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Criticizing distorting and wrong views about press freedom in Vietnam today

Nguyen Sy Trung

Associate Professor, Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, Nguyen Phong Sac, Nghia Tan Ward, Cau Giay District, Hanoi, Vietnam

Corresponding Author: Nguyen Sy Trung

Abstract

In the current national renewal and international integration process, the press is a hot battleground on the ideological and cultural front. The hostile and reactionary forces are trying to blatantly distort that "Vietnam does not have a free press" in order to smear and deny the great achievements of Vietnam's revolutionary press. Faced with that situation,

there is an urgent requirement to clarify the issue of press freedom in Vietnam today, on that basis, to promptly fight, refute, expose, and frustrate malicious plots and tricks of the enemy, contributing to firmly defending the ideological foundation of our Party.

Keywords: Press, Press activities, Freedom of the press, Freedom of the press in capitalism, Press freedom in Vietnam

Introduction

Newspapers are publications (newspapers and magazines) published periodically, a channel to provide topical information on all aspects of socio-political life to the public, an appraiser, and critic of life. living, orienting public awareness and actions to serve the development of society. In a class society, the press has a class and party character and is a tool, a means of information, and propaganda for all social classes, especially the ruling class. In addition to those properties, the press is being affected and absorbed by economic, cultural, social and scientific, and technological activities, etc. Therefore, making journalistic activities more complicated.

The issue of "press freedom" has been raised and debated in many different forums, with different views and positions. The problem here is to clarify the nature of the concept of press freedom in terms of both theory and practice. Solving this problem requires a clear understanding of the nature of freedom, to understand how freedom is, does freedom necessarily have legal guarantees? Free for whom? For whose benefit (what class)? Does freedom conflict with orientation and management? etc. If these questions cannot be answered, the view of press freedom will fall into a dead end of logic. At that time, a conflict will arise between freedom and loss of freedom, between freedom and the direction and management of journalistic activities in practice.

However, it must also be seen that between freedom and orientation and management in journalism is a very complex issue, it will not be easy to distinguish and properly implement if it is not standing to the positions and interests of the class. and under certain historical circumstances.

According to all the peculiarities of journalism in one age or another, in one country or another, among one political force or another. It is necessary to recognize the basic journalistic activities, considering that it has come from socio-political orientations, from what ideological viewpoints and propaganda values? With their sharp political vision, Marx and Engels pointed out: "Absolutely giving up politics is impossible; all newspapers that advocate political renunciation do politics. It's just a matter of how to do politics and what kind of politics to do" ^[1]. The reality of journalistic activities has shown that it must always comply with the political orientations and management of the ruling class and the social system of which it is a constitutive part of ideology and life. spiritual culture, only then will it have freedom. Regarding this, from the beginning of the twentieth century, V.I. Lenin, the leader of the great Russian October Revolution wrote: "The capitalists have always called the freedom to get rich for the rich, the freedom to starve for the public human, is "freedom" ^[2]. Capitalism calls for freedom of the press the freedom for the rich to bribe the press, and the freedom for them to use their money to create and forge so-called public opinion. According to V.I. Lenin, the issue of press freedom can only be determined when it is based on the stance and interests of the class conducting this activity, and at the same time when clearly distinguishing freedom in press activities to serve the purpose. what? Under what specific historical conditions?

It is also necessary to realize that the rule of law states always manage society by law, so all areas of social activities must obey the law, therefore, press activities must also obey the law. Therefore, there cannot be pure press freedom, absolute freedom of the press, outside the control of the state. To have freedom of the press, freedom of information in the true sense, must be based on a democratic society in which all governing bodies, newspapers, and journalists must abide by the constitution and the law. state law. There will be no freedom of the press, freedom of information in a totalitarian, autocratic, authoritarian, de-democratic or pseudo-democracy, classless general democracy, or anarchist democracy.

Thus, freedom of the press and freedom of information are carried out within the framework of the law, which protects the rights and interests of the ruling class. Therefore, when the ruling class still plays a progressive role in history, freedom of the press and freedom of information play an important role in the development and progress of society. is an obstacle to the progress of society, freedom of the press and freedom of information cannot be achieved.

Research results and discussion

Freedom of the press in today's capitalist countries

From the nature of press freedom above, we look at press activities in capitalism, to see if the press is really free in this society.

The slogan "freedom of the press" appeared in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, it was used by the bourgeoisie as a weapon to overthrow the feudal centralized autocracy and establish a capitalist regime. But after the revolution was successful, the "freedom of the press" was only available to a minority of the bourgeoisie, and freedom of press activities was distorted according to the views and interests of the bourgeoisie, not the bourgeoisie. for the benefit of the majority of the working population. It was also V.I. Lenin who discovered the true nature of the so-called "free press" in capitalist society. He wrote: "Freedom of the press" is also one of the main slogans of "pure democracy". Once again, the workers understood that - and socialists in all countries had acknowledged a million times over - that freedom was a hoax, as long as the best printing presses and the largest stockpiles of paper remains in the hands of the capitalists, and as long as the power of the capitalist class exists over the press".

During the process of formation and existence, bourgeois journalism has gone through a complicated and winding path, it reflects the nature of the capitalist regime as an economic and social system. with its ideological views. Among the periods of bourgeois journalism that took place, notably the "cold war" period (from the 50s to the early 80s of the twentieth century), private journalism The bourgeoisie has tried to orient the public to bourgeois values, to the concept of capitalist society as a society of equal possibilities, just, in accordance with human nature, where each person can fully express his or her own abilities, where one can achieve the highest level of consumption standards... At the same time, bourgeois journalism creates an offensive image of socialism. That socialism has created the "iron curtain" and is threatening the "free world", etc. whose main goal is to protect bourgeois values and smear socialism^[3].

In fact, before the breakup of the Soviet Union, bourgeois press activities with cunning tricks created a distorted world

picture thanks to half-hearted, dishonest, and unbiased information. wrongdoing has eroded people's confidence in the leadership of the Communist Party, in the future of the regime, or the negative, indifferent and indifferent mentality towards the problems facing the country. At that time, the Soviet people were not prepared to digest information in a "free, adventurous" fashion with the terrible influence of the press. The way journalists' information in that way not only makes society unstable but also makes the mass media system messy in the organization, and skewed in political views. Some scholars often compare the information speech of journalists to the artillery barrages that bombard the regime's stronghold when it is on the side of hostility and opposition. In the political upheaval in the Soviet Union, journalists' information speech: "It's scarier than cannons because it creates chain explosions in people's consciousness, rotten their spiritual support. regime from within the marrow, from below the foundation"^[4]. The power of information from the enemy contributed to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a mighty power that had existed for three-quarters of a century.

In the period of preparing to launch the second Iraq war in 2003, a series of Western media systems falsely reported that Iraq was producing and storing a huge stockpile of nuclear weapons, which was a threat to the security of the United States and its allies. This is an excuse for the US and the West to wage a senseless war to invade Iraq to realize the ambition of world hegemony. This further reveals the nature of orientation in modern bourgeois journalism and that the so-called "freedom of the press" is just a deception for the public.

Recently, the Western media system led by the US has waged an all-out propaganda war with the aim of causing fear of Russia and anti-Russia in the public's mind, leading to encirclement and isolation. to bring Russia down." Therefore, they have built an image of an "ugly" Russia, an image of an "authoritarian" Russian president, an image of a Russia that is a "threat to the security and peace" of the whole world. These directional images are used by both mainstream and anonymous media to spread on social media. In order to conceal information and prevent the public from accessing objective news from world media, the governments of capitalist countries have used technical measures to block, or exert political, and economic pressure on countries that have media outlets that report adverse news to them, forcing them to limit or stop operating radio stations, television channels, newspapers, social networking sites, etc. In 2017, the Al Jazeera (Qatar) news channel was asked to close by the US and some Western allies because it is a free and independent channel with the criteria of "objective, factual and in-depth reflection" and "having dared to tell the truth about the war situation in Libya, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan not in the favor of these countries is a very good example"^[5].

The above facts show that, in capitalism, "freedom of the press" is associated with the political orientations, positions, and interests of the bourgeoisie. Freedom of the press is the freedom of information for a minority of bourgeois governments, capitalist corporations, and the media, which is the exact opposite of withholding accurate information and spreading false and misleading information. truth to the vast majority of the public. Therefore, it can be affirmed that in capitalism there is no freedom of the press as hostile and reactionary forces always claim.

Freedom of the press in Vietnam today

One of the focal points of the resistance of hostile and reactionary forces towards the Vietnamese revolution in recent times is press activities. They always say: "Vietnam does not have a free press". Most recently, on May 3, 2022, on the website of Radio Free Asia (RFA), there was an article "Press freedom in Vietnam" that is very stable at the bottom of the ranking list. blatantly distorting the reality of journalistic activities in our country. This article cites that "Reporters Without Borders (RSF) announced the World Press Freedom Index 2022 rankings on International Press Freedom Day 3/5, an independent journalist The establishment stated that, in addition to arresting and imprisoning independent journalists, the State of Vietnam also "backs" groups that spread fake news. That is also the reason why Vietnam's press situation is still bad and always ranks last in the assessment of Press freedom" and "In this ranking, RFS ranks Vietnam at 174/ 180 countries and territories were assessed, up one place from last year, and is the country with the third highest number of imprisoned journalists in the world.

This is not the first time that such hateful and false claims of hostile and reactionary forces have appeared, but we still need to reiterate and continue to fight and strongly refute these distortions. this new. To carry out this task, it is first necessary to have a clear understanding of the press and the nature of press freedom.

Enemy and reactionary forces propagate and distort that Vietnam does not have a free press and when the press has been oriented, managed, and censored by the Vietnamese Party and State, they will hinder it. restrict, or even destroy, freedom of the press and freedom of information of press agencies, journalists, and the people, etc. they cite that currently in Vietnam "the government promulgates many regulations to tighten press freedom and freedom of speech, such as the 2018 Cybersecurity Law and Decree 15/2020"; the press is being politically oriented by the communist party...

So is the truth true to the claims that these forces make? Answering this issue forces us to clarify that the direction and management of press activities in Vietnam today still ensure the freedom of the press and freedom of information. Moreover, it also contributes to creating the basis and favorable conditions for these basic rights to be strongly expressed and developed in social life.

The historical reality of revolutionary journalistic activities in our country began when the newspaper "Youth" founded by leader Nguyen Ai Quoc was first published in Guangzhou - China, from June 21, 1925, to present, always for the goal of national independence and socialism, in order to liberate the working class and the toiling people of our country from oppression, exploitation, and injustice, move forward to build a new and prosperous life, happiness, and equality. This is the core content of freedom of the press and freedom of information in our country under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Affirming this issue, Ho Chi Minh wrote: "The press is also an important branch of culture" [6], "The press is the organ of public opinion" [7]. "The Communist press has the task of making our soldiers understand the colonial issue, awakening the consensus of the working masses in the colonial countries, and enlisting them to join the cause of the colonialists. communism" [8].

During the process of leading the Vietnamese revolutionary cause since its inception, our Party has always identified the

press as a sharp tool of the Party and State in propagating, promoting, and guiding the mass organization. the people, a forum for working people to express their thoughts and aspirations. However, in the context of current international integration, the negative impact of many ideological and cultural flows from outside has posed new difficult and complicated problems for Vietnamese press activities, including how to both maintain the socialist political orientation while ensuring the freedom of the press and orientation while still fully promoting the right to democratic freedom, dynamism, sensitivity, and creativity of journalists and newspapers. This is an issue of important theoretical and practical significance, which, if solved well, will contribute to promoting the country's press activities to develop quickly and sustainably. The document of the Fifth Conference of the Party's 10th Central Committee emphasized: " Firmly protect the ideological and political battlefield, maintain cultural identity against the increasingly strong penetration of trends, ideological and cultural trends from the outside" [9], and at the same time: "must promote democracy, exploit all creative potentials of the whole Party and the whole society to create a strong development step in the private sector." ideas, theories, journalism". The essence of the Party's political orientation is to orient the goals, directions, tasks, and paths for press activities without being deviated from socialism. That is to make press activities always stand on the basis of Marxism - Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought, taking that as the ideological foundation and guideline for their activities. Show consistency with the Party and State's renovation viewpoints, guidelines and policies; deeply show the party, class, combat, people, and scientific and revolutionary character in journalistic activities; fight against phenomena that are far from the principles, purposes, and objects, and oppose the "peaceful evolution" strategy of hostile and reactionary forces through press activities, in order to contribute to the successful implementation of the doi moi process. socialist-oriented country. Therefore, the orientation of journalistic activities not only does not limit freedom and creativity but also

arouses and promotes the dynamism and creativity of the press in the direction of selecting topics, topics, and winning prizes. with the requirements of the current political, economic and social situation of the country, meeting the practical requirements and guidelines and policies of the Party and State, and the concerns and questions of the people. people. That fact has proved that the orientation of press activities in Vietnam is not in conflict with press freedom as hostile forces are distorting and slandering. However, as mentioned above, freedom of the press and freedom of information can only be realized in a truly democratic social regime. The socialist democracy that our Party and people are building and constantly perfecting is the most progressive democracy in human history. On the basis of socialist democracy, our Party and State in the process of leading and managing the construction of the country always affirm the right to freedom of the press and freedom of information. The Constitution and laws of our country affirm the right to freedom of the press, freedom of information, and the State to manage the press according to the law. establishment and freedom of the country for the happiness of the people. The Press Law (2016) of our country clearly states: "Article 10: Citizens' right to press freedom: 1. To create journalistic works; 2. Providing information to the press; 3. Responding to information in the

press; 4. Access to press information; 5. Associate with press agencies to produce press products; 6. Print and distribute printed newspapers”^[11].

The Press Law of Vietnam affirms that the press is not only the mouthpiece of the Party, the State, political organizations, and social and professional organizations... but also a reliable forum for the people. People have the right to express their opinions through the media. Millions of articles and articles for newspapers on many topics related to practical aspects of social life have been published and reflected in many newspapers, which is a vivid expression of the freedom of the press, freedom of the press, speech of the people. In this respect, our country's Press Law states: “Article 11. Citizens' right to freedom of speech in the press: 1. Express their opinions on the situation of the country and the world; 2. Participate in the formulation and implementation of guidelines, guidelines, and policies of the Party and laws of the State; 3. Giving comments, criticisms, recommendations, complaints, and denunciations in the press for Party organizations, state agencies, socio-political organizations, socio-political-professional organizations, social organizations, socio-professional organizations and other organizations and individuals”^[11].

Thus, the right to freedom of the press and freedom of information in press activities has been clearly affirmed by the law of our country, it shows the democracy and civilization of our country's press activities today. The Party and State always create favorable conditions for citizens to exercise their right to freedom of the press and freedom of expression in the press. The press and journalists operate within the framework of the law and are protected by the State. No organization or individual may restrict or obstruct the press and journalists from operating^[12, 13]. No one may abuse the right to freedom of the press, the right to freedom of expression in the press to infringe upon the interests of the State, the collective, and the citizens. The orientation and management of press activities by lines, policies, and laws in our country do not hinder the freedom of the press and the freedom of creativity of press agencies, journalists, and the people. Our Party and State always respect those fundamental rights and always open the door to journalistic activities to the world in order to contribute to raising the level of revolutionary journalism, meeting the requirements of the period of promoting public relations, industrialization, modernization and opening up, integration, and economic and cultural exchange with the international community.

Press freedom, if it is not based on the direction of the Party, the laws of the State will easily be deflected from the goals and ideals of the path to socialism that our entire Party and people are striving for, strive, build. Therefore, hostile and reactionary forces claiming that Vietnam does not have freedom of the press because it is being oriented and managed is completely wrong is a distortion and a fabrication. The reason for having such an opinion is because these forces have a vague awareness of the freedom of the press and the duties of the press in our country. Due to a one-sided or deliberate misunderstanding of press freedom, leads to the belief that there is a need for a Western-style "freedom of the press" as an expression of the "democratic spirit". The model of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries with the contribution of such a misperception towards the tendency of "freedom of the press" has given us a profound lesson.

In Vietnam today, under the leadership of the Party and State, journalism activities are developing strongly. The Party and State have proposed many new guidelines and policies in line with the requirements of the cause of industrialization, modernization, and international integration, creating conditions for governing bodies, newspapers, and journalists to promote initiative, innovation, creativity, and freedom in their activities. The document of the 13th Party Congress clearly stated: "Building a professional, humane and modern journalism and media. Well, implement the planning and development of the press and communication system. Arrange the publishing, printing, and distribution industry towards leanness, quality, and modernization. Strengthen the management and development of various forms of communication and information on the internet. Resolutely fight for and eliminate harmful, distorting, reactionary products and information that adversely affect socio-political stability, fine customs and traditions"^[14]. With that right and timely policy and direction, it has contributed to promoting the press to promote well its role as the voice of the Party and State, as a forum for the people, and has vividly and promptly reflected all aspects of the media. of the political, economic, cultural, and social life of the country, promoting the role of social supervision and criticism, the role of detecting and fighting against corruption, wastefulness, and negativity, the role fighting the fight against wrong views to protect the ideological foundation of the Party, etc.^[15, 16, 17].

In order to protect the interests of journalists, help them freely create information, and improve their professional skills, our country has a National Association of Journalists and a Local Association, attracting 21,201 journalists as members. The Vietnam Journalists Association is an active member of the Association of International Journalists (OIJ) and the ASEAN Press Federation (CAJ), making worthy contributions to the development of regional and international journalism, for the sake of peace, and stability, progress. Along with that, our Party and State are very interested in the training of professional journalists, by establishing journalism universities and journalism faculties in many universities. Every year, there are hundreds of journalism residents who graduate from college, have high professional qualifications, capacity and sense of social responsibility, have good professional ethics, and are stable in political ideology. Journalism training schools in our country are constantly expanding international cooperation, linking with journalism universities of Russia, the UK, France, the USA, Australia, China, etc. to foster and exchange experiences. journalism experience. In addition, every year, the State also sends hundreds of journalists to training at journalism universities in the US, France, Germany, Sweden, Russia, etc. Our country's press activities are not closed but always look out. world. It is a vivid expression of our orientation and management of press activities while still ensuring the freedom of the press and freedom of information. Thus, the hateful, false words that Radio Free Asia proclaims that: Vietnam "does not have a free press", that the Vietnamese state "censors the press" more and more tightly, or that the press is banned. "orientation", etc. is just their own inference, not derived from the policy, line, from the legal bases of the Party and the State of Vietnam, from the scientific bases. learn from

the relevant and vivid reality of journalistic activities in Vietnam today.

Conclusion

Freedom of the press for whom,? Does the orientation and management of press activities hinder freedom of the press and freedom of information? That question has been and is being answered by the reality of the country's renovation in general and the reality of reforming socialist-oriented journalism in particular. The practice is always the criterion of truth. Realizing the development trend of the country, including the very vibrant and effective activities of the Vietnamese revolutionary press, we will have the right view of Vietnam in the process of innovation and international integration today.

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