

## *Original Paper*

# On the Lenin's Journalistic Thought and China's News Work in the Context of New Media

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### ***Abstract***

*April 22nd, 2020 is the 150th anniversary of Lenin's birth. As a journalist, the author, under the guidance of Socialism with Chinese characteristics, has mainly reviewed Lenin's news thought, which has not only the commemorative significance, but the practical significance in enlightening China's current news work. This article, taking the main content and the main principles of Lenin's news thought as its theoretical support, has studied the enlightenment of Lenin's news thought on China's Journalistic work in the era of new media.*

### ***Keywords***

*Lenin, news thoughts, new media*

As the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party and Chinese people, journalism plays an important role in the development of the Party construction and the establishment of national ideology. The Lenin's journalistic thought, an important part among famous schools of world journalism, inherited Marxist journalistic thoughts. It, according to the revolutionary situation and practical needs of Russia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, combined with the proletarian journalistic practice, formed a set of its own journalistic ideological system. The thought, one of important achievements in the field Marxist ideology, is the new cornerstone of proletarian journalistic thought.

## 1. Main Ideas of the Lenin's Journalistic Thought

Lenin's journalistic thought is a theoretical system of Lenin's views and theories on news and communication. As the leader of the proletarian revolutionary cause, Lenin attached great importance to the development of the national journalism, especially the positive role of journalism thought in the proletarian revolution, and summed up a relatively systematic one in the long-term revolutionary practice. Lenin's ideology originated from the early Proletariat' (Marx and Engels') journalistic thought. With the influence of the October Revolution, and the changing situation at home and abroad, his concept experienced two stages of development: the revolutionary period and the construction period. Based on the reality of the Russian Revolution, these two laid a foundation for the journalistic theory of the party newspaper, and became an important component of Lenin's journalistic thought.

Lenin was the first to put forward the concept of "party principle". He was also the first one standing on the perspective of a proletarian revolutionist, politician and a professional journalist, put forward the theory of party newspaper with unique proletarian characteristics, including the discussion of the party newspaper as the "mouthpiece" of the party and its people, the party principle of the party newspaper and the party journal, the thought of freedom of publication and other journalistic thoughts during the construction period.

The practical significance of Lenin's journalism and communication thought lies not only in Lenin's inheritance and development of Marx's and Engels' journalism theory, but also in the guiding significance of modern journalism and journalism theory in China. The in-depth study of Lenin's journalistic thought is not only conducive to deepening the understanding of Marxist journalistic ideology system, but also conducive to promoting the theoretical innovation of China's news cause, which is of crucial significance for the propaganda of socialist mainstream ideology and the development of China's news cause in the new era.

In the progress of modern society, the party principle and its authenticity in Leninist journalism and communication thought are still important principles in China's socialist construction. From the perspective of modern macroscopic communication environment, with the rapid development of media technology, the gradual weakening of mass communication privileges, the gradual rise of self media, the relationship between the transmitter and the receiver in the communication system has changed. The transmitter is no longer the only leader of information communication, the receiver is no longer a simple passive receiver of information, the boundary between them is blurred, and their relationship is increasingly close. In the new era, with the change of information transmission, we commons have the right to release information. This kind of information release lacks professional guidance and strict control. Therefore, rumors are rampant and various problems gradually emerge. In this case, the communication environment being deteriorating, the communication of professional and valuable information has been faced with critical challenges. Therefore, in the new environment, the study of Lenin's thought of Journalism and communication can help us explore the theory of journalism from the root and provides us with new ideas to deal with the challenges of the media in the new era.

The 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China has required the practice of “promoting the domestication of Marxism, vigorously carrying forward the popularization of the national spirit and the spirit of the time, and promoting the development of the communication cause”. According to this requirement, it is necessary for us to actively develop Leninist journalism to attach importance to the impact of journalism on society, and to give full play to its powerful function of public opinion, so that Individuals can see problems in the process of reform and development from the correct perspective of Leninism, think rationally about social reality, and promote the construction of socialism in China.

## **2. Challenges Faced by China’s Journalism at the Present Stage**

The party principle is the core principle in Marxist journalism. This principle in news industry embodies its ideological attributes. In its guidance, the basic connotation of the news cause is that news media should, under the leadership of the party, should reflect the will of the people and safeguard the interests of its people.

### *2.1 Challenges to the Principle of “Party Principle”*

The party principle of journalism mainly faces the challenges of market economy and new media.

#### 1) The challenge of market economy

Since the reform and opening up, China has gradually established the socialist market economy, and the news media has changed from the planned economy era to the market economy era, to meet the diversified competition. The market economy is a double sword to the development of the news media in China: on the one hand, the survival and development of the news media are determined by the results of the market competition, which makes the news media have a sense of crisis, and makes the news media improve their own quality of news works; on the other hand, under the condition of market economy, faced with the temptation of material interests, it is more difficult for news enterprises to adhere to the party principle. Some news organizations have begun to deviate from the party principle. They blindly pursue economic interests and ignore the responsibility of news enterprises. (Note 1) Some news media, they can report any news if they are paid well, no matter the news is true or not. Some news media cater the low-quality readers with low taste news content. Some news media exaggerate the reports of ordinary news events, so they attract the audience’s attention much better, and so on. All these phenomena deviate from the party spirit principle of journalism. (Note 2)

#### 2) The challenge of new media

In the era of new media, with the diversification of communication channels, new media has become the main platform for people’s learning, communication, shopping and entertainment. It can be said that people’s lives are closely connected with it today. New media has promoted the development of journalism. In this new age of new media, people have an increasing number of channels to obtain information. The speed of information dissemination is faster and faster. With these factors, people are no longer passive audiences, but also publishers and communicators of news, realizing the communication of “journalists for all”. However, it also challenges the party principle of journalism. First, journalistic

works lack correct ideological leadership. If they lack correct core values and fail to carry out the right publicity and report according to the general constraints of the society, they will lose their direction and cannot lead themselves in the right social trend. Secondly, it weakens the influence of mainstream media. In the era of new media, people don't solely depend on traditional mainstream media to acquire information, but rely more on network platforms. Thirdly, there are too many platforms, in which information is mixed up. How to achieve effective leadership of the party has become a big problem. Fourth, the foreign forces, relying on their own advantages in the technology of communication, launched attacks on our mainstream ideology, which had a great negative impact on our news work. Last but not least, people's thoughts become diversified, which makes them have different understanding to the mainstream ideology.

### *2.2 Challenges to the Principle of "Authenticity"*

Authenticity is the essence of news. Maintaining the authenticity of news is the most basic professional ethics of journalists. Lenin pointed out that the news propaganda of the party newspaper must be based on facts, and pointed out that "It is necessary to fully report and clarify the truth to the public in an all-round way, without exaggeration, arbitrariness, rumor or private report." (Note 3) Authenticity is one of the basic properties of Marxist Journalism, the inevitable requirement of the smooth development of journalism, and the internal law of the continuous development of journalism. News will distort if they can't record events correctly, comprehensively and objectively. Once there is news distortion in the news report, it will make the news events difficult to express comprehensively and objectively. At the same time, it will seriously affect the audience's understanding of the news events, thus affecting people's judgment ability of the news events. In this way, they are unable to form a positive evaluation or influence. On the contrary, it will have a relatively serious social impact. Leninist journalism theory requires that news work should be realistic and never allow false news or exaggeration. However, there is much existence of false news in China, which seriously violates the Leninist journalism theory.

#### 1) Phenomenon of "paid report" in journalistic works

With the rapid development of social economy, new media is gaining power and its social status is improving. However, many new media lost its way in the process of development, and started "paid report" in order to obtain more benefits. In contrast, traditional media is in a weak position. With low speed of propagation and low efficiency of communication, the traditional media have much lower competitiveness, falling into a bottleneck period. In order to survive, some traditional media will rely on social enterprises. They start to write false reports and fabricated facts for enterprises, so they can improve their economic benefits and social status. In the process of doing so, they gradually finished their job without adhering to the principle of authenticity.

#### 2) Phenomenon of "fast food" news

Nowadays, the pace of life having been greatly accelerated, the media has entered the era of "information explosion". Compared with "long talk" on newspaper, "fragmented reading" has become our habit of reading news. When social events happen, in order to obtain the first-hand resources, the media will rush

to report for the timeliness of news reports. However, some journalists began to lack investigation and analysis of events; some even do not understand the truth of news events, so as not to fall behind others and follow the trend of reporting. In order to attract the audience's attention, some will throw out "Introduction" first, then investigate and analyze in the follow-up reports, and correct the problems in the previous news reports.

### 3) Phenomenon of "entertainment" news

In the market economy of fierce competition, in order to pursue audience rating and please the general public, news work has gradually become a dependency of entertainment, regardless of its own attributes and principles. In some way, this change brings a negative impact on the audiences and news work itself, and sometimes it even damages fairness, justice and harmony of the society. In order to attract people's attention, many news media only seek to "stimulate" the audience's eyes, but largely ignore the audience's spirit, causing a very serious negative impact.

### 4) Phenomenon of lacking "sense of social responsibility" by journalists

The special functions of journalists require them having more social responsibilities. It's hard for them to lead a positive and healthy direction of public opinion if they can't be responsible for the audience, the party and the society.

## **3. The Practical Significance and Enlightenment of the Lenin's Journalistic Thought**

### *3.1 The Practical Enlightenment of the "Party Principle"*

It is of strong practical pertinence for us to adhere to the party principle. It is the concrete embodiment of adhering to the party's leadership and strengthening the party's construction in the field of news and publicity. The party principle of Lenin's news propaganda still provides important guidance and enlightenment for the propaganda and ideological work of the Communist Party of China.

#### 1) Strengthening the party's leadership over the news media

PRC's Chairman, Xi Jinping, pointed out that strengthening and improving the party's leadership over news and publicity can guarantee the smooth and healthy development of news and public opinion work. The fundamental requirement of the party spirit principle of journalism is to strengthen the party's leadership. Without the party's leadership, the party principle of news media will not be realized. Xi also said that the party's news and public work has to be adhered to the party principle, the most fundamental part of which is to uphold the party's leadership over the work of news and publicity. In the era of new media, the party's leadership over news media can only be strengthened, not weakened.

#### 2) Strengthening the legal supervision of news media

It is a basic strategy for the party to lead the people and to govern the country according to laws. The challenge of the party principle in journalism must be based on the leadership of the party. With the advent of the new media era and the emerging applications, the existing policies and regulations will continue to be adjusted and revised, and the new regulations will continue to be promulgated. China's relevant laws and regulations on news and relevant moral conventions are actively building and

improving. In this process, we should not only consider the characteristics of new media, but also consider the needs of the audience and the construction of laws and regulations, so as to make it more advanced and more operational. What's more, it is of importance to strengthen the legal supervision of the news media. In the process of improving the relevant legal system, the news media and workers who violate the legal system should be punished in accordance with the law, and the legal system should be used to check and regulate the behavior of the news media, so as to ensure that, under the leadership of the party, the news media can reflect the will of the people and represent the interests of the people.

### 3) Strengthening the Marxist-Leninist belief and theoretical accomplishment of news media

As the main body of news communication, news media should take firm belief in Marxism and Leninism as the premise. Only by learning and believing Marxism and Leninism theory of journalism can they resonate with Marxism and Leninism, and can consciously move and infect the people through language and action. The journalists need to have a good theoretical quality of Marxism and Leninism, grasp all kinds of social problems, use the basic principles and methods of Marxism and Leninism flexibly to analyze all kinds of news events, and guide the people to correctly evaluate the new social problems. The reason why some journalists, lacking professional quality and moral bottom line, reported false news and paid news is that they are not firm in thinking, lack of faith and need correct ideological and theoretical guidance.

### 4) News reports being mainstream publicity

We should adhere to the principle that positive publicity must be given the first priority. Positive publicity plays an active and important role in the work of news publicity, which is consistent with the actual situation of our socialist society in the new era. The process of news propaganda is the process of instilling and guiding Marxism and Leninism. Taking Marxism and Leninism as a scientific world view and methodology, we can solve the errors and deviations in people's understanding, and stimulate the enthusiasm, initiative and creativity of the people through positive indoctrination and guidance, so as to promote the transformation and promotion of people's thoughts. At present, our society being in the transition period, there are many social contradictions and problems. Therefore, only with positive publicity, can news work make a positive contribution to the party who lead the people to realize the Chinese dream, which embodies the party principle of journalism.

### 5) Strengthening the acceptance of the audience

The formation and development of world outlook is determined by the social relationship. There are generally complexity and differences due to different ideas among the audience. With the rapid development of China's economy and society, social life is becoming more and more complex. People's ideas, values and lifestyles are very different from those before. People pay more attention to self-expression, openness and transparency. With the development of this society, we need to attach great importance to the acceptance of the audience in the work of news publicity. News communication aims to transmit information to those in real life. News work should operate around following aspects: instilling information to general public, being closely linked with the people, understanding the needs and

expectations of the people. It, according to the Marxist and Leninist mass line, should truly and hierarchically reflect the needs of the people and serve the people's production and life.

### *3.2 Practical Enlightenment of the Principle of "Authenticity"*

"Authenticity" is not only the basic element of Leninist journalism, but also the basic starting point and standing point of news propaganda, and the soul of news activities. This principle in Lenin's ideology of propaganda work still provides important guidance and enlightenment for the publicity and ideological work of the Communist Party of China.

#### (1) Strengthening the cultivation of journalists' moral quality

The phenomenon of "social progress, moral decline" also exists in the news press. The relevant departments of news report should strengthen the cultivation of professional journalists' moral standard; they should guide them to establish correct values and outlook on life by learning the basic theory of Marxism and Leninism; they should let them clearly recognize their important identity as disseminating correct opinions and ideas to the public. Besides, they have to practice the idea of "serve the people" as working concept, and closely connect with the actual life of the public and report the incident in time. Journalists should correctly use the rights granted by the country and the people, follow the principle of "coming from the masses and going to the masses", and practice the socialist news principle of serving the people with a whole new meaning. The journalists should also take justice, objectivity and truth as the basic reporting principle, and fulfill the responsibilities and missions assigned by the society.

#### (2) Improving the current legal policy and regulatory mechanism

There are still weak points in our country's legal policies on the professional ethics of journalists, hereby much work is needed in this scope for it could be included in legal supervision as soon as possible. Under the legal framework to regulate and restrict the practice and professional ethics of journalists, they may correct their bad behavior at the same time and shoulder the corresponding legal responsibility. For this purpose, in the news industry, we should also establish a reasonable supervision system to supervise journalists in an all-round way through the evaluation of the public. By doing so, we can encourage them to put an end to all kinds of illegal behaviors, punish those who spread false news at will, reward those who have made contributions, and promote them through a clear system of rewards and punishments. Therefore, China's news industry will be developing in a standardized and healthy way.

#### (3) Establishing a system of news criticism

It is suggested that journalists' associations at all levels, such as newspapers, radio and television, the Internet, self media and other industry associations should set up news regulatory agencies, which are mainly responsible for the supervision of news authenticity, launching and accepting the reports of false news or false news from the public, and organizing professional journalists to conduct re interview and re investigation. Once false news is verified, its journalists and affiliated new units will be dealt with seriously, in addition, they will be publicized to the public, will accept the social condemnation, and will be put on the "blacklist", and consequently the journalists who are used to counterfeiting are afraid.

#### 4. Conclusion

As a politician and journalist with revolutionary spirit, Lenin, under the guidance of Marxism, developed his own unique journalistic thought of Leninism, combined with specific revolutionary practice and news practice. His journalism thought, with its scientific, political, epochal and practical nature, formed, developed and expanded in revolutionary practice. These thoughts are not only the summary of his practical experience, but also the mission of the times, and the integration of Marxist theory and revolutionary form.

Leninist journalism is an important theory to ensure the stability and unity of the country and the positive development of the people's thoughts. It is also a correct theory to promote the national integrity, encourage the people's mind, and enhance the national spirit and cohesion of our journalism work. Only by adhering to Lenin's theory of indoctrination of news thoughts can we promote social civilization and social progress. Therefore, its research not only puts forward the theoretical inevitability in theory, but also analyzes the innovative path produced by the combination of Lenin's news thoughts and China's news work in all-round way, which guarantees the healthy development of China's news work.

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**Notes**

Note 1. Zhang Hongru. The impact of market economy on journalism. *Science and technology communication*, 2010(8), 51.

Note 2. Tang Hongjun. The party principle of journalism is facing challenges and Countermeasures in the new media era. *New media research*, 5(15), 78-79.

Note 3. Liu Guanghui. Journalists want to be leaders of telling the truth. *Western radio and television*, 2017(24), 46-47.