberspace. These teams, with students, youth, and young intellectuals as the core force, should be thoroughly trained in knowledge and skills to

monitor situations, identify false and hostile information, and promote official, mainstream information to guide public opinion, especially during significant political events and major historical milestones of the country.

- Political theory lecturers in schools should proactively propose and implement extracurricular content related to protecting the Party's ideological foundation and combating erroneous and hostile viewpoints within the curricula of subjects such as History, Civic Education, Politics, Law, and Information Technology. They should also organize regular thematic sessions on these topics.

*Fifth, promote the exemplary and pioneering role of political theory lecturers in protecting the Party's ideological foundation*

During his lifetime, President Ho Chi Minh always emphasized the significant position and role of teachers in society. He stated: "A good teacher—a teacher worthy of being a teacher—is the most honorable person. Though their names may not appear in newspapers or be awarded medals, good teachers are unsung heroes". This underscores both the crucial role of the teaching profession in "educating minds and shaping character" and the great responsibility society places on educators. Ho Chi Minh also placed particular importance on the exemplary role of teachers, often advising that educators must never compromise their integrity and must serve as role models for students under all circumstances.

The activity of protecting the Party's ideological foundation and combating erroneous and hostile viewpoints during teaching is only truly effective when lecturers themselves continuously enhance their knowledge, strengthen their political resolve, and uphold morality and lifestyle daily. To achieve this, lecturers must thoroughly grasp the revolutionary and scientific essence of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's ideology, the Party's and State's innovative viewpoints, and new insights about the era. Lecturers should select issues relevant to students' needs, thereby addressing real-life challenges. They must actively cultivate and practice moral values, becoming exemplars of patriotism, compassion, humility, simplicity, and resilience.

## **II. CONCLUSION**

Protecting the Party's ideological foundation and combating erroneous and hostile viewpoints is a central, ongoing, and long-term task. This is a responsibility of the entire society, including students. Promoting the role of students not only contributes to the Party's ideological and theoretical work but also strongly enhances their pioneering, voluntary, and creative spirit, creating favorable conditions and environments for students to train, contribute, and mature.

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