

VIETNAM ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY
NGUYEN TAI DONG - TRAN TUAN PHONG - CAO THU HANG
(Edition)



Karl Marx's THOUGHT

ON
SOCIAL JUSTICE
AND DEMOCRACY
AND ITS CURRENT
RELEVANCE

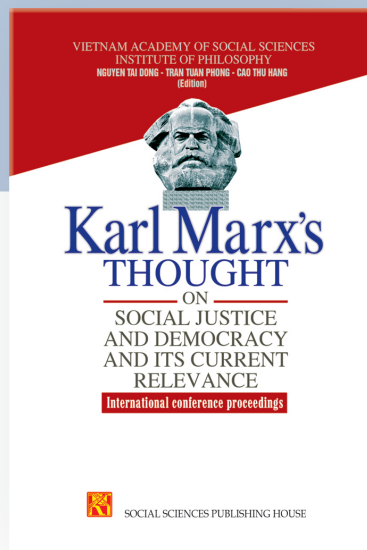
International conference proceedings

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VIETNAM ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY

NGUYEN TAI DONG - TRAN TUAN PHONG - CAO THU HANG
(Editors)

**KARL MARX’S THOUGHT ON THE RELATION
BETWEEN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY AND
ITS CURRENT RELEVANCE**

(International conference proceedings)

Hanoi, 2018

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CHAPTER ONE
KARL MARX'S CONCEPTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
DEMOCRACY

KARL MARX’S THOUGHT ON THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY AND ITS CURRENT RELEVANCE

Pham Van Duc^(*)

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Today, I am very happy to participate and give this speech at the Opening Ceremony of the International Conference “Karl Marx’s thought on the relation between social justice and democracy and its current relevance” (celebrating 200th birthday of Karl Marx). The conference is organized by Institute of Philosophy, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences in collaboration with the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung in Vinh Phuc province - a land with rich cultural and historical tradition of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

First of all, on behalf of the Leadership of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, I would like to extend a warmest welcome to all distinguished guests, international and Vietnamese scholars. I wish you all good health, happiness and prosperity, and I wish our conference a great success.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

K.Marx is one of the great thinkers of humanity in general and the proletariat of the world in particular. His thought exerts profound influence on the progress of human history and has so far been of great value and vitality. The celebration of the 200th anniversary of Marx's birth serves as an opportunity for both international and Vietnamese scholars to reflect on Marx's thoughts through a lively practical lens to further validate the scientific and revolutionary values in his heritage of ideas, especially his thought on the relation between democracy and social justice - which are the common values that humanity has been struggling to gain and become steadfastly realized in

^(*) Prof., Dr., Vice President, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences

social life of many countries and territories around the world. It can be affirmed that it is the unity between science, revolution and humanism that makes Marx's thought be truly valuable and have historical significance as well as profound meaning of the times, even though nearly two centuries have passed since his ideas were shaped and developed. The thoughts of Karl Marx in general and his thoughts on democracy, social justice and the relation between them in particular have a scientific and methodological significance that helps us to build a new society in which democracy and justice are the most basic and practical values, that man can not only be liberated and developed comprehensively, but also truly become HUMAN in the proper sense of the word.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

As a great thinker and pioneering warrior who fighting for democracy – a universal, eternal value that mankind is always aiming for, K.Marx has given deep thoughts on democracy. For him, the highest value, the most basic and important content of democracy is that *all power belongs to the people*. As a historical category, democracy is associated with a form of government, a political system. K.Marx asserted that, in the process of development of the history of human society, bourgeois democracy has represented a more advanced step than that of feudalism, but the restriction of bourgeois democracy was that it only protects the interests of the bourgeoisie and therefore, it is not the ultimate limit of human history. That, only in socialism, democracy as the power of the people is fully realized, that is, it belongs to the whole people, not a mutilated democracy of capitalism. In other words, the fundamental difference between bourgeois democracy and socialist democracy is that in the socialist system, *the people have rights to participate broadly and equally* in the affairs of the state. Finally, according to K.Marx, as a value, democracy reflects the level of human and social development in

the struggle against oppression, eliminating injustice and building human values such as democracy, liberty, equality and happiness for human beings.

Along with democracy, K.Marx also offered profound thought on social justice as a fundamental right - equal right of people in a definite relationship the relationship between contribution and enjoyment. In Marx's view, foundation and background for the implementation of social justice is to be based on an equal starting point between people in economic relations. With that in mind, he focused on the issue of social justice in the field of distribution. In theory of scientific socialism, K.Marx argues that in socialism, all people are equal in the ownership relationship of the means of production (public ownership), thus each person's contribution of labor to society is the basis for just distribution. And he came up with the principle of distribution by labor as the principle of ensuring social justice. In spite of this, K.Marx also pointed out that, in the context of socialist society which just born out of capitalism and still in the early stages of communism, that equitable distribution has not yet ruled out and still accepts a certain inequality among members of society. The limitations and shortcomings of the principle of distribution by labor have only been overcome when socialism has developed to a high level - the period of communism. Only then, human can write on the banner slogan that *“from each according to his ability, to each according to his need”*.

Although K.Marx did not write an extensive work on the relation between democracy and social justice, but directly or indirectly through his presentation in many works, we find in him general ideas about the dialectical relation between democracy and social justice.

As mentioned above, with Marx, democracy is all the power belongs to the people, while social justice is the equal right of human being in a definite relationship - the relation between contribution and enjoyment, between obligations and rights. In other words, in comparative relations, the concept of

democracy is broader than that of social justice; and social justice is manifested as a basic, substantive character of democracy.

Between democracy and social justice have a unified and organic relationship; it is reflected in the fact that democracy and social justice are preconditions of each other. They are both universal values and the main driving force for social development. To exercise democracy and social justice, first and foremost in the field of economy – which, as Marx's conception of historical materialism points out that it plays a decisive and dominates all other aspects of social life. Obviously, in order to have real democracy, it is necessary to fully implement social justice; at the same time, to have justice in society, there is no other way than to enforce and ensure a wide, authentic democracy. This is the dialectical relationship between democracy and social justice according to K.Marx.

It can be asserted that Marx's thought on democracy, social justice and the organic and united bond between democracy and social justice has not only academic, theoretical values but also profound practical significance. The polarization of the rich and the poor is increasing, the lack of democracy, the existence of formal democracy or democracy only for the powerful and wealthy minority in many countries around the world today, even in the capitalist developed countries,...are undeniable facts. And, the is the continuation of the struggle for realization of values such as Progress, Democracy, Social Justice, Liberty and Happiness for people. This is also a real testimony to the science, humanity and vitality of Marxism in general, and Marx's thoughts of democracy and social justice in particular. Therefore, K.Marx is highly regarded and respected not only by the proletariat in the world, but many Western politicians also express their admiration, respect for his profound and thoughtful thoughts. It is not accidental that many modern Western thinkers state that there can be no future without K.Marx; that among

the nineteenth-century thinkers, no one had a greater and deeper influence than the thoughts of K.Marx.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

In choosing Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh as the lodestar Vietnam has been steadfastly striving for the path of socialist-oriented construction and development in the country, in which democracy and social justice – together with rich people, strong, democratic, just and civilized country are the most basic goals and general characteristics. Over the past 30 years of the country's comprehensive renovation, the achievements that Vietnam has made, first of all are the results of the implementation of democracy and social justice. These are very important and have great significance as well as demonstrate the great development and strong international integration of Vietnam.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

In the process of implementing social progress with the values of democracy and social justice in line with the thoughts of K.Marx, Vietnam and Germany, along with many other countries, have not only been achieving encouraging results but also accumulating and learning many valuable lessons from our own practice. Our international scientific conference today not only contributes to the interpretation of K.Marx's scientific and humanist thought on democracy and social justice, but also serves as an opportunity for us to exchange and share experiences in building more democratic and just society. This is a practical and useful activity on the 200th anniversary of the birth of K.Marx (1818 - 2018).

On behalf of the Leadership of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, once again, I would like to wish all of our distinguished delegates, international and Vietnamese scholars good health, happiness and success.

I wish the cooperation of scientific research for peace and development between Rosa Luxemburg Foundation from Federal Republic of Germany and

the Institute of Philosophy of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences is increasingly strengthened, developed firmly and effectively.

In conclusion, I wish the Conference all success and I wish you all an enjoyable stay in Vietnam.

KARL MARX’S THOUGHT ON THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY AND SOME RAISED ISSUES

Nguyen Tai Dong^(*)

Dear Professor, Doctor Pham Van Duc, Vice-President of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences

Dear Ms. Danso Dahmen, Director of the Southeast Asia Office of Rosa–Luxemburg-Stiftung in Hanoi

Distinguished guests, Vietnamese and international scholars,

First and foremost, on behalf of the Institute of Philosophy, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences for agreeing and creating favorable conditions for the Conference to be successfully held. I would like to thank the Rosa–Luxemburg-Stiftung for supporting and co-organizing this Conference. Our Conference is a continuation and development of the Conference on “Marx’s thought on distributive justice and its relevance, which was successfully held in Buôn Mê Thuột in May 2017. I also would like to extend my warmest and most sincere thanks to scholars from Germany, Japan, South Korea, USA, Russia and Vietnamese scholars from all regions of Vietnam for contributing the papers and participating in our meaningful Conference.

In our last year Conference, we discussed about Marx’s thought on distributive justice. This year, we will continue to focus on Marx’s thought on social justice, democracy and the relationship between social justice and democracy, and its current relevance.

Professor Shklar from Havard Univeristy wrote that Western philosophers have spent much time to discuss about the concept of “justice”

^(*) Assoc. Prof., Dr., Director of the Institute of Philosophy, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.

than “injustice”. However, whether directly or indirectly, social justice or elimination of injustice in the social life is a key problem, which has been constantly present in the world since ancient times. It has been 200 years since the birth of K.Marx but there are so many people (about one billion of people) in the world are living in poverty. The problem of poverty can only be solved when we eliminate injustice in the society.

K.Marx devoted his entire life and career to stand for the workers and the poor in society in the cause of elimination of man’s alienation and injustice for real freedom. Thus, Marx’s thoughts on social justice and democracy are relevant not only in his time but also in our era.

Marx asked for man’s liberation but man is not the object waiting for any external liberation, man is the subject who can liberate himself. Therefore, man is not an abstract but is a concrete individual, a real man. To Marx, freedom is freedom for each individual. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels declares: “Free development of each is the condition for the free development of all”¹. Freedom is the necessary condition to achieve equality and justice is the necessary condition to achieve freedom.

In *The Social Contract*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau mentions a reality, a contradiction between “worthy to be”/ “must-be” man and the actual man: “Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains”. It is not only the contradiction between the ideal and the real, between free will and man’s perfection, it is the internal contradiction of class society. In terms of interest, it is the contradiction between collective and individual interest. Marx emphasized this idea in his thinking: “Every new progress of civilization is simultaneously a new progress in inequality. All institutions which the society that has developed with civilization gives itself turn into the opposite of the original purpose”².

¹ K.Marx and F.Engel, *The essential*, vol.4, National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, p.628.

² K.Marx and F.Engels, *ibid*, vol.20, p.198.

When discussing social justice, Marx criticized the so-called “equal rights” and pointed out the difference between justice and equality. Social justice cannot be put on the ground of egalitarianism which means the lack of democracy.

There are sayings that have become classic with full of profound, touching and multifaceted meanings. Marx wrote: “In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: *From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs*”¹. The ideal and the communist regime are the convergence of the values of justice and complete democracy, which transcends class-divided social justice as a state institution.

According to Marx, without eradication of the private ownership of production means, which is the root of the injustice, injustice remains a vicious cycle. Injustice in society cannot be solved by reconciling ways since its forms would transform from one to other more sophisticated. Marx said: History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce. Justice and democracy are the conceptions built on a specific socio-economic conditions. Here, it's essential to notice that democracy matches common, collective interests, but not only of individual interests or the interests of any social stratum.

In the theory of Marx and real socialism, social justice and democracy are core values. In other words, they are essential attributes of socialism. Socialism is not only built on the ground of justice, but also on that of democracy. “To the working class, democracy and communism are all

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels, *ibid*, vol.19, p.36

synonyms”. As for the concept of freedom in Hegel’s philosophy, democracy is a process in which democracy means more freedom for all. Here, the core of freedom is human dignity. Each person is the only dignity that cannot be replaced and must be respected. And having democracy means respect man’s life, man’s conditions, man’s rights of living, happiness pursue that are political, cultural and socio-economic rights. In reality, social justice and democracy are closely linked. Social justice and democracy express human rights.

Democracy is prerequisite for social justice and if there is democracy there will be justice. However, as values, social justice and democracy are two basic values of human society. In other hand, social justice and democracy are both social ethics and the ground for other social and moral norms.

Democracy is a crystalline value of human civilization. As compared to politically obsolete forms in the history, democracy is clearly better suited to current conditions of international integration and market economy. Democracy is also a banner of socialism, thus, “socialism” without democracy is not true socialism. Social characteristics and economic conditions of Vietnam determine the nature of its democracy. In the transition period to socialist-oriented market economy, to solve arising social issues, to overcome obstacles in development process, Viet Nam has to address and follow its own path in the process of promoting socialist democracy, which is appropriate to historical and actual condition of Vietnam.

In the view of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, democracy and social justice associate tightly. The document of the 12th National Congress of the Party continues to confirm, the country does not sacrifice social justice for economic growth, but requires “the realization of progress and social justice in every step, every development policy, promotion the role of mastership of the people in the socio-economic development”. While celebrating the 200th

birthday of Karl Marx (1818-2018), we need to clarify the following three main contents:

Firstly, to identify Marx's thoughts on social justice, democracy and relation of social justice and democracy

Secondly, to analyze the current relevance of Marx's thoughts on social justice, democracy and relation of social justice and democracy in a new context

Thirdly, to share Viet Nam's practice and international experiences in implementation of progress and social justice, democratic practice as well as in dealing with relation between social justice and democracy.

It is the most practical way to both clarify the scientific value, revolutionary value in K.Marx's thoughts in term of academic dimension, as well as to affirm the theoretical and practical significance, the vitality of Marx's thoughts in today's era.

THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE CRITIQUE OF GOTHA PROGRAM – ITS CONTENT AND CURRENT RELEVANCE

Ho Trong Hoai(*)

Nguyen Anh Tuan(**)

1. The understanding of justice, democracy and the position of the *Critique of Gotha Program* in Marx's theory

Justice and democracy are complex values and socio-historical phenomena associated with the existence and development of human life. In the clans, tribes of the primitive communist society, the means of production are owned by the community; all members have the right to own and use the property of the clan; members of the community are equal and cooperate in a natural way such as do the same amount and enjoy the same amount. In the tribal clans, there is a democratic administration, there are respected elders, patriarchs, but no one can violate the common ownership or the right to have more than others¹. The community not only appoints (empowers) representatives to command and control common activities but also has the right to replace those representatives who do not perform their jobs properly. As language, abstract thinking and generalization capability have been highly developed, people could be able to interpret and express these historical facts in concepts and categories. Accordingly, social equality is the equality between people and people in terms of social aspects, first of all in terms of obligations and rights.

Democracy is power of the people, of the community used to ensure equality, justice among its members and stability, development of the whole

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¹ Luong Minh (Editor): *History of ancient world (the 15th edition)*, Education Publishing House, Ha Noi, 2012, p.23-24.

community. Therefore, democracy, justice, freedom and equality....are natural rights of every member in clan communities, tribes of the primitive communism.

However, as the emergence of private ownership, class and state occurs, the class owning means of production becomes the subject of the public power, and exercises that power primarily and above all to ensure the interests of its class. That is when the slave class established its pro-democracy government (the Athenian state in ancient Greece was the example). In essence, all interests and powers have been acquired by the dominant class (class of slave owners). Power subjects are just a few in society, including slave owners, clergy, merchants, intellectuals and other freedmen. The majority of the working people, the slaves lose their power, they are just “speaking instruments”. So, the people power, the public power is alienated into the political power, the state power of the slave class. Of course, there is a part of population dominating the means of production, power in society while another part loses its means of production, the society is injustice, inequality in many ways; even, injustice, social inequality has become one of the characteristics and modes of existence of that social system. Thus, since then, the working people have continued to fight against oppression, exploitation, injustice and subjugation in order to reclaim and develop their inherent rights, such as the right to life, right of freedom, democracy, justice and equality.

In class-divided society, the fight for democracy, freedom, justice ... become one of the driving force of history. According to the historical-natural law of human development, each step of social history simultaneously implies certain advances in democracy and social justice. In the movement of history, the values of social justice and democracy after experiencing negativities, inclinations, tortuous flows with the dominance of the ruling classes' interests and positions will turn into its original status but on a higher, lively, and

deeper basis. It is a logical movement towards social unity, in which freedom of each is a condition for the freedom of all¹. Thus both social justice and democracy are social, humanist, and historical and political values which contain humanity, class and historical features². In every historical period, understanding and exercising social justice and democracy depend on many objective and subjective conditions, including the perception and actions of the social forces that represent the progressive development trend of democracy and justice.

Born in the mid-nineteenth century, Marxist theory outlined conditions, premises, goals, tasks, driving forces, paths, scientific methods for the working class and its political party to thoroughly implement democracy and social justice in each country, nation and the world step by step. With the revolutionary and scientific nature reflecting the objective trend of history, meeting the true demands of mankind, Marxism is rapidly spreading to the workers' movement in many countries and regions.

However, in the mid-70s of the nineteenth century, German social democrats prepared the meeting and approved the Platform for Action in the town of Gotha. The Platform contained many wrong views that can be risky not only for the German workers movement, but also for the communist movement, international workers. Thus, K.Marx wrote the *Critique of the Gotha Program* to criticize the wrong views of German Social Democrats in order to protect, supplement and develop his scientific socialist theories in new conditions. The *Critique of the Gotha Program* is a major theoretical work that marks the development of Marxism. Thus, the study of Marxism cannot ignore the *Critique of the Gotha program*, because this work deals with many basic but very complex theoretical and practical issues of the

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works, Vol.4*, National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1995, p.628.

² See: Mai Hai Oanh. *Equality - an internal requirement of socialism* (online), Journal of Communism (Electronic version): <http://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn/Home/Nghiencuu-Traodoi/2018/51740/Gia-tri-cong-bang-Yeu-cau-noi-tai-cua-chu-nghia.aspx>.]

socialist revolutionary process, including theories of democracy and social justice. In our opinion, it would be difficult to adequately address both the theoretical and practical issues of social justice and democracy within countries, nations as well as across the world without returning to research, develop and apply the theory of K.Marx, including the points presented in his work the Critique of the Gotha Program creatively.

2. K.Marx's thought on the relation between social justice and democracy in the *Critique of the Gotha program*

Firstly, justice and democracy are understood in a broad sense. Marx wrote: “The word democracy, if translated to German, means “ by the rule of the people”¹. The government owned by the people, controlled by the people is a democratic government. However, the content, that the state controlled by the working people is a basic and important part, is not the only content of democracy. In class-divided society, “the working people” is a historical category and, of course, does not include everyone in the society. Equal social justice is the equality between people and people in terms of social aspects, instead of distribution, especially distribution of consumer goods, of means of production materials, of production elements. “it was a general mistake to make a fuss about so-called distribution and put the principal stress on it” emphasized Marx².

Secondly, the law of the whole history since ancient time has been that the more labor is developed into social labor and becomes the source of wealth and culture, the more poverty and miserable life the working people experiences while wealth and culture grow in the side of non-working people. The paradoxes and injustices of class societies are the best demonstrated in capitalist regimes. According to Marx, in the capitalist mode of production, the *material conditions* of production lie in the hands of those who do not

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, Vol.19, National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1995, p.44-45

² K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.36

work in the form of capitalist ownership and land ownership, while the working people only owns *human conditions* of production, the labor power¹. The masses, especially the workers, who have labor power without the material conditions of labor, are bound to be slaves to those who possess the material conditions. Economic dependence is the basis of workers' oppression, exploitation, subjugation, social and political dependence on the exploiting classes. On the basis of modern bourgeois society, there are many different forms of state, including the form of the democratic republic, but are in fact the capitalist state, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The state is not a state of the working class and the working people. Thus, a society in which means of production only belong to the few (economic injustice), then democracy will be very formal and limited.

Thirdly, the conditions, the path, the measures to fundamentally change injustice and the loss of democracy under capitalism are *the implementation of the socialist revolution* in any forms to successfully build communism in each country and in the whole world. First of all, the working class and its party lead the society struggling to overthrow the old state, seize the government and gain democracy. Next, it turns means of production into common property, organizes the society and production on the principle of collectivism and builds a communist society. K.Marx affirms: The progress of building socialist society must go through 2 periods: the primary stage and the advanced stage². However, it was not that right after the working class gains the government, justice and democracy immediately are established. At each stage of building a communist society, there will be a way, a measure, a level of realizing social justice and democracy in accordance with objective requirements of history. Marx writes: "Right can never be higher than

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.37

² K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.33-36

economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.”¹.

Fourthly, the exercise of democracy and social justice in the process of socialist revolution requires the struggle, criticism of misconceptions, misconduct, especially when building a platform for action and implementing strategies and tactics in the revolutionary stages of the Party. A real progression of the movement is more important than a dozen of wrong program. Accordingly, it is necessary to remove vague, hollow statements that can be easily flipped over in any senses², such as: equitable distribution of labor income, establishment of a free state, creation of equal national education for all; child labor banning, experience of the right to freedom of religious belief or the exercise of justice, equality and democracy in general. It is necessary to avoid the consideration and interpretation of *distribution* as something independent of mode of production, as this would lead to the notion of socialism that focuses primarily on distribution³. It is necessary to stay alert with the thought of ignoring abandoning of proletarian dictatorship⁴. The Party, State of the working class (dictatorship of the proletariat) and production associations ... play a large role in the implementation of justice and democracy. But *the kinds of superstition, such as the faith of the people to the state, or the belief in the miracle of democracy*, only limit the struggle by legal tricks within the framework of the capitalist order that are strange and harmful things to socialism⁵. K.Marx argues, only organizations and production associations and cooperatives, founded independently by the masses of workers, not protected by the bourgeois governments as well as of the bourgeoisie are valuable.

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.36

² K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.28

³ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.37

⁴ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.45

⁵ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.50-51

Fifthly, in line with the logic of development of the productive forces and economic regimes at each stage of the process of socialist communist construction, K.Marxs outlines the basic contents and principles in democracy and social justice implementation. *In the transition period and in the early stages* of communist society, the society still contains the traces of the previous society (the capitalist society) in every respect, economically, morally, and intellectually, the traces of bourgeois rule and bourgeois order including the exercise of justice and democracy in the fields of social life¹. Accordingly, the state in this period was the dictatorship of the proletariat - the revolutionary dictatorship of the working class - where the mastership right of laboring masses led by the Party of the working class is expressed. The proper distribution of total social product is: after all deductions of proceeds of labor, the principle of distribution according to labor will be applied². This principle still leads to *shortcomings* such as *one getting more than another, one being richer than another* due to different conditions and circumstances as well as differences in their aptitudes and natural privileges³. However, K.Marx believed that these were *inevitable shortcomings* in the transition period and in the early stages of communist society.

There will be changes in the developed stage of communist society, “In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.33

² K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.31-32

³ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.35

to his needs!”¹. Then “with the abolition of class distinctions, all social and political inequalities arising from class differences no longer exist”². After that, according to Engels: The state's intervention in social relations has become excessive and the state is self-disappeared³; at that time, man is the master of his social existence, the master of nature, of his own life and is a free man⁴. At this point, social justice and democracy in a broad, complete and substantive sense will be simultaneously implemented.

3. The current relevance of Marx’s thought on the relation between social justice and democracy in the *Critique of the Gotha Program*

Since Marxism-Leninism is scientific and revolutionary by nature, it is not only a theoretical weapon of the working class but also the result of human wisdom and civilization. It is the thought, the doctrine on development, of development, so it has the need and the ability to constantly add new momentum from the practices of life⁵. With that in mind, discussing the current meaning of Marx’s thought on the relation between social justice and democracy in the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, we emphasize the following points:

Firstly, the fluctuations of world history, of the world's revolution in the twentieth century and the first two decades of the twenty-first century are vivid practices validating the value and vitality of the Marxism-Leninism doctrine in general and the thought on the relation between social justice and democracy in the *Critique of the Gotha program* in particular.

Whenever we apply Marx’s thought rightly and creatively, we get success, whenever we apply his thought in distorted and dogmatic way or reject Marxism, does Marxist thought in a wrong way, the revolution cause

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.36

² K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.44

³ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.333

⁴ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, 1995, p.333

⁵ Nguyen Xuan Thang: *The Communist Manifesto - theoretical and practical values in contemporary time* (at <http://www.nhandan.com.vn/chinhtri/item/35642502-tuyen-ngon-cua-%C3%B0ang-cong-san-gia-tri-ly-luan-va-thuc-tien-trong-thoi-dai-ngay-nay.html>.)

can face many difficulties. For example, the socialization of means of production without following objective laws, the implementation of the egalitarian distribution are the reasons leading to the restraints, even elimination of the working labor's motivation, increase of injustice and crises in many socialist countries. The renunciation of the proletariat dictatorship or the overemphasis on the dictatorship side in building the proletariat dictatorship system and socialist democracy are the reasons for the mistakes of many socialist countries, causing serious damages to the revolution. Meanwhile, thanks to the creative and insistent application of Marxism, maintenance of Marxist principles in the reform process, the socialist countries like China, Vietnam...have gradually escaped from the crisis, initially successful settlement of the issue of democracy and social justice in social life, especially in the field of economics.

Secondly, both theory and practice show that justice and democracy are intimately related to one another, they are the goal, the mode, the driving force and the characteristic of socialism in essence. Even, sometimes mistakes and wrong things happen, justice, democracy, freedom and happiness of the people are always the principles and objectives of the socialist states and the authentic Communist Parties whose theoretical foundation is Marxism-Leninism. Accordingly, the theory of Marx is the basis for the argument and creative inspiration for the communists to fully aware of the dimensions of the relation between between democracy and social justice. Democracy and justice are fundamental human rights¹, are the criteria, the measure of the level of human liberation in the process of social development². Perhaps the people owning the government cannot have real social justice but permanently there will be no real social justice if the people do not hold the

¹ See: Le Thi, *Justice, democracy and gender equality in Viet Nam* (at <http://philosophy.vass.gov.vn/ngghien-cuu-theo-chuyen-de/Dao-duc-hoc-My-hoc/Cong-bang-dan-chu-va-binh-dang-gioi-o-Viet-Nam-344.html>.)

² See: Nguyen Minh Hoan. *Marxist idea on social justice as a measure of human liberation* (at <http://philosophy.vass.gov.vn/ngghien-cuu-theo-chuyen-de/Triet-hoc-Mac-Lenin/Quan-diem-cua-chu-nghia-Mac-ve-cong-bang-xa-hoi-voi-tu-cach-thuoc-do-trinh-do-giai-phong-con-nguoi-402.html>.)

government. Equity is a consequence of democracy, of socio-economic development, of public organization exercising the general power. The less democracy the social regime is, the more unjust it is. Justice is not only or mainly distribution, but also justice in ownership, in organizational management, production conditions and development opportunities¹. The right and proper regime of implementing justice promotes democracy. Injustice obstructs, represses and undermines democracy. The more effective the regime of democratic implementation is, the more it implies justice, and of course, promotes social justice. In class societies, fighting for justice and democracy takes place with many difficulties, including sacrifice and bloodshed. Thus, building a society based on democratic values, justice is indeed *a great revolutionary reform, a huge fight*. The process, *on the one hand*, is influenced by economic factors, political institutions ..., *on the other hand*, depends on the bravery of the ruling party. Marx's sketches have been, and will continue to be the basis of scientific reason and methodology so that the working class and its party perceive, solve more effectively than complex relationships in the cause of building socialism, including the relation between social justice and democracy.

Thirdly, justice and democracy are not only essential characteristic of socialism, but also goal and true aspirations of human progress. In recent years, democracy² and social justice³ have been committed and coordinated by the international community. Since 2007, the United Nations has chosen the 15th of September as International Day for Democracy and since 2009, has chosen February 20th as the World Social Justice Day. Accordingly, the United Nations and other international, regional and national organizations,

¹ See: Nguyen Duy Loi. *Social justice in economics and economic democratization - international experiences and lessons for Viet Nam*, The Review of Philosophy, No.9-206, p.40-46.

² See: Philip Cam, *Globalization and democracy* (at: <http://philosophy.vass.gov.vn/nghien-cuu-theo-chuyen-de/Chinh-tri-Xa-hoi/Toan-cau-hoa-va-dan-chu-269.html>).

³ See: Social justice - a global challenge (at <http://www.dangcongsan.vn/the-gioi/nhung-van-de-toan-cau/cong-bang-xa-hoi-mot-thach-thuc-toan-cau-232401.html>]

nations commit to coordinate the implementation of a variety of action programs at various levels for democracy and social justice. For example: implementing *the United Nations Millennium Development Goals*; implementing the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice; exchanging, cooperating actions against liberalism, anti-imposing, implementing freedom, fairness, democracy in elections, protecting environment, implementing gender equality ... within the framework of *the Sao Paulo Forum* and *the Athenian International Forum* of Communist Parties and other Progressive Parties; or undertaking *inclusive development* so that no one is left behind by APEC. However, the distance between declarations, commitments and actions are still very far; injustice, inequality and the loss of democracy or formal democracy are still common in the world today. In our view, the problem here is not only that K.Marx's heritage is continuously new and modern, but the main problem are that: (1) State nations and the international community are persistent to democracy, social justice by many different ways and means; (2) Efforts for democracy and social justice will not be fundamentally advanced if they are not in the orbit of socialism in the spirit of Marxism.

Fourthly, the development practice of socialism and modern capitalism rejects the illusion of the unparalleled role of the state and the illusion of the absolute role of the market in the exercise of democracy and social justice, firstly in economic field. From the “invisible hand” theory, the “perfect market” to the “maximum market, minimal state” show the evidences of the inadequacies, the deadlock of ideology and capitalist model. The failure of the new liberalism that has plagued many developed economies since 2008 has challenged the illusion of the absolute role of the market in socio-economic development and in implementation of democracy in general¹, social justice in particular. The notion that, the Communist Party and the socialist state with

¹ See: Pham Quoc Trung: *Neo-liberalism: History of origin, practical model and potential risks* (at <http://www.vusta.vn/vi/news/Thong-tin-Su-kien-Thanh-tuu-KH-CN/Chu-nghia-tu-do-moi-Lich-su-hinh-thanh-mo-hinh-thuc-tien-va-nhung-nguy-co-tiem-an-35059.html>.)

its function, role, mission and centralized resources have universal power to solve all problems, has shown its failure by the grave crisis of a series of socialist countries, especially from the 70s of the twentieth century. So, considering the market and state as two sides of a coin; harmonizing relations between the state and the market is the awareness and the way that are closed to the argument and interpretation of Marx. This approach is useful both for developed and developing countries; both with the capitalist regime and the socialist regime in the present context. This is one of the experiences of the Northern Democratic Socialist Model and the reform model of socialist countries such as China, Vietnam, Laos and Cuba.

Fifthly, democracy and social justice are complex theoretical, practical and issues related to other aspects of social life. Recognizing and resolving this problem, therefore, must be placed in the big picture, interacting with other critical issues. Studying, evaluating, and applying the ideas of K.Marx on justice and democracy in *the Critique of the Gotha Program* must also set the historical context of the work in the entire heritage of K.Marx, F.Engels and V.Lenin. Of course, just as V.I.Lenin wrote: “We do not expect that Marx or the Marxists know all the concrete aspects of the road to socialism. That would be illogical. We only know the direction of that path and what kind of class forces leads that path, but in fact how the concrete pathway looks like, the experience of millions of people will indicate when they embark on the action”¹.

With the revolution of Vietnam, Marxism-Leninism is always defined by the Party as the basis for understanding and action. That is one of the decisive reasons for every victory. However, in the new context, Vietnam faces many opportunities and advantages, but also deals with many risks and

¹ V.Lenin. *Complete Works*, Vol.34, National Publishing House, Ha Noi, 2006, p.152-153

challenges, including in implementation of democracy and social justice¹, that situation requires the continuously creative application and new development of that revolutionary and scientific doctrine.

Under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, to further promote the comprehensive renovation of the country for the goal of “rich people, strong, democratic, just and civilized country”, the 12th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (2016) affirmed: “To concentrate on perfecting the socialist-oriented market economy. To build a modern market economy that integrates into the world, takes many forms of ownership and various economic sectors, fully, synchronously and efficiently operates in accordance with the laws of market economy and equal competition, transparency. At the same time, the State uses institutions, resources, regulatory tools, distribution and redistribution policies to promote culture, exercise democracy, social progress and equality; To ensure social security, step by step raise the social welfare, care for improving the people's life in all aspects, narrow the gap between rich and poor”². In our opinion, that is the creative application of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought, including the thought of K.Marx on the relation between social justice and democracy in accordance with the conditions of Vietnam in the new context.

¹ See: World Bank - Viet Nam Ministry of Plan Making and Investment: *Overview report on Viet Nam 2035: Towards wealth, creation, justice and democracy* (at <http://vietnamreport.net/Bao-cao-Tong-quan-Viet-Nam-2035--1170/Product/Du-lieu--Bao-cao.html>.)

² The Communist Party of Viet Nam. *Documents of the 12th National Congress*. National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2016, p.269

CHAPTER TWO
THE VALUE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF KARL MARX'S
THOUGHT ON SOCIAL JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY IN THE
PRACTICE OF VIETNAM

MARX’S THOUGHT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY AND ITS APPLICATION BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM IN THE CURRENT PERIOD

Vu Thi Kieu Phuong(*)

1. Marx’s thought on the relationship between social justice and democracy

According to studies by Vietnamese Marxist philosophers, Marx discussed much of social justice and democracy, but he did not elaborate on the relationship between social justice and democracy. So, in fact, did Marx talk about the relationship between social justice and democracy? The answer of this article is yes. To clarify this answer, the article will start from the analysis and comments of K.Marx on the inequality of labor and distribution in the capitalist society of that time, pointing to his idea of the link between social justice and democracy. Through analyzes and comments by K.Marx on the relationship between worker's activity / position of the worker / proletarian and the possession / ownership of the capitalist / ruling class/the rule of the capitalist state in society, his ideas on the relationship between social justice and democracy have been exposed.

In his famous *Capital*, Marx wrote that, since the whole “product of the free union is a social product”, part of it would be “used as production materials. That part belongs to society” and “the other part is consumed by members of the union as living materials. Therefore, that part must be distributed among them”¹. However, “that mode of distribution will vary according to the type of social production and the level of historical development of the producers”². And in fact, in the capitalist society of

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¹ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.23, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1993, p.124.

² K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.23, Ibid., p.124.

K.Marx period, the whole product made by the worker / proletarian does not belong to him, but “faces it as an *alienated being*, as a *force independent of the producer*”, “more and more wealth is produced, the more his strength and volume of products grow, the poorer he goes”, “the more goods his creates, the cheaper he becomes”, “the increase in value of the world of things is directly proportional to the decrease in value of the human world”¹. To the extent that, in labor the worker / proletarian is supposed to assert himself, but he finds himself “negated”, he should feel happy but he “feels miserable”, he should be able to “freely promote physical and mental energy”, but “mortifies his flesh and ruins his mind”.

This is because, after deducting a few as “labor wages” of the worker / proletarian, the rest of the product is converted into capitalist profits. Worker / proletarian receives only a tiny fraction which is “just what is needed for the worker to survive - not as a human but as a worker and it is not for the worker to maintain the human race, but to maintain the slave class - the working class”². The cause of inequality in distribution of labor products is that besides the labor force, workers / proletarians do not have ownership of production materials and social materials. Thus, as K.Marx pointed out, they “are not only slaves of the bourgeoisie, of the bourgeois state, but daily, hourly slaves of machines, of the foreman and first of all, the bourgeois owner of the workshop”³.

The analysis of K.Marx on the labor of the worker / proletarian and the distribution of labor in the capitalist society shows us workers / proletarians are those who directly make material wealth for the society but suffer from the inequity of their own activity, even become “slave”; it means that they have no status, position as well as citizenship in society. And in states “built

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.42, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2000, p.128.

² K.Marx and F.Engels. *Ibid.*, p.79.

³ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.4, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1995, p.606.

on the land of modern bourgeois society”¹, the fact that the workers / proletarians suffer from social injustices, first of all in economic terms, is inevitable. However, according to K.Marx, all these injustices will inevitably lead to the consequence that the “proletarian class struggle against the bourgeoisie”² has exploded both politically and violently” with “the first step in a workers revolution is to transform the proletariat into a ruling class, to win democracy”³. Thus, K.Marx highly appreciated the democratic element in the working class, the proletariat struggles with the bourgeoisie to eradicate social injustices, first of all injustices they are suffering.

In general, according to Marx’s thought on labor and product distribution, ownership, the working class, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, it can be seen that social justice and democracy are intertwined in that without democracy there would be no justice and the degree of social justice would reflect the level of democracy in the society.

2. Applying K.Marx’s thought on the relationship between social justice and democracy of the Communist Party of Vietnam in the current period

The view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on social justice and democracy as well as on the relationship between social justice and democracy is based on K.Marx’s thought on these issues. However, because of the different times, the Communist Party's theory of social justice and democracy as well as the relationship between social justice and democracy will not be exactly the same as Marx's. The difference in the time period leads to a change in the theoretical content of the relationship between social justice and democracy. In the age of Marx, the workers / proletarians belonged to the condemnation class in society, with little or no ownership of the means of

¹ See: K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.19, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1995, p.46-47.

² K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.4, *Ibid.*, p.611.

³ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.4, *Ibid.*, p.626.

production and forced to work as laborers, subjected to heavy exploitation of time and energy or they had to sell their labor to the bourgeoisie (the rulers of society and take possession of the means of production) to receive a small wage to feed themselves and their families at a minimum; therefore, they suffered from inequities in ownership, distribution, welfare, security and were forced to “political struggle” even the “violent” struggle. Meanwhile, in Vietnam today, workers / proletarians are generally free people who own the country and the working class is the “Revolutionary leader”, “the pioneering class in the construction of socialism”. The Party and the State of Vietnam take the initiative in taking care of and guaranteeing the democratic rights of the people and the issues of justice in the society”¹. The Party and the State of Vietnam take the initiative in taking care of and guaranteeing the democratic rights of the people and the issues of justice in the society.

Moreover, while in Marx's time, socialism was just the theory, the forecast, the possibility, in Vietnam today, socialism is being realized, being built with the great advancement of the era of globalization and international integration. Therefore, in the view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the relationship between social justice and democracy, it not only emphasizes or focuses on economic justice but also on justice of politics, education, healthcare, etc... and on “justice in development opportunities”, “justice in social product distribution”, “justice in development opportunities between regions, groups, social classes; implementing social policies for policy beneficiaries and vulnerable people”² on the basis of the viewpoint that State “respect and assurance of human rights and citizenship; caring for happiness, the development of freedom of each person” and the people “exercise their

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Document of the 11th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011, p.80.

² Nguyen Xuan Thang, Vu Van Phuc, Pham Van Duc, Nguyen Linh Khieu (Co-Editor). *Documents of the 11th Party Congress: Some theoretical and practical issues*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, 2013, p.384.

mastery through the activities of the State, of the whole political system and the forms of direct democracy and representative democracy”¹.

In the view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the relationship between social justice and democracy, it can be clearly seen that, first and foremost, social justice and democracy have a parallel relationship because they are elements of Vietnam's social development target. This is shown in the *Platform for the national construction in the transitional period to socialism (supplemented and developed in 2011)* by the Party as follows: The socialist society that the Vietnamese people is building is a society with “wealthy people, strong, democratic, just and civilized country”. Among them “democracy” and “justice” in the society that the entire Vietnamese people are building are identified by the Party as “for the true benefit and human dignity with increasing levels of knowledge, morality, physical health and aesthetics”². By pointing out this parallel relationship for the full human development, the Communist Party of Vietnam has contributed, shaping more specifically about socialist society than the theory K.Marx stated.

The view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the relationship between social justice and democracy is based on the fact that Vietnam has been experiencing remarkable economic growth with a market economy under socialist orientation but at the same time, there are many disturbing issues in cultural and social development that require a proper and thorough orientation of development guidelines and policies. In that context, the Party points out that it is necessary to implement social progress and justice in each step and each development policy by³: Focusing on good policies on labor, employment and income (overcoming the irrationalities on salaries, wages, social allowances in line with the socio-economic situation of the country); ensuring social security (with social insurance, health insurance, social relief,

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Document of the 11th National Congress*, Ibid., p.85.

² Communist Party of Vietnam, *Document of the 11th National Congress*, Ibid., p.76.

³ See: Communist Party of Vietnam, *Document of the 11th National Congress*, Ibid., p.43-44.

poverty reduction programs, etc.); improving the quality of people's healthcare and the work of population, family planning, mother and child care and protection, etc... On this basis, the Party defines *the implementation of social justice policies as a manifestation of the level of democracy and as a driving force of democracy in society*. Because from the Party's point of view, such implementation of social progress and justice in every step and each of these development policies is to “express the good nature of the socialist regime” as a society of the People, by the People, for the People, as a regime which ***“ensures that all state power belongs to the People”***¹, ensuring “that the People participate in all stages of the process of making decisions related to the interests and life of the people, and Party committees and authorities “have to at all levels have to regularly dialogue, listen, learn, absorb ideas, solve difficulties, obstacles and legitimate demands of the People”².

However, the Party does not regard the building and implementation of social justice policies as one-way from the State to the People but emphasizes that the State is of the People, by the People, for the People and is to “serve the People” so the party focus on “fully exercising the People's democratic rights, respecting, listening to the opinions of the People and subject to the supervision of the People”³ including People's opinions and supervision of social justice policies and the implementation of social justice policies. Thus, the Party particularly emphasizes the promotion of “the sense of civic rights and obligations, the capacity of mastery and participation in the social management of the People; having specific mechanisms for people to exercise the direct ownership right”⁴ and inspecting, strictly handling “violations of the social insurance law, ensuring the proper and adequate implementation of

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Party Congress*, Central Party Office, Hanoi, 2016, p.38..

² Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Party Congress*, Ibid., p.37.

³ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Party Congress*, Ibid., p.86.

⁴ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Party Congress*, Ibid., p.239.

the prescribed support for all subjects”¹. For example, as in the issue of health insurance, the Party emphasizes the improvement of medical ethics, “to fight against negatives in medical examination and treatment”, to ensure that people with health insurance “have convenient medical examination and treatment; every citizen has need and finance will be provided with high quality health services”²... Thus, it can be seen that in the Party's view, the implementation of democracy is very important for developing and implementing social justice policies. *On the one hand*, exercising democracy will help reflect the content and quality of social justice policies; *on the other hand*, it will help ensure that these policies are implemented properly for the right subjects and purposes.

In general, from the point of view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on social justice, socialist democracy, on the State of the people, by the people, for the people, on the democratic rights of the people, etc., it can be seen that the Party has defined *democracy as a means of implementing and ensuring social justice while social justice is a driving force and a measure of the level of democracy in society*. When applying the theory of K.Marx on the relationship between social justice and democracy in the reality of Vietnam, it is noteworthy that people and culture of Vietnam have specific characteristics that make results still very modest and ineffective, not as desired by the Party and the State as well as the whole society, despite the policies and guidelines of the Party and the State on the relationship between social justice and democracy as well as addressing this relationship are proper. In this article, one of the causes of this problem pointed out is that most people are not fully aware of their rights to exercise democracy in order to ensure social justice. At the same time, they are not able to speak out, do not express themselves

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Party Congress*, Ibid., p.229.

² Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Party Congress*, Ibid., p.230.

and do not express their full democratic rights to ensure social justice for themselves, for their relatives and for social community.

There are many traditional cultural factors that have limited and affected the exercise of democracy in order to ensure social justice. In a certain framework, this article can only mention a few of those elements. For example, the agricultural civilization and the culture of wet rice cultivation have the advantage of creating a harmonious, adaptive, selective, and preserving Vietnamese human culture for survival and development ¹. However, the “passive” factor has formed subconsciously and passed on from generation to generation in most Vietnamese people and formed a village culture that hindered the rise and development of the ego, the individual. These characteristics of the Vietnamese people in the wet rice civilization are unfamiliar to the mastery of the people and the exercise of democracy in society. In addition, the importation and long-term and deep-rooted effects of Confucianism in society and in the ideology of the majority of Vietnamese people especially for people in rural areas, which are manifested in moral norms, hold back the way of thinking, of doing and of showing their ownership role.

Today, along with the development of society, urbanization has “led to the development of personal freedom”² and human relations are increasingly open. However, the thought and the psychology of small farmers, the feeling snug about one’s present circumstances, being lazy of adventure and change along with the hierarchical order in confucian style rooted in thinking and behavior have undoubtedly affected the Vietnamese people's awareness of democracy and the exercise of democracy in order to ensure social justice for themselves and for their social community. The need for democracy does not

¹See: Pham Minh Thao. *Cultural behavior of the Vietnamese*. National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2015.

² See: Pham Minh Thao. *Cultural behavior of the Vietnamese*. National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2015, p.154.

always go hand in hand with the perception and responsibility of democracy that affects the implementation and assurance of social justice as “the exercise of democracy is still limited or formal”¹, good social justice policies are difficult to implement adequately and properly and even exploited to do wrong.

In addition, it is necessary to mention that in the minds of many Vietnamese, Heaven is “a noble lord, able to penetrate all the great things, all the time and firmly grasp the balance of justice for each particular life”². Such conception of social justice in Vietnam is still quite widespread today and that has greatly affected the need for democracy and the exercise of democracy in order to ensure social justice, especially in rural, remote and isolated areas of the country. Therefore, the guidelines and policies of the Party and the State are correct and good but in reality, the lives of a part of the people “are still difficult, especially in the ethnic minority areas, extremely difficult areas. The results of poverty reduction are not sustainable and the risk of falling back into poverty is high; the gap between the rich and poor between regions, between population groups is still large. The rate of poor and near-poor households in remote and mountainous areas, especially in ethnic minority areas is high (in some districts and communes it is up to 50%). Some policies on social security, poverty reduction are overlapping, not synchronous, not very high effective and do not encourage the poor rise out of poverty. The coverage rate and quality of social insurance and unemployment insurance services are still low. Social insurance fund is not sustainable. The health care and protection of people in many aspects is limited”³.

To realize successfully the viewpoints, guidelines and policies of the Party and the State of Vietnam on social justice and democracy in general, on the relationship between social justice and democracy in particular, it is

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Party Congress*, Ibid., p.168.

² See: Pham Minh Thao. *Cultural behavior of the Vietnamese*, Ibid., p.25.

³ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Party Congress*, Ibid., p.256.

important for the State and social organizations to strengthen their role in the exercise of democracy in order to ensure social justice. In particular, the Party and the State, in addition to building and promulgating their views, guidelines and policies on social justice and democracy, need to monitor closely and effectively the implementation of democracy to ensure social justice at grassroots levels, especially for cadre work. If the assessment and use of cadres is inaccurate, unequal especially in rural areas, in remote and isolated areas of the country, in ethnic minority areas, it will be very easy to lead to the situation that the system of policies to ensure social justice of the State is taken advantage of and can not reach the right beneficiaries. People can not do and can not fully exercise their democratic rights, such as criticizing and supervising the implementation of the social policies of the Party and the State in order to ensure social justice for themselves and their social community once the cadres at the grassroots level have degenerated, misused, and deliberately misled the good social policies of the Party and the State. For the social organizations, ie voluntary organizations of the masses such as associations, federations ... it is necessary to improve their quality, to demonstrate clearly the role of monitoring and reviewing the implementation of democracy to ensure social justice on the basis of respect for the law and the interests of the working people, of the nation, and of the socialist Vietnamese Fatherland.

In conclusion, in applying Marx's thought on the relationship between social justice and democracy in Vietnam, the Communist Party of Vietnam has clearly determined as follows: *Firstly*, social justice and democracy have a parallel relationship because they are elements of the social development target of Vietnam; *Secondly*, democracy is a means of implementing and ensuring social justice while social justice is a driving force and a measure of the level of democracy in society. And in order for the theory of the relationship between social justice and democracy to be successfully realized

in Vietnam, there are two issues needed to be addressed: *Firstly*, the State and social organizations need to strengthen their role in the implementation of democracy in order to ensure social justice; *Secondly*, the culture, thinking and lifestyle of the Vietnamese people need to be complemented and furthered by some characteristics that can promote and enhance the exercise of democracy of each individual in order to ensure social justice for themselves and for their social community. Particularly, the people's self-awareness of their position and role of mastery in the society as well as the enhancement of capacity related to their ability to implement democracy is the most important and decisive.

SUSTAINABLE VALUES OF MARX'S THOUGHTS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY - AND ITS CREATIVE APPLICATION IN VIETNAM

Nguyen Minh Hoan(*)

In the thinking of Marx, as historical categories, social justice and democracy have a parallel relationship, that are considered as measures of the level of human liberation of a social system at every certain level of historical development. According to K.Marx, if democracy is understood as a state system, social justice will be the criterion of the level of development of that state, first of all manifested in the status of freedom and equality between human beings in social life. This shows that in the thought of K.Marx, the relationship between social justice and democracy is not outside of relation to freedom and equality. Marx's thoughts on the relationship between social justice and democracy was absorbed and developed creatively by Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam. This is the theoretical basis for determining the goal of building a Vietnam with "wealthy people, strong, democratic, just and civilized country"

K. Marx's view of equality and freedom as the basis of social justice and democracy

First of all, on the basis of the concept of justice Marx and Marxist philosophers point out that the notion of social justice is formed only when society is divided into classes. This means that when the society has no difference in rights and obligations such as in the early communist society, "within the clan, there was no difference between the rights and the obligations"¹, there is no basis for the formation of *a sense of social justice*. This is because that in terms of the distribution relationship between members

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¹ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.21, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.234.

in the community, it is just direct and average distribution¹. Thus, in the view of Marx, since society was divided into classes, there was the basis for the relationship between “obligations and rights”, in which justice is a factor belonging to this relationship. That is *the equality between the people in the relationship between rights and obligations*. Therefore, in the view of Marx, social justice is *social equality*, first of all in terms of economic equality. Equality with respect to economic equality always requires consideration in the correspondence between two aspects: *Firstly*, equality in the fulfillment of the obligation or dedication; *secondly*, equality of interest or enjoyment on the basis of the fulfillment of the obligation or the corresponding dedication.

Thus, from the point of view of Marx, *justice is the equality between the performance of the obligation, of the contribution ... and corresponding equality of rights, enjoyment*. In general terms, the basis for the formation of the notion of social justice, according to Marx and the Marxist classics, derives from the *awareness* of the relationship between “rights and duties”, first of all in an economic perspective. Although the basis of social justice must always be based on the relationship between equality and freedom, equality and freedom are not pure ideas, eternal values; on the contrary, they themselves are governed by the basis of economic relations - exchange relations. K.Marx stated: “... as pure ideas, equality and freedom are just idealized expressions of exchange of values. By being developed through legal, political, and social relations, equality and freedom is still the infrastructure but at a certain different level”².

Social justice is always determined based on the relationship between the “rights and obligations but according to K.Marx and the Marxism

¹ See: K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.21, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.258.

² C K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works* ,Vol.46 (part I), National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1998, p.318.

thinkers, the awareness of the relationship between “rights and the obligation” of course varies from different positions of class and this has led to different notions of social justice. Social justice, therefore, is not a constant concept but always changes depending on the viewpoint of each class that reflects the perception of specific conditions at each historical stage. As Marxism pointed out: “... justice is merely a manifestation of the field of thought and metaphysics of the present economic conditions ... The justice of the Greeks and Romans suggested that the slavery regime was fair. The justice of the bourgeoisie in 1789 demanded the abolition of feudalism because that regime was not fair”¹.

In a class society, the establishment of a fair relationship between people is always first and foremost defined economically. Different economic statuses will lead to different perceptions of social justice in each class. Derived from the fact in history, and especially in capitalist society, K.Marx stated: “the man who possesses no other property than his labor power must, in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labor. He can only work with their permission, hence live only with their permission”². In addition, “in proportion as labor develops socially, and becomes thereby a source of wealth and culture, poverty and destitution develop among the workers, and wealth and culture among the non workers”³. This shows that in the view of K.Marx, in a class society which is based on an unequal relationship of economic status, the relationship between “obligations and rights” naturally leads to injustice, even in the capitalist mode of production, which is subtly hidden by a very fair appearance through the principle of parity exchange.

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.18, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.379.

² K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works* Vol.19, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.27.

³ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.19, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.29.

On the basis of developing the viewpoint of C. Marx, to criticize the injustice concealed by economic relations based on an equal starting point of the parity exchange that is supposed to be the “eternal” value of justice, F. Engels also stated: “the conception of justice, in the form of capitalism as well as in the form of proletarianism, is itself a product of historical development; in order to create this conception, certain historical conditions are required and these conditions themselves, in turn, assume to have a long history before that. So the conception of justice can be anything but certainly not an eternal truth”¹.

From that point of view, it is necessary to confirm the value of K.Marx’s view in negating the so-called ““eternal justice”, “eternal equality”, “eternal solidarity” and many other “eternal truths””². At the same time, to unveil the injustice in the capitalist conception of social justice, F.Engels pointed out: “so it has also made its classes no longer available to launch the false allegations that the rule of law and justice, the equality of rights and obligations, the harmony of the common good are reigning in the present social regime. The current bourgeoisie society, like all societies before it, has been stripped of the truth as a huge structure in which the majority of the population is exploited by a minority of people”³.

The above shows that, Marx's point of view on justice in human relations is always based on equality in the legal aspect but essentially on the economic aspect is unequal, and the so-called justice is just an injustice. To clarify this, F.Engels pointed out: ““Equal legality” means equality on the basis of inequality between the rich and the poor; equality in terms of major inequalities nowadays, in short, means simply calling inequalities as equality”

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.20, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1994, p.154-155.

² K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works* Vol.18, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.294.

³ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.19, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.169.

¹. Thus, in the view of Marx and the Marxist classics, in class society, equality and freedom as the basis of social justice are still in the hands of those who hold the economic and political power.

K.Marx not only emphasized that equality and freedom in economic terms are the premises of social justice but also considered them as the basis for defining the nature of so-called democracy in history and especially in capitalist society.

Based on the historic endorsement of the role of the economy in particular

exchange relations as a basis for the development of the notion of equality and freedom, K.Marx stated that in capitalist society, "... equality and freedom are directly opposed to freedom and equality in ancient time that were not based on exchange values. Moreover, such freedom and equality were diminished as a consequence of the development of exchange values"². With such a conception of the premise of social justice and democracy, stemming from the basis of reality, Marx firmly opposed the notion of the eternal equality and democracy. To point out the development of the democratic category as a product of real social history, K. Mark stated: "Democracy is the riddle of all constitutions solved. In democracy the constitution is always based on its actual foundation, on actual man and the actual people, not only in itself, according to its essence, but in its existence and actuality; it is postulated as autonomous. The constitution is seen as what it is, the freely-created product of man"³. Developing the view of K.Marx on democracy and to point out a real democracy for human development through building a progressive state-run regime, V.I.Lenin emphasized: "Although bourgeois democracy is a great historical advance compared to the

¹K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.2, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.772.

² K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.46 (p.I), National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.318.

³ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works* ,Vol.1, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.349.

Middle Ages, it is still - and under capitalism may be - a narrow, mutilated, fake democracy, a paradise for the rich, a trap and a false bait for the exploited, for the poor”¹. Also, based on developing K.Marx's conception of democracy, especially of the dialectic between democracy and social justice, aiming at liberating workers from bourgeois democracy, V.I.Lenin outlined: “Democracy means equality. It is clear that the struggles of the proletariat to win the rights to equality and the realization of the slogan of equality has a great significance, as long as equality is to be understood properly, in the sense of abolishing the class ... And once the equal rights of all members of society towards the possession of productive materials which means equal work, equal pay are realized, humanity of course, will take the next step in the transition from formal equality to true equality, ie to the realization of the principle of “doing your best to meet your needs”². Also on the basis of developing Marx’s views on equality and freedom as a basis for both social justice and democracy, V.I.Lenin once again emphasized: “... the difference between bourgeois democracy, parliamentarism and the Soviet or proletarian democracy is that the focus of the bourgeois democracy is on to proclaim solemnly and ritually all kinds of freedom and benefits but in fact does not allow for the vast majority of the population, ie workers and farmers to enjoy a little bit of these freedoms and rights. By contrast, the focus of proletarian democracy is not on proclaiming the rights and freedoms of the entire people but on ensuring that the labor masses formerly oppressed and exploited by capitalists actually get involved in state management ... Thus, one of the most important tasks of the Soviet Government that they must continue consistently, is to make workers and exploited people truly entitled the benefits of culture, civilization and democracy”³.

¹ V.I.Lénin. *Complete Works*, Vol. 37, Progressive Publishing House. Moscow, 1977, p.305.

² V.I.Lénin. *Complete Works*, Vol. 33, Progressive Publishing House. Moscow, 1976, p.122.

³ V.I.Lénin. *Complete Works*, Vol. 38, Progressive Publishing House. Moscow, 1977, p.116.

The viewpoints of Marx and of the later Marxist classics have always been to affirm that both social justice and democracy have a parallel relationship and must be based on the relationship between equality and freedom, first of all equality and freedom in the economic field that is a premise for equality and freedom in all other fields. Thus, justice and democracy are only truly achieved in communism. However, with the viewpoints of social justice and democracy as a rationale for the perception of a future society - communist society, the classics themselves were always prudent in pointing out the real historical basis for the realization of the goal of such true social justice and democracy.

On the basis of the viewpoint of the goal of true social justice and democracy in communism, derived from the guidance of K.Marx and F.Engels, it can be said that: “Only to a certain stage of development of the social productive force - a very high stage of development even under our present conditions – it is capable of enhancing production to a degree making the elimination of class distinctions a real advance, making that elimination firm and unlikely to lead to stagnation or even decline in social production. But only in the hands of the bourgeoisie the productive forces reach that stage of development. Therefore, the bourgeoisie, in this respect, is also a precedent, necessary condition of the socialist revolution. Therefore, one can assert that in a country without proletariat or without bourgeoisie, it is easier to conduct the revolution - He just shows that he has to learn the basic book on socialism”¹. For V.I.Lenin, derived from the inheritance and development of Marxist views and from the reality of the revolution and at the same time based on pointing out the real premise towards the goal of communist socialism, he said: “How will humanity go through stages, what practical steps will be taken to reach that ultimate goal, we do not know

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete Works*, Vol.18, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1995, p.752.

yet?”¹. It is possible to see the insights of K.Marx and the classics as the basis for the perception of correcting the problem of hasty, dogma that we had before.

2. The creative application of Marxism's viewpoints on social justice and democracy in Vietnam

Building successfully a Vietnam “wealthy people, strong, democratic, just and civilized country” is the leading goal of the Communist Party and the people of Vietnam. Since the beginning of socialist construction, especially in the renovation process, Vietnam has emphasized the need to apply Marx’s thought on social justice and democracy into the practice of socialist construction. On the basis of receiving and developing Marxism, social justice and democracy in Vietnam are always defined as both a goal and driving force for developing the country. Moreover, social justice and democracy are always carried out simultaneously. At the same time, the implementation of social justice and democracy is always based on the economic development.

Thus, social justice and democracy in the terms of the economy are a fundamental part of the exercise of democracy for the social. In other words, a solid economic foundation for social justice and democracy is the guarantee of the development of all aspects of social life.

For Vietnam, in order to ensure the social justice and promote democracy in the economy, first and foremost, it requires continuous improvement of the socialist-oriented market economy. In practice, the achievements of economic reform have come from the continuous improvement of the *socialist-oriented market economy*. In particular, ensuring social justice and promoting democracy has created “opportunities” and “conditions” that is understood as the guarantee of the equality and the inherent freedom of every citizen to participate in economic development in their own capacity and enjoy fully the fruits of such economic development.

¹ V.I.Lénin. *Complete Works*, Vol. 33, Progressive Publishing House. Moscow, 1976, p.122.

Moreover, ensuring equality and freedom is the premise for the equal “opportunities” and “conditions” for the development of each individual, and at the same time it is necessary to fight against injustice, monopoly, privilege, corruption in the economy. In that sense, both social justice and economic democracy are equality and freedom in the relationship between economic actors, all economic sectors, especially equality and freedom in the relationship between all people involved in economic life that includes production, business, exchange, consumption and social reproduction. Thus, social equality and democracy in the economy are the basis, the driving force for the liberation of productive forces, first of all to liberate the labor force, the creativity of laborers and of each subject participating in economic activities.

From the very beginning of the renovation, the Sixth Congress underlined the need to overcome the limitations of discrimination which abolished equity and democracy among economic actors. Accordingly, the Document of the 6th Congress identified timely the need to: “eliminate bias in the assessment and treatment of workers of different economic sectors”¹. In the spirit of bringing into full play the role of ownership of each citizen in economic life, the Document of the 7th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam continued to emphasize: “To create opportunities for everyone to make a difference and enjoy the fruits of development”². In that spirit, the Document of the 8th National Congress again clarified: “To create conditions for everyone to have the opportunity to develop and use their capacity”³. The Document of the 10th Congress of the Communist Party continued to emphasize: “To create conditions and opportunities for equal

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Documents of the 6th National Party Congress*, Truth Publishing House, Hanoi, 1987, p.61-62.

² Communist Party of Vietnam, *Strategy for stabilization and socio-economic development until 2000*, Truth Publishing House, Hanoi, 1991, p.9-10.

³ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Documents of the 8th National Party Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1996, p.113.

access to developed resources, for enjoying the basic social services, rising out of poverty in poor areas and poor parts of the population. To overcome the the thought of subsidization and dependence”¹. This is also the goal of helping the underprivileged to reduce their burdens, making them quickly get out of poverty and have the opportunity to integrate into social development by their own efforts. Creating opportunities and conditions for every citizen as a subject to have equal opportunities in economic life, including those who are weak in society shows the depth and superiority of social justice and socialist democracy in the view of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Being consistent with the above-mentioned spirit of social justice and democracy in the economy, first of all, in ensuring the opportunities and conditions for participation in the activities of social and economic life, the 12th Congress continued to emphasize: “To integrate closely economic policy with social policy, economic development with improving the life quality of the people, ensuring the people enjoy better the results of the course of renovation, building and developing the country. Every citizen has the opportunities and conditions for comprehensive development”². However, in the context of the continuous demand to improve the current market economy, to ensure social justice and promote democracy in the economy, first of all it is necessary to promote the initiative, active and creative role of every economic subject as a citizen and at the same time to focus on the leadership of the Party and the role of government. Improving the Party's previous views on the eight major relationships, the Document of 12th Congress added “state-market relations to create more “opportunities” and “conditions” for every citizen to promote their dedication and enjoy the achievements of that dedication. These are the right policies that the Communist Party of Vietnam

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 10th National Party Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2006 p.101.

² Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Party Congress*, Central Communist Party Committee Office, 2016, p.30-31.

launched on the basis of absorbing and using creatively Marxism in general and Marxism view on social justice and democracy into the realities of Vietnam. It is also a solid foundation for Vietnam to successfully achieve the goal of “wealthy people, strong, democratic, just and civilized country”.

THE VIEW OF KARL MARX AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM ON JUSTICE

Nguyen Ngoc Ha(*)

The phenomena of injustice (in people-to-people relations) appeared when human societies were governed by states. Since then, justice has been the discriminated people's aspirations and become a case study of social sciences. Almost all social theories claim that justice is the value and injustice is the disvalue; just society is a good society and unjust society is a bad society, and therefore they all seek to build a just society. However, social theories do not share the same views on the ways to define the criteria and conditions for justice, as well as to exercise justice. The more views suitable for the discriminated people's aspirations social theories have, the more they are welcomed by people and the wider and longer-time impacts they have on society. Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity have had their wide and long-time impacts on society as they have produced views on justice, to some extents, suitable for the discriminated people's aspirations. Karl Marx's social theory has had an extensive impact across the world for nearly 200 years as it has contained views on justice in accordance with the discriminated people's aspirations. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Karl Marx's theory in general and his view on justice has influenced Vietnam via communists. The views of Karl Marx and the Communist Party of Vietnam on justice have been discussed in a large number of research projects. Nevertheless, this article contributes to clarifying the views of Karl Marx and the Communist Party of Vietnam on justice.

1. Karl Marx's view on justice

When talking about the justice, it is a must to touch upon the injustice because they are an inseparable couple of concepts. Justice is a status in the

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people-to-people relations, in which no side suffers from injustice. In case of injustice, there will be an unjustly-treated side and an injustice-creating side. The injustice-creating side wants to maintain the injustice to get unjust benefits, while the unjustly-treated side desire to eliminate the injustice. The injustice is manifested in economic, political and social sectors. In the economic sector, the injustice can be recognised in the distribution of assets generated by society. Economic injustice will entail political and social one.

Theoretically, that is the people-to-people injustice. However, in fact, indentifying injustice is not always an easy task due to the shortage of universally-accepted clear quantitative criteria on injustice. Therefore, the disagreement happens in injustice identification. If some criterion on injustice is applied, certain people who are not unjustly treated may think that they suffer from injustice, and vice versa. There will be many wars in which the two sides fight each other both in the name of justice. It means that to their viewpoints, they are both treated unjustly and have no choice but fight for an just order. By and large, nevertheless, it is not hard to reach the unanimity in justice identification if we base on the social differentiation with two classes, oppressors and the oppressed. Accordingly, the relationship between these two classes is an unjust relationship, in which the oppressors create the injustice and the oppresesed suffer from unjust treatment. The injustice between the oppressed and oppressors has been fathomed out and reflected in social theories and literary works, especially folklore ones. Because of the unjust treatment and desire to develop an just society, the oppressed fight non-stop against the oppressors.

Neither Karl Marx was the first person to acknowledge the injustice in the relationship between the oppressed and oppressors nor he was the first one to defend the oppressed's interests and advocate for the development of an just society. For example, Confucius also wanted to build a just society because he thought that an unjust society was worse than an inadequate one. The Buddha,

Jesus Christ and many other ideologists also wanted establish an just society. However, Karl Marx's view on justice is different from that of Confucius, the Buddha, Jesus Christ and many other ideologists. This difference is reflected mainly in the determination of conditions for injustice abolishment.

According to Karl Marx, injustice is something of historical nature. The injustice did not exist in the primitive society and will not appear in the future communist society. The justice has arisen along with the unequal ownership of capital goods. Once the unequal ownership of means of production (private ownership in particular) is eliminated, the injustice will also disappear. Once the economic injustice is wiped out, the political and social injustice will be phased out. As a result, everybody will all enjoy freedom and happiness. To delete the injustice, it is must to smash the private ownership. That is the basic view of Karl Marx on justice. In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels pointed out that the written histories of societies so far were "the histories of class struggle". Class struggle is the struggle among classes, which originates from the injustice in their inter-relations. This view is very easy to be accepted because everybody knows that every country in the world has its own civil wars at different levels. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels are not the first people to put forwards this view. Both ideologists stressed that in a class struggle, the oppressed "do not lose anything but chains binding them", as while suggesting new views on the injustice's reasons and conditions for eradicating the injustice. Accordingly, once the unequal ownership of capital goods (private ownership in particular) is eliminated, the oppression, exploitation, coercion, class and state will no longer exist, leading to the justice, freedom and happiness for everyone.

The above views of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels about the justice have made quick and wide impacts on society. Some big social theories with billions of followers such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam also exert a widespread influence on society, even an impact lasting for

thousands of years. However, it is very rare that a social theory can have such a speedy influence as Marxism because it has been more than 20 years since Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* in 1848 (the milestone marking the Marxism formulation in general and Karl Marx's view on justice in particular) to the occurrence of Paris Commune in 1871, 69 years to the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917, 97 years to the establishment of European communist country system in 1945, 101 years to the advent of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and 97 years to the foundation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam led by the Communist Party of Vietnam in 1945. These historical events happened due to the influence of Marxism in general and Karl Marx's view on conditions for eliminating the injustice in particular. In short, after the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marxism in general and Karl Marx's view on justice in particular has attracted billions of followers. The views of Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity and Muslim on justice do not have such a quick impact. Currently, while almost all countries applying the public ownership of means production (USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, China, Laos, etc.) abdicate this model, many historians from these countries concluded that Karl Marx's social theory and view on justice were wrong. Historians can draw conclusions on whether a historical event is right or wrong, obvious or unobvious, evitable or inevitable. However, they will make mistakes if they blame a person predicting inaccurately about historical events for unsound historical events. Although Karl Marx mis-anticipated the high time to phase out the private ownership and injustice, he could not be the one to blame for errors of countries applying the public ownership of capital goods.

For the justice, Karl Marx acknowledged the injustice not only in the relationship between this class and another, but also in the relationship among social groups. Both written and unwritten histories of all societies so far have been the histories of struggles among tribes and ethnic groups. This point is

not too hard to be accepted because everyone knows that each tribe in the history had its own bloody wars at different levels with other tribes and people. In every war, there are invaders and the invaded, who can be considered the victim of injustice. The histories of all societies up to now are also the histories of struggles among parties or religious communities, in which one side is the victim of injustice. Karl Marx did not negate such wars. However, he only focused on the struggle among classes without attaching importance to the struggles among tribes, parties and religions. According to Karl Marx, if the injustice in the ownership of capital goods does not exist in the world, the injustice not only among classes but also in the relationship among tribes, parties and religion will also be eliminated. As a result, the situations of this country invading and enslaving another country or this party and religion enslaving the others will disappear. This is the difference between Karl Marx's theory and others on society in general and the justice in particular.

2. The view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on justice

Karl Marx's theory in general and his view on justice in particular exert a great influence over Vietnam through the Communist Party of Vietnam. Due to taking Marxism as the ideological foundation, since its establishment in 1930 up to now, the Communist Party of Vietnam has always advocated for the justice, especially the justice in line with Karl Marx's view. Thanks to that, the Communist Party of Vietnam has won people's popular support in the cause of fighting for the justice, represented more specifically in the targets of independence, democracy, freedom and happiness, and become the ruling Party (state leadership) since 1945 up to now.

Despite all-the-time advocacy for the justice, the viewpoint of the Communist Party of Vietnam has some changes in the reform period compared with the pre-reform one. In the pre-reform period, the Communist Party of Vietnam considered private ownership as the source of injustice and

the private ownership abolishment was essential to promote the justice. In this period, the Communist Party of Vietnam tended to implement labour-based distribution (or distribution according to labor) principle (to promote justice) and it was a must to eliminate the private ownership. Collectivising and nationalising all capital goods is the policy of private ownership abolishment. From 1960 in the North and 1978 in the whole country, the collectivisation and nationalisation policy was completed; and the labour-based distribution principle since then started to be applied. In practice, this principle has not been implemented in a completely accurate manner because the distribution in many aspects was not based on the labour but the egalitarianism (widespread subsidisation). The egalitarian distribution has nurtured the laziness and suffocated the activeness of workers, leading to the socio-economic crisis in the early 1980s of the 20th century.

In the reform period, since the 6th National Congress in 1986, the Communist Party of Vietnam has admitted unwanted mistakes of the egalitarian distribution and recognized the downsides of labour-based distribution principle at the same time, thereby deciding to transform the economy from a model based on state ownership of all capital goods into a multi-sectoral model or a model based on the diverse ownership of capital goods in other words. The 6th National Congress concluded “It is important to promote social justice, matching specific conditions of our country”¹, “people generating assets and good things for society, fulfilling adequate obligations and complying strictly with the laws and policies are all respected and entitled to have good incomes, which deserve their legal labour and business. Lazy people and parasites must be criticised and forced to work. Law offenders are all punished in accordance with the laws”², “unrighteous incomes must be

¹ The Communist Party of Vietnam (1987), *Documents of the 6th National Congress*, National Political Publishing house, Hanoi, p.45.

² The Communist Party of Vietnam (1987), *Documents of the 6th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp.61-62.

prevented and strictly handled”, “strictly punish law violators no matter which positions they are holding”, “ensure the justice regarding the interests and obligations of all citizens to avoid privileges”¹. The Documents of the 7th National Congress stated “Apply numerous types of distribution with priorities over the labour-based distribution and economic efficiency”², “take the labour-based distribution as the main mode of distribution, encourage the enrichment coupled with poverty reduction and improve social welfare in line with the economic development”³. The mid-term national conference (the 7th term) asserted “Prioritise the labour-based distribution, encourage talents and offer them corresponding preferential policies, as while distributing by the capital contributed to production and trade”⁴. The Documents of the 8th National Congress pointed out “Apply multiple modalities of distribution with preference for the distribution based on labour result and economic efficiency, as while distributing by the contributions of other resources to production and trade and through social welfare”⁵. The Documents of the 9th National Congress wrote “Socialism-oriented market economy distributes mainly based on labour result and economic efficiency, as while distributing by the contributions of capital and other resources to production and trade and through social welfare”⁶. The Documents of the 10th National Congress asserted “Apply the distribution majorly based on labour result and economic efficiency, as while distributing by the contributions of capital and other

¹ The Communist Party of Vietnam (1987), *Documents of the 6th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp.88-89.

² The Communist Party of Vietnam (1991), *Platform for national development in the transition period to Socialism*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p.10.

³ The Communist Party of Vietnam (1991), *Strategy of socio-economic stability and development to 2000*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p.9.

⁴ The Communist Party of Vietnam (1994), *Documents of the mid-term national conference (the 8th term)*, National Politics - Truth publishing house, Hanoi, p.47.

⁵ The Communist Party of Vietnam (1996), *Documents of the 8th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p.92.

⁶ The Communist Party of Vietnam (2001), *Documents of the 9th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p.88.

resources and through social welfare”¹. The Documents of the 11th National Congress stated “The distribution ensures the justice and creates driving force for development; resources are distributed by socio-economic development strategies, planning and plans and the distribution majorly based on labour result and economic efficiency, as while distributing by the contributions of capital and other resources as well as through social security system and social welfare is applied”². The Documents of the 11th National Congress added the distribution through social security system (besides social welfare). The name of distribution discipline that the Communist Party of Vietnam used varies in the National Congress’s Documents. However, the distribution target of the Communist Party of Vietnam is always the justice and the relevance of the distribution principle’s contents to the common standards of countries with developed market economies³.

¹ The Communist Party of Vietnam (2006), *Documents of the 10th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p.26.

² The Communist Party of Vietnam (2011), *Documents of the 10th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p.74.

³ In fact, since 1986, when advocating for the multi-sectoral economic development, the Communist Party of Vietnam has also implemented the principle of distributing based on both labour (labour result) and contributed capital, including many kinds of resources as well as through the social security system and social welfare. According to this principle, the value of gross social products will be divided into three parts: The first part is used for reproduction and addressing general social issues to contribute to the social welfare fund, thereby distributing through the social security system and social welfare; the second part will be distributed to individuals based on labouring devotions for society, including devotions of manual and mental workers, managers and non-managers as well as direct and indirect workers, which means the devotions of all workers in all indispensable sectors of society; and the third part will be distributed to individuals based on capital devotions. The profits from loans (lending banks, organisations, enterprises or individuals) or profits from shares in enterprises are incomes from capital devotions, not labour devotions. In the above three parts, the first and second ones can be also seen in the old distribution principle which does not include the third one. The division among these three parts is determined in accordance with the specific situation of each locality and stage. With this distribution principle, some people, who do not work, still generate incomes. People, who simultaneously devote capital for the production of society and work (managerial or non-managerial labour, manual and mental labour, direct and indirect labour) are beneficiaries of all above three parts. People, who only work and do not devote capital for the production of society are just beneficiaries of the first and second parts. In these above three parts, the first one is very crucial because every society needs to reproduce and address common social issues such as overcoming natural disasters and epidemics; and what is more, every society has people who are not physically strong enough to work, do not own capital and need help. Spending a part of the income with proportion based on specific conditions of each country to distribute to these people is a humanitarian policy that all countries are applying (this is approved by everybody and considered as justice because it is necessary for the social development). Refer: Nguyen Ngoc Ha (2011), “*The view of the Communist Party of Vietnam in the reform period on distribution principle for the target of social justice*”, *Philosophy journal*, vol 12.

Therefore, since 1930 up to now, the Communist Party of Vietnam has always consistently advocated for the target of justice. However, its view on the condition of justice has had changes. In the pre-reform period, the Communist Party of Vietnam concluded that the condition of justice was the private ownership elimination. In the reform period, the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed that the condition of justice was not necessarily the private ownership elimination. In the pre-reform period, the view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the condition of justice was in line with Karl Marx's view. Meanwhile in the reform period, the view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the condition of justice was added and developed in comparison with Karl Marx's view. The new viewpoint of the Communist Party of Vietnam on condition of justice is manifested in the following points: "Promote the social progress and justice right in every single step and policy of development"¹; "promoting the social progress and justice right in every single step and policy of development is a significant and consistent the guideline of the Party and State, which shows the goodness of socialism"². It is because the semantics of those points can be interpreted as although the private ownership has not been abolished or the market economy still exists in other words, the justice can still be and needs to be promoted.

The current view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the condition of justice is right, progressive and appropriate with the common viewpoint of the today civilized world. Accordingly, the more the market economy develops, the more necessary the justice promotion is. To promote the justice, it is a must to ensure the legitimate benefits of social groups, employees and employers, poor and rich people, mental and manual workers, employed and unemployed people, able-bodied people and people with disabilities, etc.

¹ The Communist Party of Vietnam (2006), *Documents of the 10th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp.77-78.

² The Communist Party of Vietnam (2011), *Documents of the 11th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p.43.

Currently, the view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the condition of justice is right and progressive but has not been realised in an adequate manner. Every country in the world witnesses the injustice at different levels. The society of Vietnam is not exceptional, which means that the injustice does exist in Vietnam. The injustice in Vietnam includes the illegal injustice such as corruption, trade fraud, tax invasion and deception and the legal injustice originating from unsound policies of the state, obsolete habits or other reasons. To assess properly the practice of justice in the current society of Vietnam, we need to undertake elaborate and specific researches and do not base only on statistics on poor-rich disparity¹.

3. Conclusion

Karl Marx's view on justice is profoundly humanistic because it defends the interests of the oppressed, who are unjustly treated and advocates for the elimination of oppression and injustice. Due to its profound humanism, Karl Marx's view on justice has quickly won the credibility of billions of people. The view of the Communist Party of Vietnam on justice is consistent with Karl Marx's view on justice based on that humanism. In determining the condition of justice, the new viewpoint of the Communist Party of Vietnam in the pre-reform period matched Karl Marx's view. Meanwhile, the new view the Communist Party of Vietnam in the reform period was added and developed in comparison with Karl Marx's view. The essence of such

¹ According to the findings of a research, the economic injustice in Vietnam is increasing by all measures. The rich are having a too high income. In 2012, the income of 10% of the richest is 1.74 times higher than that of 40% of the poorest; the disparity between 20% of the richest and 20% of the poorest has increased from 8.4 times in 2006 to 9.8 times in 2014. In 2014, Vietnam had 210 super rich people (with assets valued more than 30 million USD), which means the total assets of these 210 people are up to more than 20 billion USD, equivalent to 12% of the whole country's GDP. It is estimated that by 2025, this number will be 403 people. If the richest person in Vietnam spends one million USD (more than 22 billion VND) each day, it will take him six years to spend all of the above money. The richest person in Vietnam has a higher daily income than the poorest person in 10 years. In one hour, the richest person has an income level which is 5,000 times higher than the money 10% of the poorest spend every day on essential needs. The assets of the richest person can help all the poor in our country escape from poverty. Ethnic groups also have great disparity in terms of the living standard. Accordingly, the Kinh (Vietnamese) and Chinese people often enjoy a higher living standard. Meanwhile, other ethnic groups show a too high level of poverty. They account for less than 15% of the population but include 70% hardcore poor households. See: Duong Loan (2017), *The alarming rich-poor disparity: Fragile income, direct adversity*, <http://www.sggp.org.vn/bao-dong-khoang-cach-giau-ngheo-mong-manh-thu-nhap-truc-dien-nglich-canh-438709.html>, Retrieved on May 10, 2018.

addition and development is the admission of the fact that it is necessary to promote the justice right in every single step and policy of development, including in the policy of market economy development.

THE PRACTICE OF INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY FROM K.MARX’S THOUGHT TO THE PRACTICE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM

Nguyen Dinh Hoa^(*)

K.Marx left the proletariat around the world the profound thought on many issues of the proletarian revolution, including the ideas of democracy, democratic practice, and establishment of a democratic society that remain valuable until now, especially for countries choosing and following the path to socialism. Insisting Marx's thought on democracy and democratic practice in the social life, in the course of its development, the Communist Party of Vietnam has put forward the policy of exercising democracy in all aspects of social life and considered the practice of intra-party democracy as a basic way to build a clean and strong party and improve the Party's leadership capacity so that the Party always deserves the ruling party, leading Vietnam's revolution.

1. With F.Engels, K.Marx, a great thinker of mankind, great leader of the world's proletariat, not only built Marxism - a scientific and revolutionary doctrine, but also directly established the The Communist League - the first Communist Party's organization in the world with the task of leading, organizing and guiding the cause of “reforming the world” of the working people, in which the pioneering mission belongs to the working class. They were also the first persons to put the issues of democracy and democratic practice into theory of party building, as well as into the organization practice of the revolutionary political party of the working class as the most basic, most important content. According to Marx, the Party's highest goal is to lead the working class and labouring people to win democracy, to rapidly develop productive forces to build a new society in place of the capitalist society.

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The democratic character of the Communist Parties and International Workers, as pointed out by Marx, is first expressed in the pioneering role of each party member in the Party's works and organization. The party is the most advanced part, including the most outstanding people. Therefore, Party members must be revolutionary, active, clever and resolute; the honest, the most dedicated and the clearest people; in particular, they must be the exemplary pioneers in any situation ... They are not only active participants in the movement of struggle, as Marx has affirmed, but also always stand in the front positions of the radical revolutionary proletariats. The political enlightenment, the spirit of high self-awareness and willingness to sacrifice for the common interest of the party members not only create a strong mental motivation that forces them to act to free people and build the new society but also contributes significantly to the strength of the whole party as a revolutionary political force of the working class. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx asserted that, communist party members volunteered "to fight for the immediate goals and interests of the working class, but at the same time in the current movement They also protect and represent the future of the movement"¹.

In Marx's thinking, the democratic nature of the Communist Party is expressed very clear in the party's organization. The Communist Party is the pioneer team of the working class and working people. The goal of the Party is to fight for democracy and realize democracy. Therefore, in terms of structure, the Communist Party must be built on scientific, democratic and unified principles. Within it, for party members, as Marx asserted, all "are equal, they are brothers and in all cases, are obliged to help each other as brothers"². In other words, every member of the Communist Party has the same rights, obligations and responsibilities, without distinction. In the party

¹K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, Vol.4, National Politics Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1995, p.644

² K.Marx and F.Engels, *ibid*, Vol.4, p.733

activities, following the rules of the Party, all members are equal. The organizational system of the Party is multi-layered, in which the Party cell is the grassroots level and the Central Executive Committee is the highest level. The Party's activities are carried out on the principle of democratic centralism to ensure broad democracy and a uniform focus on avoiding extremist tendencies: either over-democratic or disorganized; or overly autocratic. In fact, to Marx, the idea of implementing the principle of democratic centralism in the Party has not been commented on. Only to V.I.Lenin, this idea was justly discussed by him in a profound and comprehensive way.

The exercise of intra-party democracy is, in essence, the exercise of the mastery of all party members in the participation and decision-making of Party works, from formulation and planning policy to candidate election for the Party leading bodies. Looking back on the history of the formation and development of the Communist International I, in term of both theoretical and practical aspects of party building, with Engels, Marx always emphasized the unity of the Communist Party in terms of ideology and organization; resolutely fought against all kinds of opportunists and revisionists, critically criticized those who did not respect and strictly abide by the party discipline.

To sum up, even though Marx's ideals of democracy and democratic practice in social life, within the Party was launched in the mid-nineteenth century, they still remain their values, continue to serve as a guiding principle for the party-building of Communist Parties and workers in the world today, including the Communist Party of Vietnam.

2. The Communist Party of Vietnam, as President Ho Chi Minh affirmed, is the Party of the working class and the Party of the nation of Vietnam. The Party has no other interests, excepts from serving the class, serving the people and serving the nation. Since its inception, especially since becoming a leading party, in order to fulfill its responsibilities to the people, to history, the Communist Party of Vietnam always pays great attention in its

structure, regularly renews, refines itself, improves the leadership capacity and strengthens its fighting power through the synchronous implementation of a number of measures and ways in which *the practice of intra-party democracy* is particularly important. Thanks to giving the importance to democratic practice, the Party has always been a well-organized, strictly disciplined unit of unity and action. At the same time, the Party's leadership and ruling power has been increasingly enhanced, meeting the demands of the Vietnamese revolution in the new period.

President Ho Chi Minh has affirmed, democracy is an important driving force for the solidarity, progress and continuous development of the Communist Party of Vietnam. He stressed, for right and effective leadership, “everything is discussed in a democratic and collective manner”¹; “Leaders must be democratic, practical, concrete and comprehensive”². At the same time, in party activities, as well as in the work of building guidelines and policies of the Party, all party members must actively and deliberately participate in discussions and comments, when the Party's resolutions are approved, all party members must grasp thoroughly and implement.

In essence, practicing intra-party democracy is to promote the mastership right of all Party members, the active participation and self-awareness of party members in all Party works. The important role of the practice of intra-party democracy is centered on three basic points:

Firstly, the practice of intra-party democracy helps the Party become a closely-organized, transparent and whole-hearted political force serving the interests of the nation and the people. Cadres, as Ho Chi Minh asserted, is the root of the work, all successes are due to good or bad cadres. The practice of intra-party democracy has firstly helped the Party gather the good persons into its structure, continue to educate, train and foster party members - that is,

¹ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Works*, Vol.12, National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 2011, p.438

² Ho Chi Minh, *ibid*, Vol.13, p.84

to create the inner strength of the party itself from its very organization. It can be said that self-criticism and criticism are the important principles, demonstrating the democratic nature of party activities and actively contributing to Party building, making the Party increasingly transparent and strong; thereby strengthening the leadership capacity and fighting power of the Party. Through self-criticism and criticism, every cadre and party member can recognize the advantages that need to be developed and the shortcomings that need to be overcome and repaired to improve and to accomplish their tasks.

Moreover, in addition to the leadership by policies and guidelines, the Party also implements its leadership on the State and society through the cadre's policy to build and develop a contingent of cadres in all fields of politics, economics, culture, society, security and defense ... of the country. Thanks to democracy, openness and transparency in policy and cadre work, the Party has selected and recommended those who are genuinely competent for positions; avoided personal shortcomings and mistakes in human resources that can cause unfortunate or unwanted consequences.

Secondly, practicing intra-party democracy and, more broadly, exercising democracy in society, help the Party to gather and promote the wisdom and initiative of the cadres, party members and the masses. In Viet Nam political system, the Communist Party of Vietnam holds the leading role. Together with implementing the cadre's policy, the leadership of the Party towards the State and society is also carried out through the guidelines and policies of the Party. The scientific characters, practicality and feasibility of the Party's guidelines and policies many issues of social life are formed on the basis of the interests of the people, of the nation, and at the same time derived from intellectual contributions through the diverse discussions of cadres, party members and the people. Listening, synthesizing, filtering, and absorbing collective opinions from the party members will help the party, the

leader prevent mistakes, and the objectiveness in decision planning and making. .

Accordingly, in order to ensure all policies and guidelines of the Party are always correct, appropriate and reflect the interests of the people, as well as the development of the country, while effectively preventing the risks pointed out by Ho Chi Minh before, it is extremely necessary for the Party to gather and promote the wisdom of the entire Party, the whole people. That is only possible by practicing democracy widely, not only intra-party democracy, but democracy in society. It is also a profound meaning in Ho Chi Minh's famous arguments that, democracy is the key to solving all problems; that within the Party must practice democracy widely ..

Thirdly, exercising intra-party democracy is not only a premise, a key point but also an example of democracy in society. A very important new point in the Party's perception of the exercise of democracy is that it considers the practice of intra-party democracy as a precondition for the practice of democracy in society. The Party is the political force leading the State and society through guidelines, resolutions and cadre policies. On the other hand, the Party has been trying to build socialist democracy, to define democracy as both a goal and a driving force of social development. Accordingly, it is inevitable that having intra-party democracy will be followed by democracy in society. At the 12th National Congress, the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed: “In order to exercise democracy in society, first of all, the promotion of intra-party democracy as the nucleus to promote democracy in society must be grasped.”¹ It can be said that the prerequisite for building a socialist democracy is to set an example pioneered by the Party on democratic practice and to lead well the process of reforming the State. “Intra-party

¹ The Communist Party of Viet Nam, *Documents of the 12th National Congress* , National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 2011, p.170

democracy determines democracy in the activities organization of the State, in association with democracy in society.”¹

In the current context, especially in the context of the sole party in power, the implementation and promotion of intra-party democracy becomes a vital requirement, an important and urgent task in the work of Party building. Since this is an important way to promote organizational consolidation and consolidation, to foster the intellectual strength and initiative of all Party members, thus contributing to raising the leadership capacity of the Communist Party of Vietnam to better meet the demands of the revolutionary cause. This has been deeply grasped by the Communist Party of Vietnam and its efforts and determination.

Profoundly aware of the role of democratic practice within the Party, during the course of leading Vietnam’s revolution, especially since stepping into the comprehensive reform of the country, the Communist Party of Vietnam promulgated and implemented many resolutions and directives on the building and reorganization of the Party, including the practice of intra-party democracy and democracy in society. In the *report summarizing a number of theoretical and practical issues over the past 30 years of renovation (1986-2016)*, it pointed out that, our Party has become increasingly aware of the importance and role of construction and development of socialist democracy, affirmed that democracy is the essence of the regime, the goal and the driving force of the cause of renovation. The Party has continued to promote the reform of structure and operation modes of the political system; to renovate and reorganize the Party, renovate the Party's leading mode towards the State and the society; to carry out the election with the balance, to issue the Regulation of Inquiry within the Party;

¹ Phung Huu Phu, Le Huu Nghia, Vu Van Hien, Nguyen Viet Thong (co-editors), *Some theoretical and practical issues of socialism and the path to socialism during 30 year of Doi Moi*, National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 2016, p.133

step by step to regulate the activities of leading bodies at all levels ... Thus, democracy and democratic practice within the Party has been increasingly more real and better. Democratic activities within the Party has taken a new leap, manifested by the widening and active participation of Party cells and party members in the work of the Party, such as the construction and implementation of the Party's guidelines and policies.

The attempts to exercise intra-party democracy in recent years creating new qualities in the organization and activities of the Party, was emphasized by the Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong at the national conference to evaluate the results of the implementation of Resolution No. 120 of the 12th tenure Politburo *on further promoting and raising the quality and efficiency of the building and implementation of the grassroots democracy regulations*, held on July 16. It is the perception of democracy and democratic practice that is increasingly raised, *the atmosphere of democracy in the Party and society is expanded*. General Secretary said, the work of building and adjusting the Party was promoted, anti-corruption was directed drastically and achieved good results welcomed and highly appreciated by the people and international organizations. It can be said, the importance and good implementation of intra-party democracy has helped the Party become a more and more well-organized, united political force in awareness and practical action, has a stable and strong political will and at the same time, it stimulates and promotes the intellectual potential, creativeness and enthusiasm of all cadres and party members, thereby raising the leadership capacity of the Party.

The Central Committee of the Party, the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee have taken close and decisive directions in exercising the Party's democracy. Some Party members, cadres, including high-ranking cadres, have been punished for serious violations of the principles of democratic centralism, working regulations and Party's

regulations on cadres ... Those affect the prestige of the Party. The determination and strictness in dealing with such violations is considered as a breakthrough in the examination and discipline of the Party, tightening discipline within the Party and the state apparatus. This not only contributes to the purity and consolidation of the Party in terms of organization, but also importantly contributes to the creation and consolidation of the people's belief in the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

However, it should be noted that the perception of a number of cadres, party members and people on democracy is limited. The principle of democratic centralism is sometimes misunderstood. The implementation of democracy is not serious, causing low results. Over the last 30 years of the Doi Moi (Renovation), the fact shows that, when democracy has been implemented well, intellectual strength of the people and the cadres has been promoted, the good results of renovation can be achieved. On the contrary, when there is a situation of violation or loss of democracy, of solidarity, or even the occurrence of dissatisfaction among cadres and the people, the difficulties and the unpredictable results can be inevitable.

On this issue, the Communist Party of Vietnam has pointed out, “the practice of democracy coupled with maintaining discipline is still inadequate. In fact, the situation is “both lack of democracy and discipline”. In society there are many manifestations of loss of democracy, or extreme democracy. Implementing laws, disciplines is not strict, the practice of democracy sometimes is even formal.. In the Party, the violation of implementing of the regime of collective leadership and individuals in charge also occurs in some places. The regulations on powers and responsibilities of the head and party organizations, government are unclear, not strictly implemented. There is a lack of sanctions to enforce democracy, uphold discipline”¹.

¹ The Communist Party of Viet Nam, *The Documents of the 12th National Congress* , National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 2011, p.151

Referring to the limitations and shortcomings in the implementation of the Party's Charter, *the Documents of the 12th National Party Congress* clearly stated: "In some party organizations, there are still some commissioners who are not fully aware of the importance of democratic centralism, do not respect and follow working regulations strictly. Formal democracy with one-way uniformity, lack of thorough debate, discussion or misunderstanding, leads to lack of solidarity in some places. The principle of collective leadership, individuals in charge in many places is still formal because of unclear definition of the mechanism of responsibility, of the relationship between collectives and individuals. Therefore, when there are errors or defects, no one will take responsibility. Thus, the phenomenon of relying on the collective, unknown personal responsibility hasn't encouraged the head's enthusiasm, dare to think, dare to do; created a loophole for the negligent, irresponsible, stagnant way of doing things, taken advantage of the collective mechanism to exercise personal motives, or subconsciously to abuse power to pursue personal interests such as resolutions of the Fourth Plenary of the 11th National Congress has shown"¹.

At the 12th National Party Congress, the 11th Central Committee pointed out the shortcomings of the Party building process, such as the limitations of forecasting, planning and leading the implementation of the Party's and State's policies. Quality and efficiency of ideological and theoretical works are not high. The implementation of resolutions, directives on training moral qualities, lifestyles; raising the qualification of cadres, party members in some places are not high and serious. The role of leading, directing, managing and implementing the fight against corruption and wastefulness have not yet performed well at a number of party committees and administrations at all levels. The power of the political system has not been promoted.

¹ The Communist Party of Viet Nam, *ibid*, p.335-336

“The limitations and shortcomings mentioned above make the Party not really transparent and strong, weaken the confidence of cadres, party members and people to the Party, the State and the regime”¹. At the same time, the Party has also clearly and precisely identified the underlying causes of such limitations and weaknesses, including “not really promoting democracy within the Party, promoting the role of monitoring, participation of the people in Party building”².

To continue the exercise of intra-party democracy in order to build a transparent and strong party and to improve the Party's leadership capacity in the context of a single party in power, it's necessary to follow these points:

Firstly, ensure the principle of democratic centralism.

To carry out intra-party democracy, thereby building a transparent and strong party and strengthening the leadership and ruling power of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the first and foremost basic requirement is to properly aware of and seriously implement *the principle of democratic centralism*. Democracy and centralism are two aspects, the two components of this principle: Democracy is the condition, the premise of centralism; At the same time, centralism is the basis, is the fundamental actor to ensure that, democracy is implemented. Intra-party democracy requires the party characteristic, the leadership, and must be attached to Party discipline. Along with that, it is necessary to study and formulate the democratic regulations within the Party, to perfect the mechanism of inspection, supervision and specific regulations on the exercise of democracy within the Party.

With the principle of democratic centralism, all party members and cells have the right and responsibility to discuss and decide on all Party works. Accordingly, the party cells and their heads should facilitate and encourage the party members to actively debate, discuss issues, even raise

¹ The Communist Party of Viet Nam, *ibid*, p.197

² The Communist Party of Viet Nam, *ibid*, p.198

their own opinions and reserve their opinions. Party committees and leaders at all levels must respect, listen to the opinions of cadres, party members, filter reasonable factors. After discussing all things in a democratic and collective way, the resolutions approved by the Party have to be strictly abided.

On the one hand, it encourages all party members and all party organizations to promote democracy, practice of intra-party democracy, and to propose good and valuable ideas. *On the other hand*, it gathers the new wisdom, initiative or experience from the various and direct work of party members as well as party organizations, then contributes to improvement of the leadership capacity, the power of the Party. Democracy and centralism have a dialectical relationship: Democracy is the basis of centralism and centralism can only be effectively implemented on the basis of promoting democracy within the Party. Going away from this principle - either emphasizing on centralism or absolutism of democracy - would be unreasonable.

Carrying self-criticism and criticism in a self-conscious, serious way with the exercise of intra-party democracy is an important part of democratic practice within the Party. Self-criticism and criticism here, as President Ho Chi Minh once said, is not for fighting each other, but rather for supporting with the constructive spirit of solidarity, kindness and help.

Secondly, the implementation of intra-party democracy *must be closely linked to the strengthening of legislation, maintaining discipline and promoting ethics, and the responsibility of party members.*

Democracy is a value. However, respect for democratic rights does not mean disorganization, arbitrariness. On the contrary, democracy must be linked to discipline and responsibility based on the law. For members of the Party, their responsibility, including the duty to abide laws, must be higher than that of the people. It is not only the responsibility of a citizen, but also the responsibility of a party member. The party leads the preparation and

enactment of constitution and the law, while respecting and operating its activities within the framework of the Constitution and the law. To make democracy truly meaningful for development, the exercise of intra-party democracy should be tied to strengthening the rule of law, maintaining discipline. The party becomes a strong and unified-will political organization because the Party has a clear purpose and strict discipline. Each party member actively promotes democracy and is responsible for compliance with the law.

In addition, every cadre and party member should voluntarily learn and cultivate revolutionary virtues, especially learn and follow the moral example of Ho Chi Minh. At the same time, it is necessary to uphold the sense of responsibility of party members in the Party's activities, in the formulation and implementation of the Party's resolutions. In short, the practice of democracy and the promotion of democracy must go hand in hand with the strengthening of the legislation, maintaining the discipline, promoting morality and social responsibility of the Party members and citizens; fighting against extreme democracy, formal democratic manifestations, combating the use of democracy to provoke internal divisions and disunity. This makes the practice of democracy concrete, substantive and clear.

Thirdly, to speed up the work of building and reorganizing the Party and constantly improving the quality of party members.

Building and reorganizing the Party regularly and seriously is a positive measure to keep the Party truly transparent and strong in terms of politics, ideology and structure, in order to meet the demands of increasingly revolutionary leadership in the new context. For the effective building and reorganization of the Party, it is necessary to base on the exercise of democracy in the Party. At the same time, building a transparent and strong Party creates favorable conditions for the exercise and promotion of democracy within the Party. The Party building and reorganizing must adhere to the principles of Party organization and activities, such as the principle of

democratic centralism, principles of self-criticism and criticism, principles of solidarity and unity...

Along with strengthening the Party building and reorganization, it is necessary to regularly improve the quality of party members. Party members who are involved in building guidelines and policies of the Party at all levels, directly mobilize, organize and guide the masses and social organizations in implementing the Party's guidelines and policies; is a pioneer and responsible for setting the example for the masses. The quality of party members is reflected on professional level, political theoretical level, working capacity, in the example of pioneering.

When each member of the Party is strong in all aspects of morality, intellect, political spirit, scientific beliefs, revolutionary ideals ..., the Party cell is strong. Then the Party is becoming a strong political organization that is capable of leading the State and society. Thus, improving the quality of party members is not only a basic content of the Party building and reorganization, but also the important condition, the basic requirement for the effective practice of intra-party democracy. Accordingly, *on the one hand*, the management, education and fostering of Party members should be respected and strengthened. *On the other hand*, encouragement, self-discipline, self-training and studying of cadres and party members should be encouraged.

Fourthly, to strengthen inspection, supervision and resolutely fight against bureaucracy and corruption.

Democracy is the right of every party cells and party members, which is attached to the responsibilities and obligations of each party cells and party members. Democracy is also linked to discipline. Therefore, in order to ensure the exercise of intra-party democracy, the supervision and inspection work should be strengthened and respected in order to detect and handle violations in the exercise of democracy, bureaucratic or authoritarian

manifestations or phenomena of abuse of democracy to create instability or impact negatively internal unity ...

During his lifetime, President Ho Chi Minh warned of possible diseases and the risks for a party in power such as bureaucracy, corruption. The Communist Party of Vietnam, through its congresses, has also seriously pointed to the pressing issues among the social opinion, such as deterioration of political ideology, morality, lifestyle, corruption, group interests ... in a section of cadres, party members. The situation is like a boil which, if is not effectively prevented, will cause serious harms. They are really obstacles preventing the exercise of intra-party democracy, and thus obstructing the development of the Party. In the fight against bureaucracy, corruption, group interests ..., party committees, party cells and party members must be pioneers. Well carrying on this struggle will have a positive effect, contributing to the realization and promotion of democracy in society and at the same time to make the social relations healthy. This is one of the most important political tasks in the Party building process.

In the current context, building a transparent, strong Party and strengthening the Party's leadership is a key task. It can be affirmed that the exercise of intra-party democracy is one of the basic methods for building a transparent and strong party and raising its leading and ruling capacity. It is the key for the Vietnamese Communist Party to understand profoundly and resolve properly all the problems and issues of the Vietnamese revolution, to overcome difficulties and challenges and lead the revolutionary cause of our country to victory.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY IN VIETNAM TODAY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

Tran Van Phong^(*)

Bui Phuong Thuy^(**)

Democracy is a universal value, the aspiration and the goal of humanity. A society that wants democracy has to have social justice. Social justice is the principle and essential requirement in establishing a relationship between dedication and enjoyment, rights and responsibilities, etc... of citizens, organizations and the state. Only when living in a just society, a human being has the opportunity to express himself and can freely express ideas, be freely creative, freely participate in discussions, decides common issues of the collective and can guarantee the rights and obligations of each individual, collective, community and society. Since then, the Communist Party of Vietnam has determined that the goal of: *Rich people, strong, democratic, just and civilized country* is one of the eight characteristics of socialism that our people are building. For more than 30 years of innovation, the implementation of social justice and democracy in Vietnam has many achievements and difficulties. In this paper, we focus on the achievements and difficulties in implementing social justice with democracy in Vietnam in the renovation period.

1. Some theoretical issues of social justice and democracy

The concept of social justice:

There are many different approaches to social justice. In the most general sense, social justice is a value that establishes the relationship between people in all aspects of social life (economics, politics, culture, society, etc.) in accordance with the principle of proportionality between

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rights and obligations, between enjoyment and devotion, between capacity and quality with opportunities and conditions of development.

As a social value, social justice is a human, national and historical category associated with the birth, existence and development of human society. The history of human society's development, at a certain point in time, is the history of struggle for social justice aimed at the ultimate goal of human liberation, development and improvement of the human personality. Social justice is reflected in economic, political, cultural, social...fields. In that, there are two main aspects: Distributive justice and fairness in terms of opportunities and conditions of development.

In fact, the distinction between equality of opportunities, conditions of development and distributive justice is only relative.

The concept of democracy:

“Democracy” in ancient Greek is Demokritos (in which “demos” is the people and “kratos” is the power), that means, the power belongs to the people or the power of the people. Today, democracy in the modern sense is widely understood and abundant. In general, democracy is a social value (human value) that reflects the subject of power as the people, affirming the basic human rights; is a form of state organization of the ruling class into a social and political system in which fundamental human rights (liberty, equality, respect for unity in diversity,...) are recognized and procted by the law, and at the same time these rights are institutionalized in the principles (the power belongs to the people, everyone is equal before the law, the minority obeys the majority, the liberty of thought, the will action, freedom and justice in election,...) to determine the rights and responsibilities of the people towards the state, the community and vice versa¹.

¹ See: Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy (2017), *Advanced curriculum on political theory, The first knowledge block: Marxism – Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's thoughts, Volume 3: Scientific Socialism*, The Publishing House of Political Theory, Hanoi, p.143 - 144.

It can be seen that democracy is not only a political category but also a social category, not just a historical category, but also a “permanent” category. Democracy shows in all aspects of social life, including economic, political, cultural and social. Democracy is associated with laws, discipline, rules in the operation of the apparatus, in the organization, in morality and lifestyle, in the relationship between people, between the state and the citizen. The core of democracy is to assert the power of the people (the right to participate, the right to voice and the right to make decisions) which resolves the relationship between rights and interests, rights and obligations, interests and responsibilities.

Justice and democracy are defined by our Party as interdependent objectives which complement each other, motivate each other and for socio-economic development: “The whole organization and operation of our country’s political system in the new period is to build and step by step improve the socialist democracy and ensure the power belongs to the people. Democracy associated with social justice must be practiced in the realities of life in all political, economic, cultural and social fields through the activities of the State appointed by the people and by the direct democracy”¹. Justice and democracy are long-term goals, sustainable values, and are gradually being realized in the process of innovation for socialist purposes. In doing so, implementation of social justice plays the role of premise and condition of democracy, and is the expression of democracy. It shows the extent of democracy. There will be no democracy if a society is not fair because democracy can only be formed in an equal environment. For that reason, building a socialist democracy is building a just and progressive society. At the same time, it is impossible to assess the extent of democracy without being base on the expression of social justice. This is also why when

¹ Source: <http://dangcongsan.vn/tu-lieu-van-kien/van-kien-dang/van-kien-dai-hoi/khoa-vii/doc41012201511375546.html>

considering democracy, people often refer to the category of social justice. For more than 30 years of Doi Moi, our democracy has made fundamental progress, and one of its causes is that we have achieved certain achievements in implementing social justice.

2. Achievements in the implementation of social justice with democracy in our country today

In the economic field:

Firstly, the implementation of social justice has gradually contributed to the establishment of ownership of laborers for means of production and to economic development of the country. Before the renovation, in our country, there are only two forms which are ownership by the whole people and collective ownership. The distribution of means of productions is focused on the two sectors: the state economy and collective economy. The state is the only entity that has the right to distribute production materials under centralized planning. In the meantime, there is no sanctioning of material liability for the funded units. This has led to the dereliction of the means of production in cooperatives. This situation is similar for state-owned enterprises. This has resulted in the ineffective use of capital goods, many resources have not been exploited, many potential failures: “Firms in general use only about half of the capacity on the plan”, “the land resources have not been well exploited and are wasted, especially agricultural land and forest resource”¹.

In the renovation period, with the diversification of forms of ownership, among them, the regime of public ownership of means of production plays the leading role. The main means of production of the society such as resources, land, capital, assets,... belong to the whole people and are owned representative by the State. However, in orderr for people to

¹Communist Party of Vietnam, *Documents of the 6th National Congress*, Truth Publishing House, Hanoi, 1987, p.17.

maximize their mastery with the means of production, this requires the State to regulate the distribution of means of production in a fair and reasonable manner. Accordingly, the main production materials of the society managed by the State are allocated to all economic entities in society based on the efficiency of using them according to the market mechanism. “Land, resources, capital and assets assigned by the State to the subjects of all economic sectors will be used on the principle of efficiency. Subjects have the same rights and obligations in effectively using the resources of the State”¹, and at the same time, “mobilizing, allocating and effectively utilizing market development resources according to the market mechanism”². The effect here is understood to be economic and social efficiency.

The principle of distribution based on socio-economic efficiency is just because it ensures the correspondence between dedication and enjoyment. In line with the principle of proportionality between devotion and enjoyment, in some cases, the equitable implementation of the distribution of productive materials must take into account other distribution principles. It is because the subjects have different starting points, then it is necessary to have support on mechanisms, policies and capital sources for economic subjects with more disadvantageous starting point. Here, the State must properly coordinate resources so that less-favored areas can have better development opportunities, overcome and prevent the risk of lagging behind and ensure that all areas enjoy the opportunities as well as the result of the general development. With that spirit, the Documents of the 12th Party’s National Congress affirmed that “Promoting the potentials and strengths of each sesame, and at the same time, to prioritize the development of dynamic economic regions; to adopt policies to support the development of areas

¹Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 11th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011, p.207.

²Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2016, p.86.

which still have many difficulties, especially remote and inaccessible areas, ethnic minority, mountainous and island areas”¹.

The distributive justice of productive materials, *on the one hand*, ensures that every means of production is owned by the owner; *on the other hand*, it forces the subjects who are distributed production materials must think, calculate and actively create in order to use production materials with the highest efficiency. When being used effectively, production materials will improve productivity and labor quality, contribute to the country's economic development and improve the income of laborers.

Secondly, The Party and the State always ensure and create favorable conditions for the equal rights of all subjects to access means of production and conditions of production and business, and to ensure freedom of business.

In order to create conditions for business entities to make good use of their capabilities, in the period of renovation, our Party always affirms: “To ensure that all citizens have the right to freely invest and do business in the fields, occupations and areas not prohibited by law, the inviolable right for legal property ownership, the equal rights in investment, doing business and accessing to opportunities and resources for development as well as in providing and receiving information”².

The enactment of *the Enterprise Laws* of 1999, 2005 and 2014 contributes to creating a level playing field for all economic sectors. The people and economic sectors are equal before the law, are free to produce and do what the law does not prohibit, are encouraged to get rich and be protected,..., promote the ownership right of economic subjects. As a result, the productivity of the society has developed strongly, helping the country out of the socio-economic crisis to

¹Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Congress*, Central Party Office, Hanoi, 2016, p.24-25.

²Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 10th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2006, p.230.

become a middle-income country and improving the living standards of the people.

Thirdly, implementing distributive justice has guaranteed material benefits to workers and ensured the ownership of the people in the distribution sector.

From an economic point of view, labor, employment and the distribution of benefits corresponding to the results of labor are the economic contents of democracy in which democracy is expressed broadly and directly.

At present, we “implement the distribution regime mainly based on results of labor, economic efficiency, and at the same time, contribution of capital along with other resources and distribute through the social security system and social welfare”¹. Accordingly, in our country, there are three basic forms of distribution: *Firstly*, distribution based on labor output, economic efficiency (which is the main form of distribution); *secondly*, distribution by contribution of capital and other resources; *thirdly*, distribution through the social security system and social welfare. This is the principle of distribution to ensure social justice in the current socialist-oriented market economy in our country. In particular, in the 12th National Congress, the Party stressed the importance of resolving the problems of labor, employment and income for laborers, ensuring social security, in which “creating opportunities for people to get jobs and improve their income. Ensuring wages, fair incomes, adequate conditions for living and reproducing labor”... “Building and perfecting the system of policies on salaries, wages, overcoming the basic unreasonable”².

In the context of our country's transition to a socialist-oriented market economy, the implementation of social justice is extremely important because it ensures that every genuine laborer possesses the minimum means of production

¹Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 11th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011, p.205.

²Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2016, p.136.

and manages it. It is a way to encourage, stimulate, promote the ownership and economic mastery of the subjects, contribute to promoting production, develop economy and improve the lives of people. The implementation of social justice in the economy also contributes significantly to the stabilization of society in that it creates a harmony interests between economic entities and social groups, thus economic subjects have built their trust in the State and the social system. Social stability is the basis and the condition to promote democracy.

In the field of politics:

Implementing social justice has created equal conditions and opportunities for the people to participate in the political life of the country, exercising their mastery right. The method of measuring the level of democracy is the equality of people participating in the organization and management of the state as well as the level and ability to attract people to participate in state management.

The implementation of social justice ensures citizens' rights of liberty, democracy and all citizens are equal before the law. *The Constitution* of 1992 and later *the Constitution* of 2013 stipulates that the responsibility of the State is to “guarantee and unceasingly promote the people's mastery; recognizing, respecting, protecting and ensuring human rights and citizenship” (Article 3, Constitution 2013). The obligation of the State is to create conditions for citizens to participate in managing state and society, publicity and transparency in receiving and responding to citizens' opinions and suggestions (Article 28, Constitution 2013).

Along with ensuring that all citizens are equal before the law, the State must create conditions for all citizens to participate in the affairs of the state in accordance with the constitution and the law; to inspect and supervise the activities of public authorities and civil servants in accordance with the regulations. Until now, most of the laws and codes before being approved, they are widely discussed and consulted by all classes of people. The election

law of Vietnam stipulates that are conducted according to the principle of ensuring universal, equal, direct and secret ballot. Our state always creates conditions to ensure that all citizens have equal opportunities to participate in the election and prohibits any form of discrimination. The number of voters participating in the elections is always high. In the election of deputies to the 14th National Assembly and deputies to the People's Council at all levels for the 2016-2021 term, the total number of voters who cast their votes was 99,35%¹.

In Vietnam, with the rapid development of the mass media, the liberty of speech, the liberity of the press, the liberty of information of the people are increasingly guaranteed. The press agencies of our country have promoted the role of being the mouthpiece of Party and State. Socio-political organizations are really places for the people to express the spirit of liberty, democracy, raising their opinions and aspirations as well as information with the Party and State agencies on the pressing issues of life, fighting against negative phenomena, corruption, social evils,..., forming public opinion affecting the operation of society and making our society better.

With the results achieved in the implementation of social justice, the mastery of the people is really expanded and enhanced. People are involved in the common work of the community, raised their voices and offered the aspirations to ensure their interests. The resolved problems of people's rights have created an opening and straightforward atmosphere with a high consensus. This contributes to enhancing people's confidence in the Party and the State and stabilizing the society.

In cultural and social field:

Firstly, on education.

¹ Brief report: Summing up the election of deputies to the 14th National Assembly and deputies to the People's Councils at all levels for the term of 2016-2021.

Article 10, *the Law on Education* 2015 of Vietnam regulates the rights and obligations of citizens to study: Learning is the right and duty of the citizen.

All citizens regardless of race, religion, creed, gender, family background, social status and economic situation are equal in learning opportunities.

The State exercises social justice in education and creates conditions for everyone to study and help the poor to learn as well as creating conditions for talented people to develop their capacities.

The State will give priority to, and create conditions for children of ethnic minorities, children of families in areas with particularly difficult socio-economic conditions, beneficiaries of preferential policies, disabled people and beneficiaries of other social policies to exercise their rights and obligations to study¹.

With the above content, it can be seen that justice in education is the premise and also the content of democracy in education.

In order to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity in education, in the renovation period, the Party and State have issued many relevant policies and guidelines, such as *the Law on Universal Primary Education* was passed by the National Assembly in 1991; Government Decree No.88/2001/ND-CP “*On the universalization of basic secondary education*” issued on November 22, 2001; Decision No.239/QD-TTg dated February 09, 2010 of the Prime Minister approving *the Scheme on universalizing education for five years old children in 2010-2015 period...* As a result, the scale and form of education and training has been constantly expanded, creating conditions for all people to have the opportunity to study and improve their skills. We have built up a unified and complete national education system which includes all grades and

¹ See: Consolidated Letter 07/VBHN-VPQH 2015 by the Office of the National Assembly to unify the Law on Education.

levels of education and training with different types of schools and classes, step by step integrating with the general trend of the world. The opportunity to go to school has been extended to all objects and creates the minimum educational level for the country.

On the basis of creating equal opportunities for learning, the Party and the State always pay attention to creating different opportunities which are suitable for all people to study and promote their abilities and strengths. The educational model has been constantly expanded such as full-time education, part-time education, distance learning, center for continuing education, community learning center, thus people are given more opportunities to study. At the same time, the State has strongly implemented the socialization of education, encourages and creates favorable conditions for the development of non-public schools with diversified forms on the basis of the State's regulations to meet the needs of learning of all classes which are more and more diverse.

Along with that, the State will increase investment in remote, disadvantaged, difficult areas, exempt contributions to ethnic minority students and implement the election policy in education. As a result, access to education for minority students has been increasing. The State is also interested in creating conditions for students who are beneficiaries of the policy and for talented people to have the opportunities to learn and develop. With the above contents, our process of implementing social justice in education is also a step towards democracy in this field.

Secondly, on health care.

Implementing social justice in the health sector in our country in the last time has ensured that all citizens have the right to health care, access to and use of health care services as well as the resources of the society which invest in the health sector.

The consistent view of the Party and the State of Vietnam is to do everything, from the smallest things to take care of human health, to give people the opportunity to develop comprehensively; to provide health care for all people and to ensure social justice in health. “Reforming and improving the health system towards equity, efficiency and development, creating opportunities for all people to be protected, be cared and improved health. Developing a national strategy for improving the health and stature of the Vietnamese people”¹. Viet Nam has built up a comprehensive health service delivery system with a wide network of grassroots health care services, which makes it easy for people to access and exercise their right to health care. Health insurance is playing an active role in increasing people's access to health services. This is seen as a tool to create equality in health care for the people. Expanded coverage of health insurance increases opportunities of the people to access health services. The coverage of health insurance in Vietnam has increased steadily over the years, in 2006 nearly 44.4%; in 2010 it was 60.3%; in 2014, it was 70.8% (Data for years from the Department of Health Insurance, Ministry of Health), including a significant participation rates of the poor, beneficiary of social welfare and disabled people. Currently, 100% of the poor and ethnic minority people are fully funded by the State to buy health insurance. For near-poor households, the government has a number of supportive policies for their participation in health insurance. As a result, the right to protection and health care of people is increasingly guaranteed and realized.

Thirdly, on culture and information.

In order to ensure the people's mastery in the field of culture and information, the Party and State have made great efforts in formulating laws and policies along with the direction of ensuring social justice to create

¹Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 10th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2006, p.33.

opportunities and conditions for all classes of people to access and enjoy cultural values.

Over the years, information and mass media have rapidly developed in terms of quantity, scale and quality, and have contributed to expanding access to information in all parts of the country. As a result, the disparities in opportunities and conditions for cultural enjoyment among regions have been shortened. Opportunities for people's choices and access to information have been expanded. This contributes to improving knowledge, political consciousness, the law and makes the human soul also richer.

In recent years, the Party and State have paid much attention to cultural development for people in mountainous, remote and inaccessible, border and island areas,... The cultural life of the local people has improved markedly.

In the field of composition, artistic and cultural talents are encouraged to develop. A number of policies have been created that allow people to participate autonomously in the process of creating and enjoying cultural values, contributing their strength and wisdom to cultural development. The freedom right to be creative in the arts and culture of artists and people of all ethnic groups is respected, etc. The achievements in implementing social justice in our country in the period of renovation have stimulated positive and active in each person, bringing development opportunities to the masses of the people and creating the best possible conditions for the Vietnamese people to promote their mastery and democratic rights.

3. Some limitations in the implementation of social justice with democracy in Vietnam today

Firstly, inequality in access to means of production still exists. There is discrimination among economic sectors: "The business environment does not really guarantee fair and workable competition among enterprises of all

economic sectors”¹. Thus, the freedom of doing business has not been fully respected and the economic potentials have not been adequately promoted. This will destroy the dynamics of socio-economic development.

In fact, the private sector is very efficient, and brings a lot of benefits to the country. However, this is also discriminated area and faces many barriers. In the field of land, although investment policies affirm equality for economic sectors and economic actors in access to land, but in practice, state-owned enterprises (SOEs) still receive more priority than private enterprises. Access to financial capital is similar. In addition, SOEs have soft budget constraints – The State supports SOEs when SOEs face financial difficulties. Despite such incentives, the efficiency and contribution of the SOE sector, including the foreign-invested sector, to the economy is limited and is on the downward momentum (see the below table).

Capital for development of the whole society and contributions of 3 economic sectors

Unit: %

	State economy		Non-state economy		Foreign invested sector	
	Use resources	Contribute GDP	Use resources	Contribute GDP	Use resources	Contribute GDP
2005	47,1	37,62	38,0	47,22	14,9	15,16
2010	38,1	29,34	36,1	42,96	25,8	15,15
2014	39,9	28,73	38,4	43,33	21,7	17,89

Source: General Statistics Office 2005, 2010, 2014

Another limitation is that we have not combined the distribution with economic efficiency and social efficiency. People in many places have

¹Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 6th Plenum of the 9th Central Committee*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2002, p.73.

relocated to cropland land for big projects, but they still have not received or delayed in enjoying the results of that projects. In addition, the people lived there are also exposed to environmental pollution in industrial areas and this annoys them. Therefore, there are many paradoxes, for examples, the people in the hydroelectric area do not have access to electricity, the people live in area of lakes and rivers lack access to clean water, the people in the delta are still lack of food, farmers lose their productive land and do not receive any vocational training so they are stuck in their quest for a livelihood, the planning was finished but then left empty, meanwhile farmers do not have fields to produce, workers and farmers in many places has to become employees in other occupations. If we do not deal well with these issues, it will cause social instability such as increasing social evils and people lose faith in the Party and State,... All this has been hindering the process of building democracy in our country today.

In the process of implementing distributive justice, there are still many limitations, such as unsolving harmony problems of interests and this has not become a highly effective way of exercising social justice. This is most clearly reflected in the salary policy. The problem of salary have not reflected the value of labor and still has many shortcomings. When evaluating the performance of the 2011-2015 socio-economic development tasks, the 12th National Congress of the Party affirmed: “The salary policy is still slowly reformed; the salaries of the majority of cadres, civil servants, employees and laborers are still low and the minimum wage does not ensure the minimum living standard”¹. Low salaries do not adequately reflect the social assessment of workers and do not reflect the democratic nature of the socialist society that we are building.

¹Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2016, p.136.

In summary, theoretically and practically, it has been proven that in order for all citizens to exercise their mastery over all aspects of social life, they must be able to access fairly and equitably with public services such as education, health care, culture, etc. The reality is that investment opportunities for education, health care and other key services belongs to the rich. The loss often falls on the poor, the vulnerable and disable people in society. The poor have little chance of accessing advanced and high quality education. They are limited in accessing to medical services, information, culture and therefore, they also limited in employment opportunities. In general, this has lost the essence of socialist democracy which is for the vast majority of the people.

Democracy is the essence of the socialist system, the goal and the driving force of the national development. Therefore, in each period of revolution, our Party always attaches importance to the promotion of democracy in all organizations and activities, especially the people's mastery and ensuring that all powers belong to the people. The real nature of this process is to promote the leadership of the Party, the management of the State, the political consciousness of socio-political organizations and the activeness, self-consciousness and creativity of all classes in order to mobilize all resources to develop the country. Implementing social justice is a prerequisite for promoting democracy because this creates opportunities and conditions as well as ensuring that everyone has the equal rights and exercises their mastery. Therefore, in order to build socialist democracy in Vietnam today, the guidelines and solutions must be based on the factor of implementing social justice./.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN VIETNAM TODAY

Vu Van Vien^(*)

Democracy and social justice are fundamental contents that are deeply concerned by Karl Marx. His goal was to build a new society - a truly democratic society in which the implementation of the values of democracy and social justice was ensured. With regard to democracy, social justice as well as the relationship between democracy and social justice, in this paper, we focus on two issues: Firstly, building a democratic society is the guarantee of the exercise of democracy and social justice; Secondly, democratization of social life is the basic way to build a democratic society in Vietnam today.

1. Democratic society - the most favorable environment for the implementation of democracy and social justice

On the concept of democracy:

More than 2000 years ago, democracy as a category of political philosophy, first appeared in ancient Greek philosophy, meaning “the power of the people”. From this, many different meanings arise. In this article, we use the term democracy in two sense, *on the one hand*, it is understood to be a value denoting “all the powers belong to the people”; *on the other hand*, it is also understood as a social institution - a democracy which manifests socially as a ***democratic society***. Throughout the long history of progressive social movements, the content of democracy has always been complemented and deepened.

On that path, Marx had profound thoughts on democracy. From the very beginning of moving from progressive democracy to communism, K.Marx has argued that “democracy is the answer for a riddle of all forms of

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state regimes” and once it “dates more towards their real basis”, “to the path of reality, is implemented by people and identified as the cause of the people themselves”, then “the state regime ... appeared as human product of liberty”. And, “only this democracy” really is “the true unity between the common and the particular”¹. In line with K.Marx’s view, F.Engels, argued that “the creation of a democracy and thereby directly or indirectly creates the political dominion of the proletariat”, in which all members of society are “capable of utilizing comprehensively their full development capacity” and becoming free men - this is the goal of the socialist revolution carried out by the proletariat⁽²⁾. Thus, in the view of K.Marx and F. Engels, democracy is an indispensable means for people to reach freedom, liberate and develop comprehensively their inherent capacities, that is, human rights are guaranteed and full implementation.

On the concept of justice:

Like democracy, social justice is a historical category. Social justice is subject to certain historical conditions. With different historical conditions, social justice also has different contents. This is not only true at a certain historical stage but throughout the whole history of human development. In the context of this paper, we focus mainly on social justice in distribution.

Receiving selectively the previous views, the founders of Marxism have made valuable contributions in building the notion of social justice. K.Marx asserted: “The right of the producer is proportional to the labor he has provided; equality is measured by the same measure - by labor”³. This is a very basic principle for social justice. Thus, social justice is a right - equal right between dedication and enjoyment.

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.1, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2005, p.349, 350.

² See: K.Marx and F.Engels, *Collected works*, vol.4, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1995, p.469-470, 475

³ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1995, p.35.

Derived from the concept of historical materialism, when constructing theories of socialism, K.Marx states that when all members of society are equal in relation to material goods, the distribution of products of labor depends only on the level of labor contribution. From then on, he laid down the principle of *labor distribution* as the basis for the implementation of social justice in socialism. In *the Critique of the Gotha Program*, K.Marx pointed out that the principle of distributive justice is “with equal work and therefore with equal participation in the consumption of society”¹. However, he emphasized that workers do not have the same capacity. Thus, this principle can not completely eliminate the inequality in society - this is also a shortcoming that, according to K.Marx, is inevitable.

Democratic society with the implementation of democracy and social justice:

Through the analysis K.Marx's thought of democracy and social justice, we find out that democracy and social justice have a dialectical relationship. Democracy is the general category of a very wide range - “all rights”, while social justice reflects a narrower range – “one right”. If democracy is *all the power belongs to the people*, social justice is *the equal right between the dedication and the enjoyment*. In other words, when implementing democracy which is all rights belong to the people, then of course, those rights have the right of social justice; on the other hand, when implementing the social justice, it will also facilitate the exercise of other rights, it means exercising democracy. So, there is a basis for asserting that the implementation of democracy impacts a broader scope, a higher level of social justice.

It also shows that every step of the implementation of democracy will create a premise for the realization of social justice; on the contrary, every step of the implementation of social justice will facilitate the exercise of democracy. The implementation of democracy and social justice takes place

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.19, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1994, p.35.

in all societies with different steps (conversely, every step of the implementation of social justice will facilitate democratic exercise with different levels and shades) following the progressive development of human history, from slave society, feudal society to capitalist society, then to socialist society. Building a model of *democratic society* is the highest step of implementing democracy in a deeper and more complete way. From these above arguments, it can be said that *democratic society is the most favorable environment for the realization of democracy and social justice*. Therefore, the construction of a democratic society is always the ultimate goal in the thought of K.Marx. In *The Communist Manifesto*, he affirmed: “The first step in the workers' revolution is to turn the proletariat into a ruling class, to win democracy”¹, to exercise all powers belonging to the people.

2. Democratization - a fundamental way to build a democratic society as a premise for the implementation of democracy and social justice

As mentioned above, democratic society is a favorable environment for the implementation of democracy and social justice. However, the democratic society does not suddenly appear, it is formed and developed along with the development of human history. Such a process is seen as a process of social democratization. Therefore, in order to implement democracy and social justice more fully, the implementation of social democratization is indispensable.

On democratization:

In our opinion, democratization involves both the content of democracy (thought and theory of democracy) and the realization of that content in life (practice democracy). That is, *on the one hand*, democratization is the process of making the content of democracy (in theory) more and more rich, deeper;

¹K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete Works*, vol.4, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1995, p.626

on the other hand, it is the process of realizing those contents into life more fully and more effectively.

Democratization has become the mainstream trend of modern politics that no nation can ignore. This trend reflects the interaction between people and institutions in order to realize the values of democracy in social life. It is a process of gradual shifting of state power towards the people and is the transition from a dictatorship to an institution formed on the basis of respect for the will and aspirations of the people. Democratization is an indispensable and objective tendency; is an important motivation for the stability and development of every countries and nations.

Democratization is the process of bringing the value of democracy to life and the movement of society to democracy. Democratization is essentially a widespread social movement, strongly involving all classes of people, acquainted with the principles and standards of democracy. Building a sense of democracy and realizing the content of democracy is a daily practice that makes democracy gradually become a lifestyle, a habit and an indispensable needs of each person as well as social community.

Thus, it can be said that *democratization is the process of making the society from being without democracy into a democratic society, from a society with less democracy to a more democratic society; is the process of making society more democratic*. From that point of view, democratization is *the basic way to build a democratic society as a premise for the implementation of democracy and social justice*.

To implement democracy and social justice in the process of democratization in Vietnam:

In the process of leading the country, thoroughly understanding the spirit of K.Marx, the Party and the State of Vietnam have guidelines to build a democratic society as well as to exercise democracy and social justice during

the construction and development of the country. The central manifestation of this policy is the democratization of the country.

In the years of renewal, when considering democracy as the collective right of the working people, the Communist Party of Vietnam conceived: “*To build a regime of socialist collective ownership* is to build a society in which the organized laborers who are the peasant alliance led by the working class, are the owners. Collective right includes true freedom of the individual”¹. At the same time, affirming the promotion of the working people’s mastery and building the regime of socialist collective ownership was one of the “central tasks of the transitional period to socialism”².

Since the start of the national renewal process until now, the issue of democratization has been deeply concerned by the Party and State of Vietnam. They have considered *democracy as a goal and a driving force* for the cause of constructing and developing the country. In the 6th National Congress, which opens for the innovation, when emphasizing the promotion of democracy to create a strong motive for the country's development, the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed that “in all activities, the Party must thoroughly grasp the idea of “taking the people as the root”, building and promoting the mastery of the working people”³ and see “*the mastery of the socialist collective* is the essence of socialist democracy which must be embodied in all aspects of life”⁴.

In the 7th National Congress, when ratifying *the Platform for the Construction of the country in the Transition to Socialism* (1991), the Communist Party of Vietnam adopted a new conception of democratic society: “The whole organization and operation of our country's political

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Resolution of the 4th National Congress*, Truth Publishing House, Hanoi, 1997, p.19.

² Communist Party of Vietnam, *Documents of the 5th National Congress*, vol.1, Truth Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982, p.47.

³ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the Party Congresses in the renovation process*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2005, p.117.

⁴ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Ibid*, p.327.

system in the new period is to build and step by step perfect *the socialist democracy* and ensure the power belongs to the people”¹. The point of view of democracy is a political institution, a social system in which “ensuring the power belongs to the people”, expressing close relationship between the Party, the State and the people to ensure that democracy is carried out in real life at every level, in all fields, from which *awareness of democratic society* has been affirmed by the Communist Party of Vietnam in next congresses.

This issue is more clearly defined by the 10th National Congress: “Building and stepping up *the socialist democracy, ensuring the power belongs to the people (author emphasizes)*”². In the 11th National Congress, the democratic content received a higher position - building Vietnam: “rich people, strong, *democractic* (author emphasizes), just, civilized country; owned by the people...”³.

And, most recently in the 12th National Congress, in order to speed up the process of democratization, the Communist Party of Vietnam continues to introduce and implement many important ideas both in terms of democratic content and democratic practice in which emerging factors related to the mechanism of exercising democracy. Firstly, on the general task of the period 2016-2020, the Communist Party of Vietnam has clearly defined: “To perfect and promote the socialist democracy and the people's mastery”⁴. Talking about the promotion of socialist democracy and ensuring the people's right to self-determination, the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed: “To continue promoting socialist democracy, ensuring all state power belongs to the people”⁵; “the mastery of the people is better promoted in the fields of social

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the Party Congresses in the renovation process*, vol.28, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2005, p.327.

² Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 10th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2006. p.72

³ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 11th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011. p.70

⁴ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 12th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2016, p.79.

⁵ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Ibid*, p.169.

life through direct democracy and representative democracy, especially in the political and economic fields”¹; “institutionalizing and improving the quality of forms of exercising direct democracy and representative democracy”². The above arguments not only emphasize democratic contents that need to be more fully substantiated, but also show the forms and methods of exercising democracy, reflecting different aspects of democratization. in our country. Thus, the content of democratization has been more concretized by the Party.

Without stopping there, the Communist Party of Vietnam also pointed out the role of promoting democracy in the Party towards the process of social democracy. “To exercise democracy in society, firstly, it is necessary to ensure the promotion of democracy in the Party as the nucleus to give full play to democracy in society. *Fostering the democratization of society* (the author emphasizes) to promote the people's mastery as well as active and creative role of the Fatherland Front and mass organizations”³. This is a very new thesis demonstrating the pioneering role of the Communist Party of Vietnam in the process of democratization as well as the determination of the Communist Party of Vietnam to carry out the democratization of the country. This point also demonstrates that democratization is the way to build a democratic society.

In the process of democratizing the country, economic democratization is central and that is the leverage to realize democratization in other fields of social life. Thus, in the 12th National congress, the Communist Party of Vietnam was more fully aware of the role of economic democratization when emphasizing that “promoting *the mastery of the people* in economy and society”⁴; “to renovate and perfect mechanisms and policies in order to promote the mastery of the people; to ensure *liberty and democracy in*

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Ibid*, p.167.

² Communist Party of Vietnam, *Ibid*, p.169.

³ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Ibid*, p.170.

⁴ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Ibid*, p.103.

economic activities of the people according to the provisions of the Constitution and laws...”¹.

Through the above analysis, it can be affirmed that *the process of democratization of the country is also a step by step process of implementing democracy more fully and deeply in Vietnam*. Every step of democratization also creates the basis and conditions for implementing democratic values in life. Here we focus only on the content of doing social justice.

Besides the impact of implementing democratization, the process of democratization has also brought about the premises for the implementation of social justice. “Democracy associated with social justice must be carried out in all political, economic, cultural and social spheres through the activities of the State appointed by the people and in the form of direct democracy”². Here, we focus only on the field of social justice in distribution.

Since inheriting K.Marx's concept, Vietnam has chosen the form of *labor distribution*. Along with the principle of labor distribution, the distribution regime in Vietnam is also redistributed - distributed through social welfare. This form complements the form of labor distribution. These forms of distribution contribute to implement social justice in the context of a centralized economy. In time, Ho Chi Minh also affirmed: “Socialism is fair and reasonable because who works hard enjoys much, who works less enjoys less, and who does nothing enjoys nothing. The elderly or disabled will be helped and cared by the State”³.

This distribution of early time has created positive effects. It not only creates unity and consensus in society but also creates important motivations in production. This is the first step in social justice in distribution in Vietnam. However, the prolongation of the implementation of this principle of

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam, *Ibid*, p.11.

² Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the Party Congresses in the renovation process*, vol.28, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2005, p.327.

³ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Works*, vol.9, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1996, p.175.

distribution, *in its simple perception*, has gradually led to *the average distribution which equalizes* all labor values and contributions. This led to the elimination of the dynamics of country's economic development, thus bringing the country into socio-economic crisis.

In the period of Doi Moi, along with the democratization of the country, the implementation of social justice has developed with new elements. Firstly, the Party and State of Vietnam have made fundamental changes to the principle of labor distribution. In our opinion, the old conception of this principle is too simple, but not sufficient. We think that according to the old conception, the measure of this principle is only *the number of laborers* and is identical with *the working time*. Since then, the principle of distribution according to labor has become the principle of distribution by days of labor and working hours.

The process of democratization along with the development of a market economy and the perception of this principle has fundamentally changed, is understood more fully and nature. Labor distribution is measured not only by number of laborers, working time but also *the quality of labor*, that is, it must be based on the results of labor expressed in terms of *labor productivity*. K.Marx emphasized this when asserting that socialism can only win capitalism in productivity. From the point of view of labor value measured by labor time, we gradually realize that the labor value must be measured by the amount of labor time as well as the quantity of products produced in a certain period of time and measured by labor productivity. This awareness had been appeared before the innovation. It was tested during the contracting process, from Contract 10 to Contract 100, etc. In the renovation period, this awareness was fully recognized through the Party documents and implemented in practice. the policies of the State. As a result, the implementation of social equality in distribution has been upgraded to a new scale. In the renovation period, this awareness was fully acknowledged in the

Party documents and implemented in practice through policies of the State. As a result, the implementation of social justice in distribution has been raised to a new scale.

In the 11th National Congress, the Communist Party of Vietnam has emphasized the implementation of “distribution of outputs mainly by the results of labor and economic efficiency”¹. When it comes to economic efficiency, the Party and State of Vietnam aim to come up with the principle of labor distribution. It also takes into account the quality of products, conditions and working environment, and encourages certain occupations.

The quality of the product which is good or bad will bring high or low economic efficiency. Good product quality will directly affect the consumers, thereby expanding the market, promoting production development and saving production costs. In addition, the Party and State of Vietnam pay special attention to the nature of labor, simple labor and complex labor. Forms of labor need more gray matter and wisdom is paid higher than simple labor. This view is expressed very clearly when the Party and State of Vietnam consider science, technology, education and training as central tasks during the transition period. Vietnam always pays special attention to the achievements of science and technology bringing about high economic efficiency for the country. From this point of view, the Communist Party of Vietnam has clearly stated: “To bring into full play the country's scientific and technological potentials and quickly raise the productivity and quality of economic growth”².

Distribution by economic outputs is also reflected in the fact that Vietnam has paid due attention to the conditions of the working environment and the sectors needed to be encouraged. For example, workers in mines or labors in areas with many difficulties... These areas need to be encouraged because

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 11th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011. p.206.

² Communist Party of Vietnam, *Ibid*, p.192.

these are fields that are less attractive to workers; however, the results of their labor are very necessary for production and meeting the essential needs of society. Therefore, the income of workers in these sectors must be higher than in other sectors. This is another progressive step towards implementing social justice.

The expansion of democracy along with the development of a market economy, considering economic sectors to be equal and the private sector is an important driving force has strongly influenced the distribution of resources that contributes to economic development in particular and to the development of the country in general. For example, capital, production materials, production skills, etc. Now the contribution of capital, production materials and production skills is considered to be a very important factor for the development of production and business. In many case, these contributions are the decisive factor for the expansion of production and business, and therefore they must receive a relevant distribution. In the process of democratization, Vietnam attaches great importance to the distribution of these contributions. Through the congresses of the Party, awareness and implementation of distributive justice under these contributions in the practice is increasingly clear and consistent. The documents of the 11th National Congress stated that “distributing the economic outputs mainly based on the labor contribution, economic efficiency and, *at the same time, the level of capital and other resources contributions* (author emphasized) and through the social security and welfare system”¹. With the democratization process, the Communist Party of Vietnam has always paid attention to the implementation of social justice when they affirmed that “to carry out social progress and justice in each step and each development policy; economic

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 11th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011, p.206.

growth coupled with the development of culture, health, education, solving social issues for human development”¹.

In the contemporary world, there is widespread recognition that democratization and market economy are mutually supportive and reinforcing. Since the implementation of the renovation along with the development of the market economy, the process of democratization in Vietnam has been prospering and implemented in a consistent and sustainable way. In order to build an industrial society it is necessary to carry out industrialization, similarly, if we want to have a democratic society, then we have to democratize. This process is strongly influencing the exercise of democracy and social justice in Vietnam. Democratization is the basic way to build a democratic society, to carry out deeper and more fully the content of democracy and social justice.

¹ Communist Party of Vietnam. *Documents of the 10th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2006, p.77

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF SCIENTIFIC- TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION IN VIETNAM^(*)

Luong Dinh Hai^()**

Justice and democracy are the aspirations of every society, every nation with social polarization, or oppression, exploitation. Both (justice and democracy) are the measures of social progress, the common values of humanity, the goals of modern societies. At the same time, they are the driving force for the development of the nation-states and the international communities. Justice and democracy in the history of human society share the very closed relation that, like other social relations, cannot be described or shaped in terms of a formula or directly and inversely proportional functions. This relation is complex, various, multi-dimensional, multi-content and dependent to objective conditions. This relation in each country has distinct characteristics, different from other periods' and other countries' in each period of history,

One of the manifestations of social justice is the rich-poor gap and social polarization. One of the methods to implement social justice, therefore, is to regulate the real incomes of social actors. Since then, justice becomes the most powerful and inclusive motive for social and human development. In Vietnam, social justice in the past decades has been showing up many new dimensions in theory and practice¹. Regulating income by state policies is one of the main ways for implementing social justice in Vietnam. However, in reality, social justice has not been reached as it was expected and its implementation has been extremely difficult. Poverty reduction and income

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¹ See: Luong Dinh Hai. *Adding comments on distribution justice in Viet Nam today*. Review of Philosophy, No 9 (316), pp.57-64.

adjustment through various policies over the last several decades have been one of the great efforts, with great achievements, recognized by many organizations and nations around the world. However, many recent surveys show that income disparities are increasing, and the gap between rich and poor in society is no longer the ordinary story when the signs of social polarization appear.

“In one hour, the income from property of the richest people is nearly 5,000 times higher than the income of the 10% poorest spending on daily necessities in Vietnam. The income of the 210 super-rich people in Vietnam is more than enough to take 3.2 million people out of poverty and to end extreme poverty across the country.”¹ “Vietnam is among the 10 countries in the world where the rich-poor gap and the number of the super-richs grows the fastest. While assets increasingly accumulate to a few people in society, the pace of income transfer from the poorest to the higher income groups is slowing. The gap between rich and poor is expanding.”²

The reasonable and legitimate differentiation between rich and the poor in the market economy and in the history of human society generally is the driving force of human and social development, but the rich-poor polarization is an obstacle to human and social development. The rich-poor differentiation and social polarization are primarily the result of income disparities. In terms of the relationship between personal and institutional income, in Vietnam today, the rich-poor differentiation comes from four sources: Firstly, differentiation results from institutionally legitimate and legal income. That is the income from talent, labor, and other legal income sources of individuals

¹ <http://thoibaotaichinhvietnam.vn/pages/xa-hoi/2017-01-12/chenh-lech-thu-nhap-ngay-cang-gia-tang-39855.aspx>, accessed in January 12th; see: <http://baobaohiemxahoi.vn/vi/tin-chi-tiet-khoang-cach-giau-ngheo-o-viet-nam-dang-gia-tang-manh-664e1f4f.aspx>, accessed in January 12th; <http://www.vusta.vn/vi/news/Trao-doi-Thao-luan/Thuc-trang-chenh-lech-giau-ngheo-o-Viet-Nam-49959.html> accessed in September 25th 2013; https://vietnam.oxfam.org/press_release/oxfam-cong-bo-bao-cao-ve-bat-binh-dang-tai-viet-nam-va-khoi-dong-chien-dich-thu-hep, accessed in January 12th

² <http://www.sggp.org.vn/bao-dong-khoang-cach-giau-ngheo-mong-manh-thu-nhap-truc-dien-nghich-can-438709.html>, April 12th 2017; See: Do Thien Kinh. *Social stratification and social mobility in Viet Nam today*. Social Sciences Publishing House, Ha Noi, 2018.

who work in accordance with their skills and capabilities and specific socio-economic conditions of communities. Therefore, differentiation generated by these income sources is also legal and rational, and is the driving force for human and social development, and therefore, needs to be strengthened and encouraged.

Secondly, differentiation is due to reasonable but illegal income. These are legitimate income, which are in accordance with the laws of socio-economic development in a positive and progressive direction. The elimination of illegality of this kind of income is the task of government that creates institutions unsuitable for human and social development. The regulations, laws, and policies must be adjusted so that the source of income becomes legal and reasonable. In the context of rapid development of science and technology revolution and its increasing impact on production, people and society, the task of adjusting institutions regularly is the urgent, frequent and the most important task of all governmental levels. It is the evident to prove the essence and effectiveness of government in term of construction perspective, instead of using GDP growth as a measure to assess the government like doing now.

Thirdly, differentiation is due to unreasonable but legal income. Those, who have this kind of income, often fear of being spotted and condemned and often find the ways to rationalize or hide their income in various ways. The existence of this kind of income is due to the fact that the institutions are slowly innovated for the changing reality, or the institutions reflect incorrectly the socio-economic relations that should be encouraged. If this kind of income till exists or becomes popular in society, its consequence will be very unpredictable because it does not encourage labor and reasonable income. Therefore, legitimate benefits and social norms will not be followed strictly and self-consciously; institutions become an environment and an instrument for facilitating and encouraging unreasonable and improper income; people

lose faith in laws, policies, state administration, governance, social values, especially in values of justice. There will be spiritual crisis in society, first of all, political crisis and instability will occur sooner or later. Therefore, the rich-poor differentiation, due to unreasonable but legal income, is harmful to human and social development. The regular task of the state is to timely detect this kind of income for adjusting the institutions in accordance with reality so as not to create a negative social differentiation.

Fourthly, the social differentiation resulting from unreasonable and illegal income is the most damaging. Income from corruption is one example of this kind of income. As the more people in the society have this kind of income and the longer this situation lasts, the social values naturally turn upside down, instability and social conflicts will appear sooner or later. The rich-poor differentiation due to unreasonable and illegal income is one of the causes and sources of rich-poor polarization in society. Social popularization in this way is typical injustice, serious violation of social justice. Of course, such popularization would hinder the development of production forces, of human beings and of society. The quick elimination of this kind of income is a very important task of the state to ensure social justice, which is a condition for the sustainable development of society and people. The existence of these sources of income reflects inefficiencies, or institutional ineffectiveness, which is first of all to the state.

In fact, in Vietnam today, four kinds of income exist, even sometimes in many places the second, third and fourth one share the bigger part of total personal income than the first one. Even so, the dominance of fourth one has caused social upheaval and has severely reduced the trust of the people in the state. The rich-poor differentiation formed by the second and third one are also the significant obstacle to Vietnam's human and social development. If legitimate income is considered illegal (like the case of “hello coffee”, the case of \$100 exchange in Can Tho last days), it does not encourage the

exploration, innovation in business, even it can strangle the talent, initiative in business. The phenomenon of “fence breaking” is a clear manifestation in which the institution considers reasonable, legitimate activities and personal and communal income illegal, causes the “fence overtaking” of the people and society. Income that are unreasonable but are institutionally recognized as legitimate are also pressing the public. The “backwardness” of the institution is a fact that exists in many different sectors and occupations at different levels, which is hindering the implementation of social justice.

The rich-poor differentiation, based on legitimate and reasonable income, may be initially unlawful, of course, will motivate human and social development and ensure sustainable equality implementation in society. It is also the foundation for a stable, developed, consensual and united society. However, in reality the interplay of these four kinds of income always coincides, albeit different degrees in different periods and social conditions. If we only desire and understand just one kind of reasonable and legitimate rich-poor differentiation, our viewpoint can be one-sided and the social management and administration can be subjective and wrong.

In reality, the rich-poor differentiation and the implementation of social justice depend on many different factors. In the next 10 years, in our opinion, the more developed the market economy will be, the developed scientific-technological revolution 3.0 and the more its achievements going to Viet Nam is, the wider rich-poor gap can be. Whereas social institutions are unlikely to have significant improvements to prevent the widening of the rich-poor differentiation, it is becoming increasingly difficult to bridge the gap between rich and poor that has existed in the last two decades.

Today's age is the era of scientific-technological revolution or, in other words, one of the great characteristics of the present historical period is the rushing development of the scientific-technological revolution. Research into the impact of the science and technology revolution we view that the

scientific and technological revolution from late World War II to the late 1970s and early 1980s of the twenty century is the foundation for the Industrial Revolution 3.0 with huge achievements and unprecedented impact on human development and society on a global scale. The science and technology revolution since the 1980s has created a theoretical foundation for the industrial revolution that has already begun, and has been talked about a lot in Germany and Vietnam. At the same time, this revolution is also pushing forward the Industrial Revolution 3.0 spreading across the globe.

In the history of Vietnam, it has not been able to carry out any scientific, technical and technological revolutions that the world has made. Even with three industrial revolutions taking place, Vietnam can not participate due to historical conditions and many other factors. Through field surveys in 9 provinces in the three regions of the North, Central and South¹ showed that the level of production and industrial forces in regions, fields and sectors is very uneven². There are still places where production is in the pre-industrial phase, there are new places where production is in industry 2.0. Only enterprises in industrial zones, big cities, some industries and sectors

¹ The research team of the project KX 01.11/16-20 conducted a sociological survey, in-depth interview, and panel discussion with managers, administrators, researchers, university and high school teachers, workers, entrepreneurs in Lao Cai, Quang Ninh, Ha Noi, Da Nang, Ninh Thuan, Dak Lak, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai, Vinh Long. Opinions on the impacts of the scientific and technological revolution on Vietnamese people and society are different on the basis of the assessment of the industrial level of the country. However, the vast majority of the respondents said, Vietnam's current industrial level is only in the 2.5 industrial era, which has not reached the industrial revolution of 3.0. But the influence of the industrial revolution, of the science and technology revolution on Vietnamese people and society is now very strong and placing more pressure in many terms. Impacts and changes in many terms caused by these effects are not equal, but the strong, breakthrough tendency upsetting many dimensions of human life and society is inevitable. The impact on social justice and social relations is growing and creating many challenges in the coming years. The report by the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences on the impact of the 4.0 revolution made in 2017 has also contributed to this viewpoint, despite many of the challenges posed by the 4.0 industrial revolution. The impact of the revolution in science and technology and the industrial revolution to social justice in Vietnam is evident.

² We believe, the main technological platform of industrial revolution 1.0 is steam engines and internal combustion engines; of industrial revolution 2.0 is electric machines (from generators and electric motors, of industrial revolution 3.0 is electronic machines, and of industrial revolution 4.0 is artificial intelligence. See: Lương Đình Hải. *Scientific-technological revolution and its impact on Vietnam's people and society*. Review of Human Studies, No 5 (92), p.3-14; Industrial revolution 4.0 and the placing issues for socio-economic development in Viet Nam. The proceeding of National Workshop in Institute of Banking, Ha Noi, June 2018. Paper: Opportunities and challenges of Viet Nam in scientific-technological revolution 4.0, p.3-16 v.v..

have stepped up to industrial revolution 3.0 but it is only in the early stage of industrial revolution 3.0. However, the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution are coming into Vietnam very quickly.

In fact, the achievements of two scientific, technological revolutions have been showing the great impact on Vietnam. But in terms of industry, industrial revolution 2.0 which is the basis of electromagnetic technologies, and industrial revolution 3.0 which is the basis of electronic technologies, are the ground of the Vietnamese industry today. We would like to emphasize this to note that there are some misconceptions about the industrial revolution 4.0 and the industrial revolution 3.0 when coming to their impacts on Vietnam. In Vietnam there is no industrial revolution 4.0 because its technological foundation is artificial intelligence that has not appeared in the Vietnamese industry as a common technology platform. Taking into account the influence of the scientific and technological revolution on social justice, it is necessary to pay attention to this important characteristic of modern Vietnamese society in order to avoid subjective illusions, then lead to unpredictable mistakes.

The development of the science-technology revolution and the industrial revolution (both 2.0 and 3.0) in Vietnam now contribute positively to secure social justice on a firmer, broader and deeper basis, rather than social justice on the basis of unindustrialized agriculture or production. Technology as well as industry are all products of science. When they are put into production and society, they will change people and society in the direction of progress and development. Science, especially social science, that has a strong impact on human and social perceptions of social justice, creates ideals, methods and solutions for social justice implementation in suitable ways for each stage of production development. The concept of justice has

been changed in a way that is progressive, comprehensive, complete, inclusive and intensive, as analyzed in the previous workshop¹.

But it is important that, as the achievements of the industrial revolution spill over into Vietnam, turning the Vietnamese economy into an intensively and extensively industrialized economy with high degree of production, the opportunity for social justice implementation for all is more open, diverse and easily accessible. On the one hand, this happens due to the fact that science, technology and industry create many professions and opportunities to have income for workers. This is a necessary condition for justice. The society, before industrialization, had not enough favorable conditions to fully and equitably implements equality. Therefore, it must apply egalitarian regime in justice implementation. On the other hand, industry creates opportunities and conditions for people's liberation from direct labor functions such as transportation, controlling and supervision, so that physical differences are less likely to affect the mass production, reasonable and legitimate income increases and the opportunity to have them become more.

With the development of science, technology and industry from the end of the twentieth century, the number of job positions has increased rapidly, and the opportunity to access incomes, instead of declining, has increased. This is the most evident in the fact that the number of workers has increased steadily, the number of occupations has not decreased but has continued to increase, despite the fact that traditional trades have been eliminated. The development of the industry has eliminated a number of industries, and at the same time create many new industries. This seems to be one of the important characteristics of the scientific and technological revolution and industrialization. This has created opportunities for different capacities of people to be realized and, as a result, they have legitimate incomes.

¹ See: The international conference on distributive justice co-hosted by the Institute of Philosophy, VASS Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Rosa Luxemburg Stifting, May 2017, Buon Me Thuot, Viet Nam.

Science, technology and industrial revolutions create tools and instruments that can accurately address products quality and productivity of every individual and every community. This means that each person's labor can be judged more objectively, accurately and more closely. It is a condition and precondition for social justice implementation in the more reliable basis. In addition, science, technology and industry have increased the productivity and production capability of the economy, created more and more products. Wealth is created more, the basic needs of man and society are guaranteed as the most important premise for human and social development. The fulfillment of the basic needs of the individual and society in itself is a matter of communal justice, humanity and progress. On the basis of that equality, modern society can implement social justice at higher and more significant level, such as justice in education, in health, in the environment, etc. .

If in the pre-industrial societies, the proverb “Fear not poverty, only fear injustice,” is absolutely right, then in the age of scientific and technological revolution and industrial revolution today that kind of proverb is no longer correct, the more correct one should be “ sufficiency does not necessarily mean justice, but insufficiency cannot means justice”. This means that, within the influence of scientific and technological revolution and industrial revolution, horizontal justice is a firmly secured condition, such as equality of species and equality with universal humanity. Vertical justice that means the people with better qualified, better labor, more dedication should get more, is the category belonging to higher sense of social justice, showing special meaning in scientific and technological revolutions and industrial revolution time. The implementation of vertical justice is the real motives for human and social development.

Scientific and technological revolution and industrial revolution contribute to the extension of man's and community's vision and capability, enable them to increase their capacity in all aspects as well as productivity. In

addition to the social differentiation caused by class classification by ownership, the differentiation by increasing capacity and labor productivity is an important cause of social polarization, although this polarization is reasonable and legitimate. In the early stages of industrialization, many countries accepted and promoted the rich-poor polarization along the direction of vertical justice to foster the rapid development of people and society. The rich-gap differentiation here is due to equality and therefore it is reasonable. It motivates people to work more, make better use of all abilities, and increase productivity and efficiency of labor, economic development and wealth creation. Social progress is therefore maintained on a regular basis.

Can vertical equality accelerated by scientific, technological and industrial revolutions, resulting in an increasingly rich-poor differentiation be the reason for social polarization? That is a big question that we have not found the answer in the research literature yet. Certainly, in principle, a long-lasting social differentiation will lead to polarization. It's inevitable but in practice it is not so. Because the opportunity to increase income thanks to scientific, technological and industrial revolutions is not permanent, or lasts in a long time for any specific individuals or communities. The opportunity to increase income is not limited to any particular actors, but to all in society. Human development is always uneven in all respects. Man's qualities and qualities are not the same. Taking advantage of opportunities brought about by scientific, technological and industrial revolutions is not the same as well. Therefore, it is essential to promote and expand the opportunities for using achievements of those revolutions as a maximum. We shouldn't afraid of the rich-poor differentiation when implementing vertical equality under the influence of scientific and technological revolutions. The paradox of social justice implementation in vertical way in scientific, technological and industrial revolution creating the rich-poor differentiation and social polarization is a real difficulty to solve. But we shouldn't limit the

development of scientific, technological and industrial revolutions due to that reason.

In Vietnam today, this paradox does not lead to any bad consequences for social development; on the other hand, the rich-poor differentiation by unreasonable and illegal causes great harm to human and social development. Therefore, in our opinion, the State should encourage and accept the rich-poor differentiation by vertical justice under the influence of scientific, technological and industrial revolution to promote the faster and stronger development of human and society.

On the other hand, the scientific, technological and industrial revolutions often promote horizontal equality. They create more products for satisfying the living needs and raising the living standard of the society. In other words, the achievements of the scientific, technological and industrial revolutions have always heightened the average and minimum living standard of man. It also means, the scientific, technological and industrial revolutions promote horizontal social equality in a broader, more inclusive and higher level. Horizontal equality, therefore, is also enhanced and more sustainable. Products are more included in basic and diverse needs, demonstrating social progress at a higher level. However, as horizontal social justice is elevated, vertical social justice will be pushed up to higher levels, the paradox “the more equitable the more differentiation” will continue to exist.

Along with the development of the scientific, technological and industrial revolutions, the content of both horizontal and vertical justice has been expanded to such things as environmental justice, achievement justice in all aspects: education, health, physical education, sports, etc. Ensuring social justice in all aspects, both horizontally and vertically, is very difficult while the market economy must be developed at a rapid pace.

According to our survey, the majority of people evaluate that, the impact of the revolution of scientific, technological and industrial revolution

has not greatly affected the implementation of social justice, the paradox of “the more justice, the more social polarization” is not as strong as the impact of market economy and the institutions. The inadequacies in social justice implementation today are mainly due to market economy and institutional factors. It is therefore necessary to foster the application of scientific, technological and industrial revolution’s achievements to economic, social and human development, and to use them to limit shortcomings of market and institutions distorting social relations and restricting human and social development.

While the gap between the rich and the poor is widespread, which poses a risk of social polarization, the problem is to make effective use of the achievements of scientific, technological and industrial revolutions to restraint the widening gap and to shorten the rich-poor differentiation in reality today. The achievements of scientific, technological and industrial revolution do not create justice or injustice, increase or reduce the gap between the rich and the poor. Applying them for the certain purposes of individuals, social groups and communities based on market rules makes the rich-poor differentiation happen in different ways. The achievements of scientific, technological and industrial revolutions are very basic and effective tools to increase the income of social groups, increase or shorten the rich-poor gap, social polarization. To use them properly for human purposes, social progress becomes an urgent task and demand of modern society.

DEMOCRACY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MODERN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY – FROM MARX’S VIEW ON DEMOCRACY

Nguyen Thi Lan Huong^(*)

1. K.Marx’s view on democracy

Democracy is one of the key categories of K.Marx’s political philosophy. It is researched and argued in the close connection with other important ones namely equality, justice, liberty, responsibility etc.. The way Marx takes research on it also shows main characteristics of his political philosophy, that is to say the respect for *the objective principle, the historical one* and *the class position*. Thus democracy cannot neither be considered without categories connected with it, nor be discussed in an ambiguous, classless, and non-historical position.

Marx’s thoughts on democracy can be seen in a great number of his works such as *The holy Family*, *The German Ideology*, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, *The Communist Manifesto*, *Capital*, *The Principles of Communism*, *The Class Struggle in France*, etc.. Through those works it can be said that Marx does not stop at an academic research on democracy, in contrary - and above all - he tries to realize it in revolutionary practice.

Marx’s thoughts on democracy have been interested in, analyzed and considered by many national and international researchers. Since it is a profound issue closely connected with his thoughts on socialism. Though there are still controversial views in the discussion about it, but Marx’s

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thoughts on democracy in our opinion can be summarized in some points as follows.

*** *At the first level of meaning: democracy as a political category (political democracy)***

That is the level of meaning that Marx takes most of his time and effort to argue. Discussing on democracy as a political category, there are some noticeable points as follows.

First, in Marx's view, *democracy is regarded as a kind of state's institution*. This kind of institution is built in a specific economic ground and in general it serves that economic ground. In the logic of historical materialism, the formation of every field, including democracy, must adapt to and serve a specific production relation (economic relation). Marx thinks that the production relations, or civil society, is the most basic ground of all kinds of state, from the ancient slavery state to the modern democratic system of state. Relating to this point are the following important ones.

Second, Marx emphasizes the classical essence of democracy, that *democracy in nothing other than a form of politics to gain interests*. In its nature, democracy is the means for domination among classes. Marx states that in every form of state, the establishment of democracy is for the purpose of obtaining private interests of individuals, groups or the public interest of the whole community. That is the most distinguishing point of Marx's thought on democracy in comparison with others. He thinks that all struggles, including ones within democratic regimes, autocratic regimes, or dictatorial regimes, are the illustration of real kinds of class struggles¹.

Third, Marx states that democracy is not separate from dictatorship. These are two aspects of one issue / thing; democracy for some is dictatorship for others. When democracy becomes a ruling measure of the dominant class,

¹ See: K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete works*, vol.3, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1995, pp.47-48.

it must protect political interests of them. And once those political interests are threatened, the rulers will immediately dispossess political rights of the ruled without hesitation, until when the interests of ruling class will be firmly reestablished. About that Marx gives the example of “universal suffrage”. Once the interests of ruling class are endangered, they will replace the motto of “universal fraternity” with the one of war¹.

Fourth, Marx criticizes the democracy in the capitalism. Although appreciating the great process of transformation from the feudal autocracy to the modern capital democracy, he also points out the limitations of the capital democracy by criticizing its *hypocrisy*. He says that the democratic politics of the capitalism always corresponds with the capitalist private ownership; it is the most obvious political sign of its essence, namely protecting the interests of the capitalists. To the masses, this kind of democracy is not only hypocritical but also a type of exploitation and oppression. On the other hand, Marx thinks that in the socialist democracy, *the political participation of the people* is the key and decisive factor. Thus studying Marx’s thoughts on democracy it is necessary to pay special attention to its central issue namely *the people’s liberty and power*².

Fifth, Marx states that democracy is a historical category. It means it is the result of long time development of the mankind’s society and will in the end disappear with the disappearance of the state. One of the most fundamental principles of Marx’s theory of democracy is that the state is the result of the private property and the old society. It was born and developed together with the development of the production. In the theory of communism, he argues that both private ownership and class will disappear, and so will the state. Since the state is a historical category, *the political*

¹ See: K.Marx and F.Engels, *Complete works*, vol.11, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1995, pp.349-350.

² See: Ta Ngoc Tan, *From Marx’s thoughts on democracy to the construction and improvement of the socialist democracy in Vietnam*, <http://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn/home/nghiencuu-traodoi/2018/51183/tu-tuong-cua-cac-mac-ve-dan-chu-den-xay-dung.aspx>.

democracy as a kind of state institution will some day disappear in the development of mankind's society (along with the disappear of the class, the state, and the private ownership of the means of production)¹.

It can be seen that the five above-mentioned points have close connections with each other and form the *first level of meaning* in Marx's thoughts on democracy – *the political democracy*². Because of the characteristics of class struggles in Marx's era, he took much time to argue that level of meaning of democracy. That also is the reason why it is absolutized in a conservative and dogmatic way all the time from his decease until now.

****At the second level of meaning: democracy as a social category (social democracy)***

In Marx's thought, democracy has the second level of meaning, namely democracy as a social category. At this level of meaning, democracy has the following characteristics.

Sixth, democracy is a social value. From this aspect, democracy shows a desire or a goal at which man aims, beside other values such as liberty, equality, justice, responsibility etc. Thus when the state disappears, the democracy disappearing together with it is merely the democracy as a form of state institution, and the democracy as a dignity of man will *exist forever*.

In this aspect, according to us, it is necessary to add the seventh point.

Seventh, democracy as a social value is one of signs and *main methods in social management in the modern society*. dân chủ với tư cách một giá trị xã hội sẽ là một trong những dấu hiệu, *phương thức chủ đạo cho quản lý xã hội trong xã hội hiện đại*. With this seventh characteristic, the consideration

¹ About these aspect please make more reference to: Wen, J. C. (2015). (Institute of Marxism, China University of Political Science and Law, Beijing, China.), Reconsider Marx's Democracy Theory. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 8 (3), 13-18. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/6586> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/6586>.

² See: Phạm Văn Đức (editor), *Realizing democracy in the context of constructing rule-of-law state and developing socialist-oriented market economy*, Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi, 2015.

for the category of democracy must closely connect with other categories including liberty, equality, justice and responsibility. These are important categories in the context that the present society is under the enormous influence of the modern sciences and technology.

2. Democracy under the influence of the modern information technology

Nowadays the modern information technology not only brings about great developments in the international economy, but also leads to fundamental changes in theory as well as practice of democracy in almost all forms of society. Among those effects there are both positive and negative ones. For the democracy, the effect can be seen in the fact that the modern information technology is promoting the process of democratization and bringing about the changes in the balance of power between stakeholders.

First, the information technology promotes democratization.

Firstly, the information technology changes the method of expression the democracy

As we all know, democracy is the progressive result of the development of human relationships. Democracy at first means the “forum”, the “district” where people freely show their opinions and viewpoints on matters relating to the community; and through the discussion they lead to common decisions and agreements. The first-known democracy in human history is the Athenian one. However it is in fact not the democracy for all because in that form of democracy, slaves, women, children and people with disability had no right to join in the discussion.

There emerged numerous types of democracy along with the history, in which *representative democracy* (in capital democracy) is one of the important developments of democratization and popular in a large number of countries. In this type of democracy, the representatives are chosen based on regions, territories, domains, groups, fields, corporations, classes etc. People show their

opinions and choices through their representatives. The representatives directly discuss, agree with each other and make decisions in the name of groups of people. The advantage of this type of democracy is that people have right to choose and nominate those who represent them in making decisions regarding problems of the community. But the weakness of the representative democracy is that *it leads to the fact that the majority of people are removed from the forum of making decisions*, and no one can guarantee whether representatives chose by groups of people would be absolutely faithful to their interests, desires and demands or not. However, the representative democracy is the most progressive type that man has before the appearance of the higher type of democracy – namely *the direct democracy* which means in fact the democracy for every person.

The formation and development of the modern information technology, with the increasing use of mass media such as radio, the press, the Internet etc. *has been bringing the advantages for the democratization*. The democratization of social life means giving people the liberty, the equality, creating the opportunities to develop and perform people's capacities. Thanks to the development and application of the information technology to all fields of the social life, the opposition between direct democracy and representative democracy becomes the counterbalance between two mixed types of democracy: the mixed direct democracy (communal democracy, democracy of civil society) on the one hand, and the mixed representative democracy (parliamentary democracy, assembly democracy, congress democracy) on the other hand. The result of this process is that *direct democracy becomes the main type in the social life*. In the modern information environment with the considerable assistance of the modern communication tools, *man becomes freer* in showing his own viewpoint and political opinions through direct relations, bypassing existing intermediate representatives.

Secondly, the information technology promotes the development and the scale of democracy

The most obvious feature nowadays is that modern means of communication and telecommunication such as television, radio, Internet etc. *are helpful in realizing the democracy in a larger scale and unlimited time.* The most typical examples are *emails, websites, blogs, the SNS* (social network services) – the important types of communication on the Internet.

With email, people can both have the advantages as using telephone, letter and fax, and overcome the inconveniences of those means, since an email can be printed as letter, and at the same time we have no need to immediately answer like the telephone. In addition, email is not so slow as letter and we can send the message to many people simultaneously. Thus it not only creates good conditions for the exchange between individuals, but also is helpful for groups and organizations. Its advantages, low price and high democratical feature promote the faster and more effective communication among individuals, between individuals, communities and governments, and vice versa.

With *website*, the democracy is also expanded. Website is a set of information of corporations, organizations or individuals. When accessing a website, man can join in, provide feedbacks and interact with others. Nowadays, thanks to the hyperlink technology, man can access websites everywhere and everytime as long as there is a connection to the Internet. Web creates e-offices, online newspapers etc. where people not only search the information but also interact and exchange the information with each other. Through the web, citizens can understand well the government, the representatives, the events taking place at home and abroad. Moreover, they can interact and have communication with each other with no need to directly meet each other.

The rapid development of Internet also creates many other ways of online communication in which the typical one is international social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and other national sites. In a social networking site, it

seems that the participants are no longer restricted by social rank, position, age, or political standing. Every body seems to be equal and can suggest one own arguments viewpoints without anxiety over prejudice like in the real life.

The popularity of types of communication mentioned above is bringing about the considerable changes in *the relations between people and the government*. The information system nowadays is a combination of all types of communication such as radio, television, email, web, SNS etc. in a united, diversified and complicated digital environment and space. That environment has a direct influence over every field of social life including the political field and democracy, not only within the national scale but also on the international scope. People now can directly follow the process of a session of the National Assembly, or a national and international meeting. They can even directly offer the suggestions and control the draft laws and policies proposed by the government. In this aspect, it can be said that the information technology is helpful for people to increase the monitoring of government's activities, thence promote their role in managing the country. The high interactivity of the Internet environment makes it become an important communication channel between the government and the people, in both national and international scope. Internet became an environment helpful for the communication between the government and the people. It is the fact that in the presidential campaign in the US in 2008, thanks to the maximum use of the SNS, Barack Obama won the overwhelming victory against his opponents. Similarly, in the recent presidential election, candidate Donald Trump has directly interacted with the electors through the "real time" message in his Twitter account. Now this is still the channel the President uses to interact directly with the people. It can be said that in the present, almost all politicians and organizations in the world cannot but use this strong media as a helpful channel to communicate with people in order to serve their political purposes.

Internet not only provides services to promote the development and the scope of the democratization, as mentioned above, but also is the basis for the construction of *electronic government* – the important foundation of the reform of political systems in the world. The e-government refers to the use of advantages of information technology, such as computer, Internet etc. to *computerize the state administration*. With the e-government, administrative work relating to the state, the government and public agencies can be done through the digital environment. People do not waste their time to directly come to those offices or wait for the solutions for their judicial problems. Policies of the government are publicly proclaimed in the society and at the same time the government can quickly receive the feedback of the people on the policies that they promulgated or have plan to promulgate. The e-government also put forward the demand on the reformation of the national administration from the central to provincial level, the reformation of mechanisms which change more slowly than other fields. Thus it can be said that, to some extent, advantages that Internet brings about are *contributing to reduce the representative democracy and increase the direct democracy*, filling up little by little the gap between these two types, promoting the democratization more speedily, strongly and widely.

Second, the information technology brings about the change in the balance of political power and risks.

As we all know, the value of democracy is represented in three principles: *firstly*, in the nature of the state, it must be “the state of the people, for the people and by the people”, *secondly*, in the principle of election: the universal suffrage, and *thirdly*, the principle of “ruling by the majority”. These principles respect the individual freedom and the democratization in the framework of law. In a strongly interacting world as the present, the electronic media are becoming the method the common people can use to realize and keep the control of these three principles of democracy. Thus, together with the change of the forms of

expression of democracy, it can be said that Internet and mass media are now contributing to *the promotion of the direct power of the people*.

However, the influences of the Internet and electronic media over the politics are *not only positive*. Beside the ability to widen the freedom and democracy, the information technology is also the method that individuals and organizations use to undermine the stability of a nation. We all know that all interactions taking place on the Internet do not depend on the national boundary. *The popularity* of the Internet encourages the interaction “from many people to many people”, making citizens all around the world join in public conversations; at that time the management over the Internet does still not reach the agreement on a global scale. That gap is the reason why terrorist or racist organizations can scatter information for the benefit of them. Besides, the uncentralized and network structure of the Internet helps the individuals to overcome the barriers of information management. In front of that difficulty in completely managing the Internet, even the governments with great power sometimes reveal their incompetence. The capacity of the Internet for removing the state power by creating a scattered space of activity arouses an anxiety that the Internet can cause an *anarchy and chaos*.

Nowadays, the universality and expansion of the Internet is easier and easier thanks to the decreasing price of technological devices and the increasing popularity of the digital environment. Every one can access to the Internet, create and supplement everything one wants to the Internet, as long as the technological solutions permit. However, the ability of security and management of the Internet in the world, although achieving much progress, still has gaps that cannot be completely filled. It is also a fertile ground for the illegal access to personal information and even the information of governments, ministries and other fields not only in national but also in international scope. In the present, the fact that information technology systems of governments or economic – social organizations are attacked by hackers are not unusual. Thus, besides the capacity

for widespreading the knowledge and freedom for people, the Internet technology also causes problems that go beyond the control of the people – that is to say the anarchy, the chaos and the violation against the private life. Như vậy, *bên cạnh khả năng mở rộng tri thức và tự do của con người, công nghệ Internet cũng gây ra những vấn đề vượt khỏi tầm kiểm soát của chính con người* – tình trạng vô chính phủ, hỗn loạn và xâm phạm thô bạo đời tư của cá nhân.

What happening reveal the dual nature of the Internet. The Internet is the source of good things but also the source of harmful or even evil things. The positive aspect of the Internet shows the strength of man's knowledge and intelligence, and the negative one of it opens up the possibility for following personal interests and benefits without attention to communal benefits. A regulatory environment that can protect people from effections of negative information, such as slander, deception, insult, exposition of private information for the political benefit of groups, etc, is not established yet, or operates uneffectively. All of those matters can lead to the risk of *anti-democracy* and *anarchy*.

So how should be the attitude of the people towards those communication methods, especially the Internet? The negative effects of the Internet on individuals and societies are unavoidable, but the Internet cannot be merely prohibited. There is here some problems relating to *the role and power of the State* in managing the information. With broadcasting and television, the management of the State can achieve the effects, but with the Internet, the power of State manangement depends more on whether the nation or government has feasible technological solutions and adequate regulatory mechanism or not. Generally, when the government holds the information institutions, it can orient them and even forces them to serve its own interests. But with the Internet it is not the same situation. The non-authority, dereliction, non-possession, decentralization because of the network structure of the Internet causes serious difficulty for the management, especially when technological solutions and

regulatory mechanisms has not caught up its development. The broadcast and television are easily under the control of a government and nation, but the Internet is not. Before *the internationality and popularity of the Internet*, it is necessary to have a co-ordination between countries and States in a common exertion of removing bad effects. But this co-ordination is really difficult since all countries and communities have the same interests and purposes when using the technology like the Internet.

From what discussed above, it can be said that the technology itself does not bring about the democracy. The encouragement or restraint on democracy concerning the technology must depend closely on three factors, namely *the technological design, the use of technology and the social environment in which the technology is used*. A technological design must rely on the ability of realization in the technical and utility aspect. And the use of technology decides that this technology will be used for the benefit of whom and for which purpose, and finally whether the social environment accepts this technology or not. With the third one, we mean that the social acceptance must start from the fact that people are persuaded by the advantages and right purposes that the technology brings about, not by the coercion. The environment of technological usage does not depend only on juridical institutions, but also on the specific culture of each country and nation, and the important thing is that it depends on the *trust* of the society in the information transmitted. Therefore it is necessary to carefully consider the relationship between these three factors in order to understand the nature of the influence of information technology over the political power, then we can produce appropriate forecasts and activities.

In brief, the influence of information technology over the *democracy* is incredibly complicated, it reveals in both positive and negative aspects. *On the one hand*, it creates good conditions for the participants to promote their power in the process of democracy; *on the other hand*, it also brings about the risk of abusing the power and misusing the democracy. Here it is necessary to be fully

aware that problems of democracy, equality or political power must be resolved not only by technological solutions but also by economic, social, political and cultural ones. Technology only promotes or restrains the development and deforms political problems in other forms. The information technology can improve the conditions of man, but if we want to enhance its effectiveness, it is imperative to have the adjustment and management towards the positive direction. Therefore, the governance of modern society cannot be without deeper research and studies on this issue, especially from the perspective of understanding of its nature./.

SOCIAL JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY AND THE MOBILIZATION OF SOCIAL RESOURCES FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION IN VIETNAM

Nguyen Thi Hoai Le^(*)

Ly Phuong Duyen^()**

Although not intensively analysing social justice and democracy in the nature of taxation, Marx developed very fundamental foundations for the exercise of democracy and equality in case the State uses various regulatory instruments to perform management tasks, including tax, in his works. K.Marx then described the concept of democracy as a type of state government in which the people play a central role in governance. He emphasised that democracy is the state regime of the people – the people is the basis for every decision and the only reason for the existence of the democratic state. In other words, it is the people themselves who create the democratic state in accordance with their wills, aspirations and right of freedom, and therefore, the democratic state is merely a manifestation of the wills of the people, expressing the right of freedom of the majority of people. With a deep understanding of the decisive and dominant role of the people in the democracy regime, K.Marx explained, in detail, the differences between the democracy regime and other political regimes with respect to the relationship between people and the law: *“Under the democracy regime, human beings do not exist because of the law, but the law exists for human... while in other models of state government, the existence of human is decided by the law”*¹.

In Marx’s thought of democracy, the political participation of the people is a key and decisive factor for the ownership of the people in the democratic state. At the same time, Marx also explained democracy based on

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¹ K.Marx and F.Engels. *Complete works*, vol.1. National Political Publishing House, Hanoi.2002, p.350.

the laws of social development and advancement, in which economics is an important factor. This view point comes from the historical materialist stance of K.Marx, whereby democracy is always closely linked with the movement and development of human history. It is the product that reflects the nature of human's social relationships. The most important of which is the economic relationship.

Another significant point regarding Marx's thought of democracy is his selective inheritance of rational arguments and ethical values from other theories of democracy that were developed by many earlier philosophers. In particular, K.Marx concurred with the ideas of justice in civil society, the development and promulgation of laws, the right for equality of the people before the law, the adjudication, as well as the enforcement of verdicts. The idea of drastically removing negative behaviour that makes the people suffer from authoritarianism and illegal activities of individuals out of the operation of the entire state system is also significant and deeply humanistic¹.

Therefore, it can be concluded that social justice is a special goal that all social regimes, economic schools of thought and theories of taxation are heading toward and desire to achieve. Democracy is identified to be the essential way to obtain this goal. In addition, taxation in every country is enacted in the form of a law, so the development of the law on taxation and the management of tax law enforcement must also achieve the goal of democracy and social justice. After the Communist Party of Viet Nam took Marxism – Leninism as the basis of its thought, the core ideas of K.Marx on democracy and equality were adopted in building society in general and in tax administration in particular.

Although the use of tax instruments varies among different tax theories (focus on demand or supply side, use of indirect or direct taxes), all

¹ United States Department of State, *Democracy in Brief*, Publications of the International Information Programme.

economists pay equally enormous attention on the goal of social justice. In order to achieve that goal, taxpayers must be placed at the centre of the policy framework and regulators have to consider their interest, attitude and mental thinking. In other words, good tax administration is always seen as a bridge to put tax policies into practice effectively and ensure the achievement of objectives set for the implementation of tax policies. Many tax experts said, “*Policy changes without changes in administration means no change*”. The economists of the World Bank also pointed out: “*Changes in tax policies need to be in line with the capacity of administration*”¹. Therefore, along with the elaboration of a fair tax policy, tax administration also needs to perform appropriate adjustments.

2. Tax administration and the mobilization of social resources for tax administration from the perspective of social justice and democracy

The matters of democracy and social justice are demonstrated in a clear and consistent manner – from the conceptual approach of tax administration; the principles, mechanism and performance measures of tax administration to the mobilization of social resources for tax administration of tax administration.

First, social justice and democracy mentioned in the conceptual approach of tax administration. First of all, it can be seen that tax administration is also a public management activity and therefore, does not fall outside the main concept as well as general approaches of management. This activity is “*necessary for the organisation to effectively exploit resources and achieve the planned objectives*”². Scholars around the world approach management in a variety of ways, and therefore have different definitions of management and tax administration. However, there are basically three

¹ See: Rechar M. Bird and Milka Casanegra de Jantscher (1992), *Improving Tax Administration in Developing Countries*, International Monetary Fund.

² Le Xuan Truong, (2016), *A textbook of tax administration*, Financial Publishing House, Hanoi, p.7.

approaches: (1) management by order; (2) management based on psychological factors and (3) management based on the process.

Management by order is defined as “*the intentional influence, on a regular and continuous basis, of the subject of management on the object of management to achieve the planned objectives*”¹. In this approach, the managers basically regulate by power and commands. The management tools they often use are imperative commands and the object of management is not involved in the management process but rather submits to it. Thus, democracy is not guaranteed.

Psychology-based management: “*is the process of working with and working through other individuals to achieve the goals of the organisation in an ever-changing environment*”². This approach aims to maximise the efforts of each member in the organisation and, hence, clearly demonstrate the democratic nature of the management process.

Process-based management –means “*planning, organisation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and adjustment*”. So, this management approach allows the participation of the object of management as well as other stakeholders in each stage of the process. Accordingly, democracy is most apparent here.

On the basis of their characteristics, each approach has its own advantages and disadvantages. However, in a fair, equitable and democratic society, command-based management has been gradually abandoned; instead, managers often combine process-based management and psychology-based management in managing taxpayers. And tax administration is defined as “*the organisation and control of tax collection activities in a country so as to implement tax policies to achieve planned goals*”. Given this definition, democracy has always been a requirement that tax administrators have to

¹ Ngo Thanh Duong (2006), *Discussing the concept of the mobilization of social resources for tax administration*, The Communist Review No. 103, 2006.

² *A textbook of Management Studies*, Houghton Mifflin Publisher (5th edition).

address if they want to achieve the goals of the tax policies, including social justice.

Second, equality and democracy being incorporated in the principles of tax administration

In order to achieve the objectives set by tax policies, tax administration needs to follow some fundamental principles, including: (1) *Centralised democracy*: ensure uniform application of management procedures in close relation with the implementation of other taxes, given the involvement of the entire management apparatus; maintain a publicly open and democratic manner in dealing with violation behaviour as well as rewarding activities to ensure the convenience and enhance the effectiveness of management and equality for all taxpayers; (2) *Transparency*: take advantage of the knowledge of the people through their participation in the development of tax policies, thereby supporting tax agencies in implementing tax collection measures, spreading information on a wide scale and raising the awareness of taxpayers so that they can understand clearly their rights and obligations while fulfilling their obligations towards the State. Hence, it will bring into full play the role of the people as a strong factor for inspection and control while limiting all the negative effects possibly arising from the tax industry and taxpayers; (3) *Cost-saving and efficiency*: minimise the operation cost of the tax administration apparatus as well as the compliance cost of taxpayers to achieve the greatest amount of tax revenue at the lowest possible cost; (4) *Appropriateness and consensus*: Any regulatory adjustment or issuance of new regulation requires public support and should be consistently guided by management agencies. At the same time, it must be based on the available stock of physical and human resources that a country attains in a given period¹.

¹ Le Xuan Truong, (2016), *A textbook of tax administration*, Financial Publishing House, Hanoi, pp.12-13.

Given the four principles mentioned above, tax administration must always be directed towards taxpayers to provide the best possible conditions for them and other stakeholders to participate in the management process. Moreover, it should always respect the rights and the fulfilment of obligations of taxpayers. It means that democracy has always been one of the leading criteria in the development and implementation of tax administration.

Third, equality and democracy being demonstrated through the mechanism and performance measures of tax administration

Based on the above management principles, the mechanism and performance measures of tax administration are also increasingly changing to better ensure the goal of social justice and democracy.

The performance measures of tax administration are specific methods that tax administrators use to manage the behaviour of taxpayers as well as the activities of tax authorities themselves. In tax administration, regulators often use the method of process-based management and the black-box model to streamline the management process. The black box model is represented in sequence: Input elements, black box elements, and output elements.

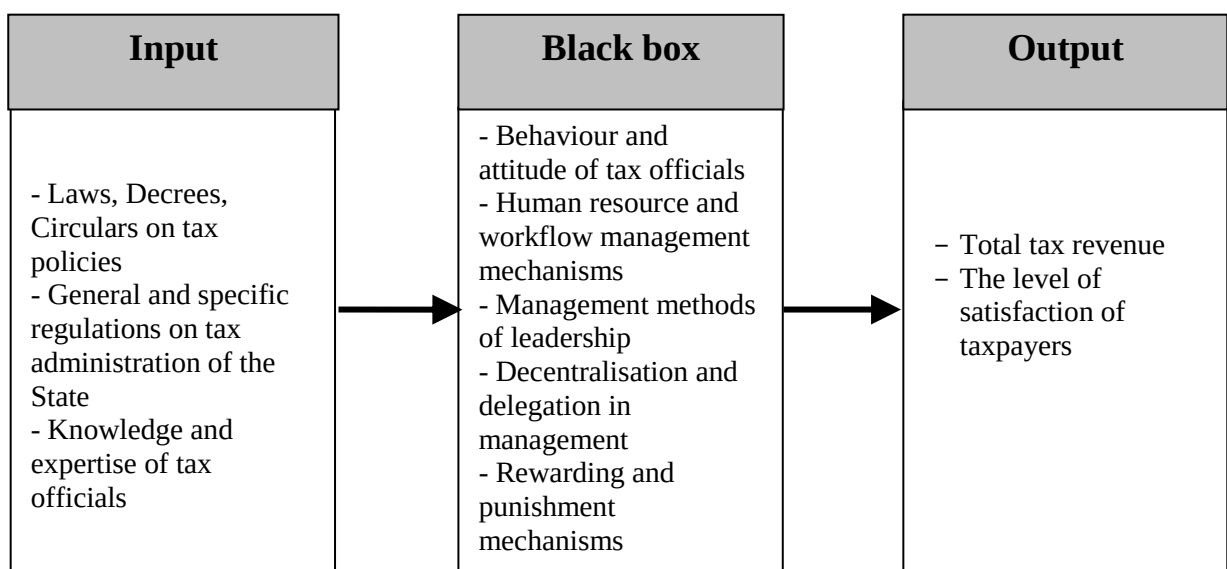


Figure 1.1. The black box model in tax administration

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the process-based management model

In this model, rather than focusing only on the tax revenue as its ultimate goal, tax administration also targets another vital element – the level of satisfaction of taxpayers. This is a modern and innovative management concept that places the object of management at the heart of the process. With this management mind-set, regulations, legal documents, procedures... and the attitude of regulators must also change, heading towards taxpayers and seeing them as customers. Now taxpayers can participate in the management process instead of passively obeying the commands of management agencies as in the imperative (command-based) management model.

Based on this model, a network of relationships in tax administration has also been formed, in which the responsibilities and legitimate rights of taxpayers and tax authorities are closely linked on the basis of the methods through which they are organised and executed. This is called the mechanism of tax administration. There are two main mechanisms that are usually employed by tax authorities in tax administration: (1) *The tax-notify mechanism in which tax authorities will be in charge of calculating tax duty*: taxpayers declare their tax duties first; tax authorities will check and determine the amount of taxes to be paid, then notify taxpayers about their decisions; and (2) *The tax self – assessment mechanism*: taxpayers base on the provisions of tax laws to determine their tax obligations, declare their tax duties, submit declaration forms, pay taxes based on the amount they have already calculated and bear full responsibility for the precision of the declared information. Tax authorities are responsible for supporting and guiding taxpayers in completing tax obligations so that they can fully understand tax regulations, policies, declaration and payment procedures... to fulfil their tax obligations¹.

¹ Le Xuan Truong, (2016), *A textbook of tax administration*, Financial Publishing House, Hanoi, pp.23,24.

Accordingly, while the tax- notify mechanism is the management model based on the command-driven approach, the tax self-assessment mechanism focuses more on exploiting psychological factors and tends to move towards the process-based approach in tax administration. Thus, the application of tax self-assessment mechanism is probably the most basic and obvious expression of equality and democracy in tax administration, which gives taxpayers the opportunity to participate in tax administration and have access to management regulations to secure fair execution of their rights and obligations.

Fourth, the mobilization of social resources for tax administration with relation to social justice and democracy

Along with the development of society, the role of taxes is increasingly expanded. Apart from the original role of generating resources for the State as before, it also plays a greater role in regulating the macro economy and ensuring social justice, which is considered one of the most important roles of the modern tax system. Though the idea of privatisation of tax administration has emerged in the world since the early 1990s due to the increasing demands of taxpayers for democracy¹, the mobilization of social resources for tax administration is still considered a sensitive issue in Vietnam. In a certain sense, the issue of the mobilization of social resources for tax administration of tax administration has hindered certain contradictions as the concept of taxation must be associated with the power of the State and only the State has the right to set taxes and collect taxes. However, this issue will become more apparent when the concept of tax administration the mobilization of social resources for tax administration is clarified.

First and foremost, it is possible to see that, in society, interrelated individuals and population groups have complex interactions in terms of

¹ See: Luis Fernando Ramirez Acuna (1992), *Privatisation of Tax Administration*, International Monetary Fund.

economic, political, cultural and social aspects. K.Marx wrote: “Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses *the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand*”¹.

According to Wikipedia – the online encyclopaedia, *the mobilization of social resources for tax administration is a concept of anthropology and sociology, which is defined as a lifelong process of inheriting and disseminating norms, customs and ideologies of a society, through which individuals can develop their abilities and absorb different cultural patterns. In other words, it is the process by which people are constantly adopting cultural values into their personality to live in society as a member.*

Yet, when considering the delivery of public services, people do not usually refer to the concept of the mobilization of social resources for tax administration as above, but in the sense that the mobilization of social resources for tax administration is “a form of privatisation” or “the participation of the private sector” (PSP – Private Sector Participation, PPP – Public Private Partnership or PPI – Private Participation in Infrastructure) in providing public services/benefits for the society².

This definition can be demonstrated more clearly through the views of some scholars:

“The mobilization of social resources for tax administration is the process of transferring work to the civil (non-state) sector so that they can help the government complete some work that used to be carried out by the State, or according to the “old thought”, should have been completed by the State”. For example, the the mobilization of social resources for tax

¹ Quoted from: Ngo Thanh Duong (2006), *Discussing the concept of the mobilization of social resources for tax administration*, The Communist Review No. 103, 2006.

² See: Pham Sy Liem (2011), “*The definitions of privatisation – the mobilization of social resources for tax administration and public private partnership*”. <http://www.vncold.vn/Web/Content.aspx?distid=2750>.

administration of education is “mobilising material and intellectual resources of society to nurture the development of education”¹.

“The mobilization of social resources for tax administration of cultural activities is to build a responsible community of people from all social classes for the creation and improvement of a healthy and productive social and economic environment so that it can provide more favourable conditions for the development of cultural activities. From that, it can facilitate the attraction of all resources, economic participants and people of all social classes to participate in the creation, supply and distribution of cultural products and art works of high quality”².

Darrin Grimsey and Mervin K. Lewis also brought out a definition of PPP that is very close to the concept of the mobilization of social resources for tax administration, which is “*a risk – sharing relationship based upon an agreed aspiration between the public and private (including voluntary) sectors to bring about a desired public policy outcome*”³.

Thus, there might be major differences between the concept of the mobilization of social resources for tax administration in general and the concept of the mobilization of social resources for tax administration in the delivery of public services in particular. Given the above definitions and understandings, within the scope of this article, the matter of the mobilization of social resources for tax administration of tax administration needs to be approached from the following viewpoint: tax law is a specific area under the management of the State and needs to be regulated by competent authorities; the non-state sector may be involved in the elaboration of the law and to be assigned certain rights to perform the work of tax administration. Thus, the

¹ Nguyen Tai Dong (2017), *A number of issues regarding economic equality and economic equality in Vietnam today*, Proceedings in an international conference, Institute of Philosophy, Buon Ma Thuot May - 2017,119-126.

² Dang Van Bai, (2012), *The mobilization of social resources for tax administration of cultural activities* <http://quydisan.org.vn/xa-hoi-hoa-cac-hoat-dong-van-hoa/a1300993.html>

³ Quoted from: Pham Sy Liem (2011), “*The definitions of privatisation – the mobilization of social resources for tax administration and public private partnership*”. <http://www.vncold.vn/Web/Content.aspx?distid=2750>.

State does not lose its power when some tasks of tax administration are assigned to the non-state sector. Companies and individuals do not have the freedom to promulgate tax policies as they are required to be enforced by law and by government decisions. In other words, *the mobilization of social resources for tax administration of tax administration is the participation of the non-state sector in tax administration in order to better manage taxation activities.*

Thus, the participation of taxpayers in tax administration is a legitimate need to ensure equality for taxpayers at both angles: ensuring fundamental rights and equality of opportunity. The acceptance and promotion of the mobilization of social resources for tax administration of tax administration also demonstrate democracy in management and ensure the principles of transparency and consensus when performing tax administration.

In summary, social justice is the goal that taxation policies in all countries and all periods of time desire to achieve and the practices of tax administration are said to be essential to obtain the goal. To secure the accomplishment of this goal, tax administration needs to be directed towards the people, respecting the rights and interests of the people as well as creating the best opportunities for them to exercise their rights and obligations through appropriate management methods and mechanisms.

3. Social justice and democracy in the mobilization of social resources for tax administration: Some issues need to be addressed in Vietnam

In Vietnam, before the Law on Tax Administration was promulgated and came into effect¹, tax administration had been mostly performed following the traditional mechanism in which tax agencies would be in charge of calculating tax duty and taxpayers would have to obey and follow their decisions to fulfil tax obligations. The involvement of taxpayers in the

¹Law on Tax Administration No. 78/2006/QH11 dated 29/11/2006 came into force since 1st July 2007.

development of tax policies and tax administration was very limited. The Law on Tax Administration is the basic foundation for the mobilization of social resources for tax administration, social justice and democracy in tax administration, which have been expressed more clearly in these following aspects:

First, there are legal grounds for the mobilization of social resources for tax administration of tax administration, which ensure the participation of all subjects for the goal of a more and more fair, equitable and democratic society.

Based on the perceptions and directions of the financial sector, the Tax System Strategy for 2011-2020 also sets out specific objectives and requirements for tax administration reform, stating: “Thoroughly modernising the practice of tax administration to develop both management methods and administrative procedures in accordance with international standards; improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisational apparatus and personnel structure; strengthening and refining the supply of facilities and equipment; pushing propagation activities, support and provision of services for taxpayers; enhancing the capabilities of tax agencies to inspect, examine and supervise taxpayers’ compliance of laws; applying information technology and electronic tax to boost the efficiency and effectiveness of tax administration, striving to make Vietnam become one of the leading countries in Southeast Asia in the ranking of favourable taxation environment by 2020”.

The Law on Tax Administration No.78 /2006/QH11 ratified by the National Assembly on November 29th, 2006 is currently the highest legal framework for tax administration, acting as the basis for implementing structural reforms in tax administration mechanism and particularly helping it evolve from the traditional imperative model to the tax self-assessment mechanism. Accordingly, in the old model, taxpayers shall perform their tax obligations passively. The new model, yet, raises the responsibility of taxpayers in calculating and paying taxes

toward a more active manner. The law has a comprehensive scope of regulation and is applicable to all stages of the process of collecting taxes and other State budget revenues; it also clearly defines the rights, obligations and responsibilities of taxpayers, tax officials and tax authorities. Specifically, the Law on Tax Administration has also highlighted the legal responsibilities of State agencies, other organisations and individuals in the practice of tax administration with regulations on business organisations providing tax services. Thus, it can be said that the Law on Tax Administration is an important legal basis, which is the foundation for the mobilization of social resources for tax administration of taxation.

Thus, it can be seen that the mobilization of social resources for tax administration of tax administration has been going inline with the direction and guideline of the State, as well as the general socio-economic development trend of the world. The legislation of the participation of State agencies, other organisations and individuals in tax administration not only ensures social justice in terms of distribution according to contribution and social redistribution but also demonstrates democracy in administration, where stakeholders are involved in every step of the administration process. However, the Law on Tax Administration only provides general regulations without detailed regulations for specific issues, especially on coordination activities, information provision and tax enforcement. Hence, tax administration still faces many difficulties.

Secondly, the self-assessment system places taxpayers at the centre of the process, demonstrating the democratic characteristic of administration.

Starting from the requirements of the industrialisation and modernisation process of the country, in July 2004, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee Communist Party of Vietnam approved the Reform Strategy for the Taxation System until 2010, which clearly stated: “Applying the self-assessment mechanism on production and business establishments to promote the self-declaration and self-calculation of taxes; reorganising the tax administration apparatus in order to ensure

the functions of tax administration and create a organisational structure that is able to effectively manage different types of taxpayers; reorganising the General Department of Taxation in the direction of guaranteeing concentrated, effective and efficient management of the entire tax collection system nationwide”¹.

The self-assessment system (SAS) has been piloted in Viet Nam since 2004 with 457 participating taxpayers in two cities, Quang Ninh and Ho Chi Minh City, and two types of taxes: value added tax and corporate income tax. In 2005, three more tax authorities applied SAS to 1,500 taxpayers and expanded the adoption of this mechanism to a number of other taxes such as royalties and excise taxes. Since 2007, after the Law on Tax Administration came into effect (1st July 2007), taxpayers of all economic sectors have been made to comply with SAS and SAS are now applied to all kinds of taxes. The application of SAS shows more respect to the obligations of taxpayers as well as the right of taxpayers to fulfil their tax obligations in a more active manner.

Regarding the participation of taxpayers in tax administration, it is clear that: Much costs can be saved when the tax authorities are not required to examine and calculate the amount of taxes payable to taxpayers or notify them about their tax obligations. The administrative costs saved from the printing and sending out tax notices are basically taxpayers’ contributions to tax administration. At the same time, the implementation of SAS brings a greater benefit, namely, raising the legal liability of taxpayers in declaring and paying taxes. When complying with the SAS, the taxpayers must take full responsibility for the truthfulness of the declared data as well as the precision of their calculations of the payable tax amounts, thereby enhancing their self-consciousness and the need to take a more active role in completing their obligations. In addition, the SAS has established trust between tax authorities and taxpayers².

¹ Political Report of the 11th Party Central Committee at the 12th National Party Congress.

²In 2017, there were 126,739 newly - established enterprises nationwide (an increase of 19,000 enterprises compared to 2016); 67,626 enterprises which closed down their business; 21,978 enterprises which

The application of the tax self-assessment system is considered to be the first success of the mobilization of social resources for tax administration of tax administration, and also a success of the exercise of democracy in tax administration in Vietnam.

However, most taxpayers still perceive taxes as an obligation but not a right. Thus, the participation of taxpayers in the self-assessment system as encountered some limitations such as: taxpayers have not been active enough in performing tax declaration and payment; some still tried to defer the fulfilment of their tax obligations or deliberately declared false data to commit tax evasion. Also, the occurrence of false declaration, late filing and late tax payment are still quite common. False declaration of tax obligations may happen due to limitations in the knowledge of taxpayers; or the fact that the propaganda and popularisation of the laws have not been sufficiently effective; the work of guiding and supporting taxpayers have not taken appropriate measures; the inspection and examination have not been carried out in a timely manner and sanctions are not enough deterrent.

Third, develop propaganda programmes and support services for taxpayers and tax agents as a form of guaranteeing fundamental rights to all individuals in society; equal opportunity for taxpayers – thus ensuring social justice.

Propaganda and support services for taxpayers are some of the most basic and important tasks in tax administration. These tasks can be socialised easily on a large scale. In other words, a very large number of objects can easily participate in the process.

temporarily ceased their business activities; 16,412 enterprises which restarted operation. By the end of the year, there were 639,104 enterprises operating in different production and business sectors nationwide, increasing by 71,338 enterprises as compared to 31/12/2016. In the past year, taxpayers have strictly complied with requests for tax declaration and proceeded tax payments in a timely manner, with the amounts that were close to the predicted amounts. Nationally, on average, the total number of submitted declaration forms reached 96% of total declaration forms that were requested to submit, the rate of forms submitted on time/total form hit 93%. The number of declaration forms that had not been submitted accounted for 4% of total forms that were requested to submit.

Given the reform of tax policies, during the past years, Vietnam has made great efforts in reforming tax administration and improving the efficiency of support services for taxpayers. The means of support being applied in Vietnam are quite diverse and have initially achieved certain results¹.

As can be seen, the means of propaganda being used have become numerous and more diversified with the keen participation of more social classes in society as in other programmes of the tax authorities. Nevertheless, most means of propaganda and support are implemented in the form of direct contracts between the tax authorities and news agencies, radio stations, television stations or publishers; principally in strict accordance with the objectives and orientations of the tax authorities and the utilisation of the State budget. Apart from some seminars organised by consulting and audit firms to provide information and advice for taxpayers or VCCI's paid training workshops for taxpayers, other forms of direct support, training sessions, and dialogue meetings are still sponsored by the State budget. The non-State sector has contributed positively to coordinating and organising propaganda programmes and support services for taxpayers but has not truly actively shared resources with the State in carrying out propaganda and support

¹In 2017, the General Department of Taxation implemented the programme "Accompanying start-up enterprises" with the goal of protecting enterprises from difficulties and obstacles in taxation that might affect their operation at the beginning stage of the business. The General Department of Taxation, Taxation Department of Ho Chi Minh City and other Taxation Departments opened an information gate to support start-up firms, encourage and create favourable conditions for business households to convert to enterprises; helped them to complete initial tax administrative procedures in the fastest, most convenient and economical manner; assisted enterprises in accessing information channels or approaching support points of tax authorities so that they can completely focus on expanding their production and business activities; continued to hold dialogue seminars with taxpayers and other conferences, training workshops on newly-issued policies and regimes; organised several "tax weeks to listen to the voice of taxpayers" to timely support and address any difficulties and problems in taxation currently threatening taxpayers. Moreover, the whole industry has held conferences to commend organisations and individuals that excellently fulfilled their tax obligations in 2016 and hold many dialogue conferences with businesses. Tax agencies also disclosed information on tax administrative procedures and the settlement process for tax-related administrative issues via the "one-stop shop" mechanism; guided taxpayers on the process, procedures and policies when performing their tax obligations; received and promptly handled tax dossiers and procedural responses of taxpayers sent to the tax offices through the OSS section. The receipt and processing of tax dossiers and other tax procedural responses were carried out quickly and the results were delivered within the prescribed time limit, thereby solving difficulties and problems in the course of implementing tax laws for taxpayers. In 2017, more than 295 thousand questions of taxpayers were addressed by various means; 1,420 dialogue sessions were organised for over 98,000 business participants; the number of articles on mass media reached over 50 thousand articles in newspapers and online information channels...

activities to assist taxpayers. Therefore, the participation of the non-State sector in tax administration is rather limited, especially regarding the issue of resource sharing. Still, the results obtained have shown the potentials of the private sector to participate in this field of management.

Along with the positive results of the mobilisation and exploitation of non-state resources for policy advocacy and propaganda efforts, recently, the concept of **tax agents** has also become increasingly familiar to taxpayers. Tax agents can participate in tax administration in the following aspects: to propagate, support and consult to taxpayers so that they can fully understand their tax obligations and easily declare tax returns with a higher degree of accuracy and fewer errors. Tax authorities can easily approach and manage taxpayers through tax agents as the number of official agencies required now is much smaller than that needed to directly manage all the taxpayers. Tax agents benefit from the collection of fees charged to taxpayers. Tax authorities can also cut costs that are supposed to be spent on propaganda activities and support services for taxpayers or tax-filling costs (as tax declaration now demonstrates a high degree of accuracy). And taxpayers – even though they have to pay for tax agent’s services – will save a lot of time and money when filing tax returns, executing tax procedures, or complying with policies and regimes about tax. Thus, from an economic point of view, the development of tax agents is beneficial for all three parties: The State, the providers of tax services (individuals and enterprises) and taxpayers. However, the development of tax agents in Vietnam in the past time is not really remarkable. First, the operation of tax agents in Vietnam is quite limited while certified tax agents have not yet implemented strong propaganda or promotion programmes about their tax-filling service. Therefore, they were unable to find customers nor proved their professional skills and expertise or created trust and prestige with taxpayers. As a result, taxpayers have little access to learn about the functions of tax agents as well as their legal interests when

signing service contracts with tax agents. In addition, the process of applying legal documents related to this issue has shown some shortcomings such as securing confidential information of taxpayers, assuring other legal interests of taxpayers when using services provided by tax agents.

Apart from the three matters mentioned above, the permission granted to firms to produce self-printed invoices according to Decree No.51/2010/ND-CP (came into effect since January 1st, 2011); the development of electronic tax declaration and payment processes; the promotion of tax payment through the commercial banking system and reform of tax administrative procedures; or the success of cutting time used to complete tax procedures to 117 hours per year, are also considered significant reforms that were directed at taxpayers to demonstrate democracy in tax administration.

Some recommendations

The Political Report of the 11th Party Central Committee at the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam clearly stated: “Continue to promote socialist democracy and guarantee that all the rights of the State shall belong to the people. All policies and guidelines of the Party, as well as policies and laws of the State, must be derived from the aspirations, legitimate rights and interests of the people, consulted to them and reflect their viewpoints. Besides, democracy must be fully and seriously implemented in all areas of the social life. It is also necessary to ensure that people can participate in all stages of any decision-making processes that are related to their benefits and their lives, from the contribution of initiatives, discussion and debate to the monitoring of the implementation process in reality. Focus on developing legal documents directly related to the mastery of the people”¹.

With these directions, not only tax administration, but all management activities in general, must always aim for equality and

¹ Nguyen Thi Doan, Do Minh Cuong, Phuong Ky Son (1996), *Theories of management*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi.

democracy as their ultimate goal and principal guideline when being implemented in practice.

The mobilization of social resources for tax administration of tax administration has been a major success, not only as an effective guideline of management, but also for the remarkable results obtained from the practice of management. However, to further promote democracy in tax administration so as to achieve social justice, it is first essential to continue to maintain a consistent management thought – that is to place taxpayers at the centre of the process. Therefore, it is necessary to create favourable conditions for taxpayers through: (1) legal documents must respect the rights of taxpayers and form a comprehensive legal framework for taxpayers to exercise their legitimate rights; (2) tax authorities need to continuously maintain and improve the self-assessment system so that the process will be most convenient, economical, time-saving and resource-saving for taxpayers. The measures to be taken in the coming time include the development of necessary infrastructure to ensure that taxpayers can declare and pay electronic taxes, or complete tax procedures online; thereby minimising the amount of direct contact between taxpayers and tax authorities while still ensuring the autonomy of both taxpayers and regulators; (3) developing support services for taxpayers, especially public services provided by tax authorities, as a way to ensure equality among taxpayers in accordance with the contributions they have made to the State.

Conclusion:

Given the advancement of the society and the development of new social management theories, Marx's thought of social justice and democracy are still valuable today as they ever were, not to mention that they are further developed to be adopted more flexibly in the current context. Economic management, in general, and tax administration, in particular, should be considered a complex field of management with many subjects that require

management. Therefore, if equality is not guaranteed for all subjects under management or democracy is secured during the implementation process, management tasks may fail to meet their goals. Hence, studying Marx's concepts on social justice and democracy to employ them in management practices is a difficult but indispensable task for management agencies, especially tax managers in this modern society.

CHAPTER THREE
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
AND DEVELOPMENT OF MARX'S THOUGHT ON SOCIAL
JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY

MARXISM, SOCIAL JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY, AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Rodney G. Pepper^(*)

In this presentation I shall first state what I believe to be the relationship between socialism, on the one hand, and democracy and social justice, on the other. Then I will elaborate my views on some important questions concerning these topics.

Socialism, Social Justice, Democracy, and Civil Liberties

Political democracy and civil liberties (including the rule of law) are important components of any adequate view or theory of social justice; but they aren't the only components of such an adequate view or theory since we must also include in any such theory protection of people's subsistence rights (to minimally decent material living conditions), a principle concerning fair equality of opportunity (in the competition for desirable educational slots, jobs, careers, and social positions), and, arguably, principles concerning overall fair distributions of income and wealth in a society and also a principle concerning social democracy (e.g. workplace democracy). And this doesn't even cover ecological ethics concerning how we are morally required to treat other (non-human) creatures and the natural environment, as a whole, when such questions are separate from questions of how best to treat them if we want the best results for humans ... especially in cases in which moral treatment of other creatures and/or the natural environment might not be maximally beneficial to humans.

Although I can't elaborate my theory of social justice – called Justice as Fair Rights¹ – here, suffice it to say that it contains principles covering all

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of these moral concerns (except that of ecological ethics, which is a theoretical project on which I am currently working). While my theory of social justice is a modified version of Rawls's theory, my overall social and political philosophy advocates socialism². While some argue that such a "liberal" theory of social justice is incompatible with socialism (and Marxism), I strongly disagree with this suggestion.

First, it is important to realize that very few theories of social justice (or moral theories, in general) automatically advocate one particular type of socioeconomic system or one particular type of political system. We can only determine what socioeconomic and political systems a particular normative (moral) theory advocates (as either acceptable, optimal, or the only acceptable one) once we combine it with a set of empirical, social-scientific theories and theses. These include theories or theses in the realms of economics, sociology, history, psychology, etc. Moreover, the particular socioeconomic and political systems judged to be either acceptable, optimal, or the only acceptable ones might also depend on the historical conditions of particular societies. For example, John Rawls distinguishes between economically well-developed societies and societies that are not as economically well-developed (e.g. the ones often referred to as underdeveloped, developing, or Third World countries) and argues that it is not reasonable to apply exactly the same principles of social justice to both kinds of societies. In fact, Rawls claims

¹ See my "A Modified Rawlsian Theory of Social Justice: Justice as Fair Rights", presented at the 24th World Congress of Philosophy, Beijing, 2018, available at rodneypeffer.com.

² To clarify whether my theory is Marxist or not, I accept and have developed a Rawlsian theory of social justice (because I think it is the best one available in terms of its structure, clarity, applicability, and compatibility with my considered moral judgments). But the overall Moral and Social Theory (or Moral, Social, and Political Philosophy) I advocate, and have tried to further develop, is Marxist because, as I explain on the first page of *Marxism, Morality, and Social Justice* (Princeton University Press, 1990), it (1) advocates the most basic political positions of Marxism (namely, that certain kinds of socialist societies that are historically feasible are morally preferable to capitalist societies and that social and/or political revolutions are justified if they are both necessary and sufficient to create such socialist societies) and (2) it is based on the most basic values of the Marxist (and greater socialist) tradition (namely, humanism, humanitarianism, internationalism, egalitarianism, and freedom as self-determination); and (3) it is based on certain basic Marxist empirical theories (namely, its theory of classes and class struggle, its analysis of the inevitable dysfunctions of capitalist societies, and its empirical projection that better socialist societies are historically feasible).

that the absolute priority of liberty over the other principles in his theory of social justice does not apply to societies until they have reached a certain level of social and economic development. This is not to say that Rawls's Principle of Maximum Equal Basic Liberties does not apply at all to less economically developed societies but, rather, that some tradeoffs between this principle and his other principles – namely, Fair Equality of Opportunity and the Difference Principle, which governs allowable inequalities of income and wealth in a society – are sometime justified in less economically (and socially) developed societies; whereas in economically well-developed societies such trade-offs are never justified, according to Rawls. Thus, for example, if in a poorer country some limitations on political democracy or civil liberties were absolutely necessary in order to accelerate economic development such that its citizens could be raised up out of extreme and debasing poverty as soon as possible, this would probably be justified on Rawls's theory. On the other hand, in a relatively wealthy country such trade-offs (limitations) of democracy or civil liberties would not be justified according to Rawls's theory... at least on the empirical assumption that such trade-offs would not be required in such societies in order to make sure that no one was forced to live in extreme and debasing poverty¹.

And even with respect to the very same society, a particular theory of social justice (or general moral theory) will reach different conclusions concerning what kinds of socioeconomic and political systems (and institutions, laws, policies, and programs) are acceptable, optimal, or the only ones acceptable depending on empirical, social-scientific theories and theses

¹ Whereas Rawls's conditions for when such trade-offs between basic liberties and other social primary goods (such as opportunities and the material goods of income and wealth) are justified are somewhat vague, my theory of Justice as Fair Rights solves this problem by stating that basic liberties can only be limited on the basis of better meeting the Basic Rights Principle (which demands that people's security rights and subsistence rights be respected and protected, where "meeting people's subsistence rights" includes making sure that they can meet their needs that must be fulfilled in order for them to be normally functioning persons and citizens, which includes not only such basic biological needs as food, water, and shelter but also a minimal level of education, etc.).

one takes to be true (or most likely true). Thus, for example, with respect to economically and socially well-developed societies a “liberal” theory of social justice such as John Rawls’s “Justice as Fairness” or my “Justice as Fair Rights” can advocate either egalitarian, democratic forms of capitalism or egalitarian, democratic forms of socialism depending on our views about whether capitalist or socialist socioeconomic systems are more likely to meet the principles of our theories. In fact, Rawls explicitly makes this point in his initial *magnus opus*¹:

“Which of these systems [capitalist or socialist] and the many intermediate forms most fully answers to the requirements of justice ... depends in large part upon the traditions, institutions, and social forces of each country, and its particular historical circumstances. The political judgment in any given case will then turn on which variation is most likely to work out best in practice”².

Moreover, Rawls – and virtually all other progressive liberal theorists – do not accept the right to own large-scale productive property as a fundamental moral right. Progressive liberals such as Rawls include the right to own personal property – and perhaps small-scale productive property that one uses to earn any income – as fundamental moral rights, but not the right to own large-scale productive property. Whether there is a legal right to own large-scale productive property – and, thus, whether capitalism is justified – is a question that can only be answered by applying all the principles of social justice (as a whole) to feasible social arrangements (possible societies) in a particular set of historical circumstances. If recognizing such a legal right to own large-scale productive property is justified in this manner then capitalism is justified; if not, then some kind of socialism is justified.

¹ *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, 1971; revised edition, 1999.

² *A Theory of Justice*, 1971, p. 274; revised edition, 1999, p.242.

This is displayed in Rawls's theory as follows. The first principle of Rawls's famous two (actually three) principles of social justice is "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all"¹. Rawls then gives his list of liberties covered by the first principle as "freedom of speech and assembly; liberty of conscience and freedom of thought; freedom of the person along with the right to hold (personal) property; and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure as defined by the concept of the rule of law"². Note that the word "personal" in parentheses is in Rawls original text; it hasn't been added. However, Rawls clearly specifies that "liberties not on the list, for example, the right to own certain kinds of property (e.g. means of production), and freedom of contract as understood by the doctrine of laissez-faire, are not basic; and so they are not protected by the priority of the first principle"³. This is another way to show that certain kinds of socialism are justified on Rawls's theory and similar theories of social justice.

In fact, any progressive liberal theory of social justice such as that of John Stuart Mill as well as John Rawls clearly justifies humane versions of socialism rather than capitalism ... at least if one accepts the truth of even (what I call) a minimal set of Marxist empirical, social-scientific views or theories. This is primarily the Marxist theory of classes and class struggle and the Marxist critique of the dysfunctions of capitalism (and projections that humane forms of socialism are feasible).

Marxism, Liberalism, and Contemporary Political Philosophy⁴

Sometimes it is asserted that Marxism and liberalism are completely incompatible because Marx often criticized liberalism in his writings and seemed to draw a strict line between his views and liberalism. But I think this

¹ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p.61.

² Ibid., p.61.

³ Rawls, "A Kantian Conception of Equality", Cambridge Review, Feb. 1975, p. 96

⁴ Some of this section is taken from a 20-question interview of me conducted by Professor Li Yang of Peking University in the summer of 2018.

criticism involves a misunderstanding of such “liberal” theories as that of John Rawls, as well as not properly appreciating the difference between the types of liberalism that Marx was attacking and the kind of egalitarian, progressive liberalism espoused by Rawls and other recent and contemporary liberal and liberal-socialist political philosophers. In addition, I think it underestimates Marx's own commitment to certain so-called “liberal” ideals. After all, in his analysis of the 1871 Paris Commune in *The Civil War in France* Marx praises the political democracy the Commune had instituted and, famously, refers to it as “the harbinger of future communist society.” In that work Marx advocates the democratic institutions created by the Commune, including elections for all political positions, with political representatives to be subject to recall and paid no more than an average worker (in order to avoid bureaucratization). Moreover, in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx very strongly defends such civil liberties as freedom of speech and freedom of the press. As I note in *Marxism, Morality, and Social Justice*:

...In his later works many of Marx's criticisms of rights can be taken as criticisms not of rights in general but of bourgeois conceptions of rights. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, for example, Marx is *not critical* of “the ... general staff of the liberties of 1848, personal liberty, liberty of the press, of speech, of association, of assembly, of education and of religion, etc”. In fact, he expresses regret that later in the course of the Revolution of 1848 “the right of association – one of the most essential of the political victories of the February days – was abolished.” Rather, he is critical of the fact that in reality “all those liberties [are] regulated in such a way that

the bourgeoisie in its enjoyment of them does not come into collision with the equal rights of the other classes”¹.

And there is absolutely no reason to believe that Marx didn't support these ideals being instantiated in the type of socialist society he was describing and advocating in his own works, even in what he referred to as the first stage of communism as opposed to the higher stage of communism (or what I call full-fledged communism), which Marx and Classical Marxists – as well as socialist anarchists (e.g. Bakunin and Kropotkin) – thought would be stateless as well as classless.

Of course, Marx was not a utopian and he realized that anti-capitalist revolutions would probably involve violence and that the government that arose after a successful anti-capitalist (“communist”) revolution may have to employ coercive methods to keep the capitalist class and its supporters (and hangers-on) from staging a successful counter-revolution; methods such as (at least temporarily) outlawing pro-capitalist political parties. But he – and Engels and most other Classical Marxists, at least up to the time of the 1917 Russian (Bolshevik) Revolution – clearly thought that this transition period would be relatively short. And since they thought such revolutions would have the support of the vast majority of people they didn't think that the coercion involved would have to be either long-lasting or overly severe. Moreover, Marx and the other Classical Marxists believed that once a stable socialist society was firmly established (in a relatively short period of time) there would no longer be any need for such coercive measures and, as Lenin said in *State and Revolution* (1917), the new socialist societies would be “more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republics” of the time.

Of course, many people have thought – or at least claimed – that Marx and other Marxists were advocating undemocratic, repressive political

¹ *Marxism, Morality, and Social Justice*, p.327. The quotes from Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* are taken from *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Robert Tucker, ed.), W.W. Norton, N.Y., 1972, pp.447 and 468.

systems as part of the socialist societies they advocated because they used the term “dictatorship of the proletariat” (as in the *Communist Manifesto*) to describe the societies to be created after anti-capitalist revolutions. But this is not true, and is based on a misunderstanding of what Marx (and other Classical Marxists) meant by the term “dictatorship of the proletariat.” When Marx used this term to describe the new form of society he expected to come into existence after the overthrow of capitalism he was not speaking of an authoritarian or repressive type of government. In fact, this term – the way that Marx and other Classical Marxists used it up to and including V.I.Lenin in his *State and Revolution* (1917) – was not a reference to any type of government or political system but, rather, described a particular type of socioeconomic system; namely, a socioeconomic system in which the working class was the ruling class rather than the capitalist and/or land-owning classes; or, in other words, a socialist society. Similarly, Marx uses the term “dictatorship of the bourgeoisie” to describe any and all capitalist socioeconomic systems; that is, any socioeconomic system in which the capitalist class is the ruling class. And just as societies that were “dictatorships of the bourgeoisie” could – and did – have many different kinds of political systems ranging from authoritarian (as in 19th Century Prussia and Czarist Russia) to constitutional monarchies (as in Britain) to democratic republics (as in France and the U.S.), so too, in theory, could “dictatorships of the proletariat” have many different types of political systems, including extremely democratic systems... which, of course, is the kind of political system Marx thought would exist in a “dictatorship of the proletariat” after anti-capitalist revolutions, as well as the kind of political system he strongly advocated. It is true that the term “dictatorship of the proletariat” came to be used by later Marxists – even including Lenin after 1917 – to mean an

authoritarian socialist state dominated by the Communist Party ... but this is another story...¹

But, of course, the Classical Marxists also thought that these anti-capitalist revolutions would first occur in the most highly economically developed countries (e.g. Germany, France, Britain, or the U.S.) Unfortunately, as it turned out in actual history, the first anti-capitalist revolutions happened in less economically developed and even semi-feudal countries (such as Russia and China) which then had to withstand the economic, ideological, and (sometimes) military attacks of many of the most powerful capitalist countries that existed. Nevertheless, it seems clear that Marx and the other Classical Marxists believed that “liberal” values or rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press – as well as political democracy – would be instantiated in socialist societies as soon as they became stable.

Moreover, it must be remembered that the type of views that Marx was attacking for being liberal were either Classical Liberalism (which does seem to be an attempt at an ideological justification of capitalism) and a relatively crude sort of hedonistic, act-utilitarianism (particularly Jeremy Bentham’s theory). But it might be noted here that Marx expresses far more respect for his progressive liberal contemporary, John Stuart Mill. Today we refer to the unreconstructed ideological descendants of Classical Liberalism as Right-Wing (or “Right”) Libertarians and identify this theory with the so-called

¹ By 1920, under the pressure of the vicious civil war in Russia that started soon after the 1917 October Revolution and the failure of the revolution to spread to any of the more economically developed countries (such as Germany, France, Britain, or the U.S.), Lenin felt compelled to redefine “dictatorship of the proletariat” to such an extent that he would claim: “Dictatorship means nothing more nor less than authority untrammelled by any laws, absolutely unrestricted by any rules whatever, and based directly on force. The term 'dictatorship' has no other meaning but this” (Neil Harding, *Leninism*, Macmillan Publishers, London, 1996, p.162). And at the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1930 – under much less precarious conditions than those faced by Lenin in 1920 – Stalin said: “We stand for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which represents the mightiest and most powerful authority of all forms of State that have ever existed” (Gordon Smith, *Soviet Politics: Continuity and Contradictions* (2nd ed.), St. Martin's Press, N.Y., 1991, p.79). Obviously, the way this term came to be used by many later Marxists had nothing in common with the way it was used by Marx and even by Lenin up to the fall of 1917.

Austrian and Chicago Schools of Economics (Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich von Hayek, and Milton Friedman) and with such philosophers as the early Robert Nozick ... not to be confused with Nozick in his later works, where he clearly repudiates his earlier right-libertarianism¹.

The point is that that what we refer to today as “liberal political philosophy” is not at all the same type of liberalism that Marx was referring to and critiquing. Since the time of Marx, liberal political philosophy has become more and more egalitarian and, arguably, more and more compatible with humane forms of socialism. This compatibility is at least implicit in the works of earlier progressive liberal political philosophers like T.H.Green, L.T.Hobhouse, and John Dewey, but it is explicitly stated by Rawls in his works. In fact, among contemporary progressive political philosophers in the West, one finds that whether they are in favor of capitalism or socialism – or are officially neutral on the choice (as is Rawls) – does not necessarily line up with the particular moral theory or theory of social justice (and human rights) they accept but, rather, with their empirical, social-scientific and political views about the nature of capitalist and socialist societies and, thus, which ones are acceptable according to such normative theories and, if more than one kind of society may be acceptable, which ones may be judged optimal by such theories.

It should also be realized that not all political philosophers and theorists in the progressive liberal tradition are oblivious to the fact that it may not be possible to immediately establish full-fledged, Western-style political democracy in some societies due to their level of economic development or their particular political cultures and history. In his later work *The Law of Peoples* (1993/1999) Rawls, for example, recognizes this fact when he distinguishes between what he calls “burdened societies” and “benevolent

¹ For Nozick’s repudiation of his earlier right-libertarianism see his *Philosophical Explanations*, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp.286-292.

authoritarian regimes,” on the one hand, and well-developed, well-ordered (liberal) societies, on the other, and argues that we can't expect the former types of society to embody the same degrees of political democracy and civil liberties as the latter type of society. But he also recognizes this distinction in his earlier masterpiece *A Theory of Justice* (1971) when he argues that the special conception of Justice as Fairness (within which the Maximum Equal Basic Liberties Principle takes precedence over the Fair Equality of Opportunity Principle and the Difference Principle)¹ only applies to well-developed societies, whereas the general conception of Justice as Fairness (within which the Liberty Principle is not given this absolute priority) applies to societies that are not economically well-developed. According to Rawls, in the latter kinds of societies the maximin principle – that is, the principle to maximize the social position (that is, social circumstances) of the least well-off people in a society – applies to all the primary social goods taken as a group (liberties and opportunities, income and wealth, and the social bases of self-respect) such that the position of the least well-off people is maximized in terms of the total package of primary social goods they have access to. Moreover, in that work Rawls argues that answering the question of which socioeconomic and political systems might be justified in particular societies may depend, in part, on their histories and political cultures, as well as their levels of economic development.

Thus, it is possible to accept a so-called “liberal” theory of social justice and be a Marxist because being a Marxist doesn't depend on what

¹ Although Rawls does not include a Basic Rights Principle in his famous statement of his principles of social justice, he does implicitly recognize people's security rights and subsistence rights in *A Theory of Justice* in that they are contained in his theory of natural duties; specifically the duty not to unjustly (and severely) harm others and the duty to aid those in dire necessity if one can do so without great risk of substantial harm to oneself (which Rawls refers to as the Duty of Mutual Aid); and these natural duties hold between people regardless of whether they live in the same societies: that is, they apply across borders, or internationally. In any case, in his later works Rawls explicitly accepts such a Basic Rights Principle as the first – that is, most important – principles of social justice (with reference to my advocacy of such a principle). See John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, 1993, p.7 and *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, Harvard University Press, 2001, p.44.

particular theory of social justice (or general moral theory) you accept but on whether you believe that capitalist systems are inherently flawed, unfair, and destructive and that socialist societies need not be any of these things but there can be humane forms of socialism in which there is as much freedom and liberty as is compatible with a like freedom and liberty of others, as well as compatible with other basic principles of social justice (such as making sure that people's subsistence rights are met and that everyone has a minimally decent material existence and doesn't have to live in extreme and degrading poverty). Of course, there are always important debates about these matters with regard to different kinds of societies with different cultures and historical traditions, and also about whether principles of justice apply differently to societies at different levels of social and economic development. But as J.S. Mill maintained, it is always primarily the responsibility of people of each society to make their own political decisions and to design and implement their own institutions and policies, without undue influence from the outside: Mill's Doctrine of Self-Help. (Today, of course, we may argue that this principle of the self-determination of nations is constrained by the responsibility of the international community to prevent or halt massive, ongoing violations of basic human rights, such as genocides or mass rape campaigns... at least if they can do so without making the situation even worse, on balance.)

In fact, if one analyzes the most important recent and ongoing debates among many of the most important political philosophers in the Western – and broadly Analytic – philosophical tradition, one sees that one cannot guess whether a particular political philosopher is a proponent of capitalism or socialism (or is officially neutral between the two, such as Rawls) by simply looking at their principles of social justice – or their general moral theories – themselves. But almost all of these theorists – no matter their particular theory of social justice or general political philosophy – agree with Rawls that, in

principle, their theories can support either capitalist or socialist societies depending on which type of society can best conform to their theories of social justice (or general moral theories) in particular historical circumstances. And some – including Rawls – seem to be of the opinion that, in principle, a basically just society can be established in either a capitalist or socialist society. This is one of the few places where I differ from Rawls ... at least if we take a long view of history. As a Marxist, I think that capitalist societies are too inherently dysfunctional to be genuinely just over the long run, especially given the fact that they can't avoid periodic (but unpredictable) economic crises and that these crises, if extreme enough, almost always give rise to fascist movements that are supported by most elements of the ruling capitalist classes as the ultimate defense against socialism.

We should also keep in mind that, as is often noted, Marx's thought is partially based on 19th Century German Philosophy (as well as on British Political Economy and French Socialism). And, as I argue in great detail in Chapter Two – “The Development of Marx's Moral Perspective” – of *Marxism, Morality, and Social Justice*, Marx's implicit (and sometimes explicit) moral views and political philosophy were heavily influenced not only by Hegel but by Kant and Rousseau, as well. And, as previously noted, Marx was familiar with such 19th Century liberal philosophies as those of Jeremy Bentham and J.S. Mill, although he had much better things to say about the latter than the former (having once referred to Bentham as “the insipid, pedantic, leather-lipped oracle of the commonplace bourgeois intelligence of the nineteenth century”)¹.

In fact, one of the most important tasks when it comes to clear-thinking about moral theory, political philosophy, and political theory and action is to distinguish their moral – or, more broadly, normative – components from their empirical, social-scientific components and seek to determine where it

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, International Publishers, N.Y., 1967, p.611.

is, exactly, that different theories differ on each of these. Sometimes political philosophies differ on both; but sometimes they differ primarily – or even exclusively – on one or the other; for example, on empirical, social-scientific theories and beliefs.

In a general sense, this describes the recent discussions about theories of social justice and what kinds of societies can best conform to such theories among Rawlsian theorists – Rawls's theory is still almost always at the center of any such discussion – and other liberal egalitarian theorists of social justice as well as liberal-socialist egalitarian theorists of social justice¹. Moreover, Critical Theorists such as Jürgen Habermas and others² are also important theorists in this ongoing debate over theories of social justice and political philosophy in general, but they are hard to definitively classify as either proponents of democratic, egalitarian forms of capitalism or humane forms of socialism, or as being neutral between the two. Almost all of these theorists are in favor of the protection of people's security and subsistence rights as well as civil liberties and political democracy; and when it comes to the material goods of income, wealth, leisure time (and we can add health care) the overarching criteria accepted by almost all of these theorists concerning the distribution of income, wealth, and other such primary social goods is that the distributions should, as much as possible, be endowment insensitive (meaning that distributions must not be solely or disproportionately based on rewarding more naturally talented people) and ambition sensitive (that is,

¹ Liberal egalitarian theorists of social justice include Brian Barry, Ronald Dworkin, Thomas Nagel, T.M. Scanlon, Norman Daniels, Joel Feinberg, Jeffrie G. Murphy, Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, Richard Arneson, Allen E. Buchanan, Philippe Van Parijs, Thomas Pogge, Joshua Cohen, Bruce Ackerman, Susan Moeller Okin, Darrel Moellendorf, and Will Kymlicka). Liberal-socialist egalitarian theorists of social justice include Kai Nielsen, G.A. Cohen, Jon Elster, John Roemer, David Schweickart, Frank Cunningham, Alison Jaggar, David Miller (of Oxford University), Rita Manning, William H. Shaw, Lubos Blaha, and me).

² For example, Thomas McCarthy, Richard Bernstein, Axel Honneth, Nancy Fraser, Iris Marion Young, Seyla Benhabib, and Rainer Forst.

sensitive to people's conscientious efforts to be productive or beneficial to society)¹.

But the differences between liberal egalitarian theorists and liberal-socialist egalitarian theorists does not boil down to differences in moral theory or the moral component of their political philosophies or the particular theory of social justice they accept. For example, within both of these groups of theorists some are proponents of Rawls's Difference Principle while others are proponents of principles demanding more or less strict economic equality. Rather, what most importantly distinguishes their theories has to do with whether they think that some versions of socialism are both feasible and preferable to capitalist systems. Those who believe this are classified as liberal-socialist egalitarians and those who don't believe this are classified as liberal egalitarians. Moreover, some of these theorists are officially neutral between capitalism and socialism, arguing that which is preferable depends on empirical realities and/or that some versions of both capitalism and socialism are both morally acceptable. For example, John Rawls is officially neutral between egalitarian, humane, and democratic forms of capitalism (e.g. his very sketchily described version of Property-Owning Democracy) and egalitarian, humane, and democratic forms of socialism (although he thinks it is likely that only market socialist societies, as opposed to command-economy socialist societies, will be able to meet these criteria).

Thus, the most important issue in these contemporary debates is not whether one accepts some of the more arcane or contestable parts of the Marxist tradition but whether one thinks that the Marxist critique of the inevitable dysfunctions of capitalism is correct and whether the Marxists (and

¹ See Ronald Dworkin, "What is Equality? - Part 1: Equality of Welfare," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 10, 1981 and "What is Equality? - Part 2: Equality of Resources," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 10, 1981; Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, N.Y., 1990; and Rodney G. Peffer, "Rawlsian Theory, Contemporary Marxism, and the Difference Principle," *Edinburgh Handbook on Liberalism*,

Mark Evans (ed.), University of Edinburgh Press, 2001.

other socialists) are correct that humane versions of socialism are historically feasible at this point in history. Much of my current work is aimed at showing that there are versions of democratic market socialism that are morally preferable to any command-economy socialist society as well as to any form of capitalism ... at least once one takes the external – that is, international – effects of capitalist systems into account as well as their internal effects within a particular country ... and so long as one takes a long-term, diachronic point of view of social developments as opposed to a “static,” synchronic point of view. One example of taking a diachronic point of view with regard to contemporary social realities is to realize that even apparently stable democratic capitalist socioeconomic and political systems may change if they undergo large-scale economic crises, and that this may mean either that they turn in a more socialist direction or that they turn toward fascism. Another example is to realize that contemporary post-capitalist societies – or socialist societies in a broad sense of the term – may evolve more democratic political systems over time ... at least, if the most powerful and militaristic capitalist countries don't succeed in destroying them – and perhaps themselves – in the process.

The Normative Theoretical Tasks of Marxists and Socialists Today¹

What, then, are the theoretical tasks of Marxists and, more broadly, socialists today? My view is that while it is all too easy to over-emphasize the importance or effectiveness of moral theorizing and debate, it seems undeniable that this sort of thing has some impact on real-world politics.² The truth is that in order to be effective large-scale political movements must articulate their moral values and aims; for example, their principles of social justice and human rights. And rather than being wary of entering into such

¹ Some of this section is also taken from my interview with Professor Li Yang of Peking University.

² See my “Marxism, Moral Theory, and Moral Truisms: Response to Kai Nielsen,” *Radical Philosophy* (Great Britain), no. 60, Spring 1992.

debates, Marxists and other socialists have every reason to relish them. But to participate effectively in these debates we need to have knowledge of the all of the main moral theories and theories of social justice, as well as know what values are essential to the Marxist tradition ... which, as I have argued, are at the most general level, humanism, egalitarianism, and freedom as self-determination (that is, both positive and negative liberty)¹.

The main political task of our age, it seems to me, is to establish societies – and, eventually, a global federation of societies – that are both socialist and democratic. Thus, one of the most important theoretical tasks that Marxists and socialists must pursue is to provide the normative basis – as well as the empirical, social-scientific basis – for our judgment that socialism is compatible with democracy and is preferable to capitalism. The “socialist” part of this vision means that the economies of such societies must have the following two characteristics. First, the bulk of large-scale economic enterprises and large-scale natural resources must be socially (that is, publicly) owned ... although this may include different kinds of social ownership such as state-owned, community-owned, and cooperative. However, this requirement does not prohibit the private ownership of small-scale productive property, such as small businesses, or even – in some cases – medium-size economic enterprises, if this should be advantageous for the promotion of the public good (primarily meaning social justice). The second characteristic is that the basic laws governing the economy must be designed to be in the public good (or general interest) rather than to primarily promote private profit or the undue advantage of any social elite. In particular the background social and economic institutions, laws, policies, and programs must be designed such that people are able to adequately meet their subsistence needs and that no one is forced to live in extreme and

¹ See the Introduction, Chapter 1 (“The Development of Marx’s Moral Perspective”), and Chapter 10 (“Toward an Adequate Marxist Moral and Social Theory”) of my *Marxism, Morality, and Social Justice*.

dehumanizing poverty. However, this does not prohibit the profit motive from being part of the economy, such as it is in market socialist systems; it only means that the profit motive be subordinated to the overall public good (social justice).

The “democratic” component of this vision of democratic socialist societies requires, first and foremost, that (1) the rule of law prevails, (2) people’s civil liberties are respected and protected, and (3) that the legitimate interests and preferences of people (the public) be given due consideration when the government makes decisions ... and that, if there is a conflict of such interests and/or preferences, they be fairly adjudicated. Moreover, in any society in which it is possible to have political democracy – meaning regular, fair elections of political officials – this must also be instantiated. And if there are societies that do not yet meet the conditions necessary (and jointly sufficient) for full-fledged political democracy such societies must have as much (partial) democracy as possible under the circumstances, and must try to meet the conditions for a thorough-going political democracy as quickly as possible so that such a more full-fledged democracy can be instantiated as quickly as possible. Needless, to say both socialist social and economic institutions and democratic political institutions can only exist and be stable over time if enough people within a society support them; but this is true of any set of social, economic, and/or political institutions. But this is one of the reasons that Marxists and socialists need to be able to give clear descriptions, analyses, and justifications of such institutions. Of course, theoretical work is no substitute for actual political work to create and maintain such societies; this requires, as the old saying goes, that we educate, agitate, and organize in order to accomplish this task.

But, of course, meeting these two general goals of having a socialist economy and political democracy (as described above) ultimately depends on enough people in a society being committed to both of these goals ... and the

values that support them. But this is true of any society if it is to be a sustainable society. That is, the stability of any kind of society depends in large part on a critical mass of people accepting its basic social, economic, and political institutions as being legitimate. Any society in which the government (state) maintains the social status quo only (or primarily) by means of force, fear, and coercion will not be a stable society over the long run.

Thus, the task of socialists is to convince people not only of the dysfunctions and brutality of capitalism but also of the desirability of socialism and, especially, the desirability of democratic socialism and the view that socialism and democracy are, indeed, compatible over the long run. In fact, it is even arguable that only socialism can achieve democracy over the long run since capitalist societies will inevitably have major economic crisis and these crises always give rise to right-wing authoritarian (and totalitarian) movements – that is fascism – and these movements are always supported by significant elements of the ruling capitalist classes as the ultimate means of preserving capitalism (and their power and privileges) under such circumstances. This is why we always need to take a diachronic view of every kind of society to see them in the context of historical trends rather than only a synchronic view that ignores such historical trends ... which, of course, is not to say that history has a pre-determined outcome such as the triumph of socialism over capitalism. It is perfectly possible that capitalism should triumph over socialism in the long run, with catastrophic consequences for both the earth's natural environment and the people who live on it. This is why all people of good will should do their fair share in improving their societies (and global society) and should the ultimate goal of a global federation of democratic socialist society (which is not the same as what are referred to as “social democracies,” which are simply more egalitarian forms of capitalism).

Socialism, Political Democracy, and Economic Democracy

Of course, capitalist and socialist systems will recognize different sets of basic property rights as being part of the constitutional essentials... especially when it comes to the ownership of large-scale economic assets (including large-scale natural resources, built-up infrastructure, and economic enterprises). While capitalist systems recognize largely unfettered rights to own any of these kinds of large-scale productive property – as well as personal property and smaller-scale productive property (e.g. small businesses) – socialist systems will recognize (as fundamental legal rights) only rights to own personal property and, probably, smaller-scale productive property (such as small businesses and the property they require to operate). Socialist systems may also decide to recognize limited, non-basic legal rights for individuals to privately own some specific types of medium-sized or even large-scale productive property but these kinds of property rights will not be recognized as fundamental moral rights or constitutional essentials in socialist societies.

For example, in market socialist socioeconomic systems such as those advocated by theorists such as David Schweickart¹ and myself,² there is a fundamental right to own small-scale businesses and productive property as well as personal property – even expensive personal property that one can legally acquire under a fair set of social and economic institutions, laws, and policies (that will include a adequate health care system, fair minimum wage laws, a fair taxation system, and adequate environmental policies. But we propose that there should also be a legal right to own medium-sized businesses (and associated productive assets) if these enterprises started as small businesses and were successful enough to grow into medium-sized

¹ David Schweickart, *After Capitalism* (revised edition), Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

² See my “Marxism, Markets, and the ‘Sanctity’ of Socialist Property Relations’,” *Journal of Social Philosophy*, vol. XXII, no. 1, Spring 1991 and “Social Justice and Market Socialism” presented at the 24th World Congress of Philosophy, Beijing, 2018, available at rodneypeffer.com.

businesses (as measured by number of employees and/or total receipts from the sale of goods and services in a fiscal year). But there would be no legal right to own large-scale businesses (or associated productive assets) and, therefore, the system would require any economic enterprise (business) that grew so large that it was classified as a large-scale enterprise to be sold to the public sector at fair market value. For example, large-scale enterprises might be defined as those having more than 1,000 employees or a total yearly gross income of, say, \$50 million. (However, the public sector might include cooperatives and community-owned enterprises as well as state-owned enterprises.) But these legal rights to own medium-sized economic enterprises (and associated productive assets) are not fundamental rights that are guaranteed in the constitution, as are rights to own personal property (and probably small-scale productive property). Rights of private individuals (or families or groups of people) to own medium-sized productive enterprises are only legally instituted in a socialist society if it is decided that this is the best way to meet the principles of social justice and advance the public good. Of course, the same could be said about proposed rights of private individuals to own large-scale economic enterprises and assets but socialists are united in their belief that recognizing such legal rights – and, thus, having a capitalist socioeconomic system – will not best meet the principles of social justice and is not the best set of institutions to pursue the overall public good.

Moreover, such theorists as Schweickart and me advocate social and economic democracy as well as political democracy, especially work place democracy, because we believe that it is not only intrinsically morally valuable but that it is instrumentally valuable in that there is considerable empirical evidence that a workers self-managed market socialist economy will be more economically efficient than a socialist economy that lacks works self-management (primarily due to the increased motivation of workers in self-managed enterprises to strive for greater economic efficiency so that they

are more likely to be able to give themselves greater end-of-the-year bonuses). But I think it would not be wise to include social and economic democracy among the constitutional essentials in a society because it seems to me that, while an important value, it is not a basic value in the same way as security rights, subsistence rights, basic civil liberties, basic political rights, or even fair equality of opportunity. That is, there can be a basically just society that does not embody social and economic democracy whereas there cannot be a basically just society that does not embody these other (more basic) principles of social justice or values. Moreover, I also don't think it would be wise to demand that workers self-management be a constitutional essential of a socialist society because whether or not it would make a society more economically efficient is a contestable empirical issue. In fact, while Schweickart and I believe this is true other advocates of market socialism – such as John Roemer – argue that it is not likely to make a socialist economy more efficient.¹

Problems with Political Democracy

Obviously, political democracy is not without its problems. Perhaps this has become even more obvious with the election of Donald Trump as President in the U.S. ... although, of course, a defect in the American political system – namely, the archaic and unfair Electoral College system – is partially responsible for him being elected given that his main opponent, Hilary Clinton, received over 3 million more votes. I use this as an example of problems with political democracy not simply because I disagree with many of the views and policies of Trump and his administration but also because of Trump's utter disdain and contempt for the norms and institutions of political democracy, civil liberties, and basic fairness. In my opinion, there is no doubt that, at heart, Trump is an authoritarian who dreams of being the strongest of “strong men” and that he views democratic constraints on his power as merely

¹ See: John Roemer, *Equal Shares: Making Market Socialism Work*, Verso, N.Y., 1996.

obstacles to be overcome whenever possible. Moreover, his divisive, disrespectful, and even hateful rhetoric are meant to undermine the shared norms of civility and basic cooperation that make political democracy possible ... and it is having this effect within the U.S. and, perhaps, to some extent around the world where other authoritarian strong men (such as Duterte in the Philippines and crown prince Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia) seem to have been emboldened by Trump's rhetoric and his announced policies of complete non-interference and non-criticism of such figures and regimes.

Moreover, in addition to the danger that democracies can sometimes be manipulated by unscrupulous and immoral demagogues – e.g. Hitler, Mussolini, and Trump – there are other important difficulties faced by democratic systems, especially in terms of the cognitive limitations and biases of citizens as well as social coordination problems (which are much discussed in game-theoretical social-scientific literature). Jason Brennan's recent book, *Against Democracy*¹ details many of these problems. While considering these problems is disconcerting, Brennan's proposed alternative – rule by the most knowledgeable – doesn't seem either practical or justified ... except, perhaps, as a temporary, stop-gap measure until the citizens of a particular society can become educated enough for genuine self-government.

But one important point to make about this issue is that advocates of political democracy rarely are in favor of a system in which the majority of voters – or even the majority of elected officials (e.g. in a parliament or legislature) decide every issue that comes up simply by majority votes. Most advocates of political democracy advocate constitutional democracy; that is a political system in which certain fundamental principles and rights are protected against the vicissitudes of majority votes of either citizens or legislators, and which cannot be violated or overturned by such votes. These

¹ Princeton University Press, 2016.

most centrally include basic civil liberties – including basic property rights – and basic political rights (and procedures). These are what Rawls refers to as “constitutional essentials.” And rather than being subject to simple majority votes (of either the populous or their elected representatives) such constitutional essentials can only be overturned or altered by extraordinary political procedures which usually require super-majority votes and complicated political procedures. (For example, the U.S. Constitution can only be amended if 2/3 of both houses of Congress vote to recommend a particular amendment and then 3/4 of either state legislatures or state constitutional conventions vote in favor of it.)

Other Aspects of Political Democracy

But none of what I have so-far said decides exactly what kind of political democracy is best for particular societies (or for societies in general).¹ First, it doesn’t decide between such partially democratic systems as guided democracy (perhaps Cuba), advisory democracy (perhaps China), qualified democracy (in which a particular ethnic or religious group has unique political rights; e.g. Israel or Iran), and full-fledged political democracies of various kinds ... although I argue that the ultimate goal is some kind of full-fledged democracy. Second, what I have said in this essay doesn’t decide between fundamentally different types of democracy such as representative democracy, delegate democracy, and direct democracy (as in Swiss cantons) ... although it seems clear that direct democracy and probably even delegate democracy are not viable in sufficiently large societies; e.g. almost all contemporary nation-states. Third, it doesn’t decide between standard types of representative democracy versus more radical proposals

¹ The following distinctions can be found in Del Dickson, *The People's Government: An Introduction to Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, 2014.

such as participatory democracy (e.g. as advocated by Carol C. Gould¹) or deliberative democracy (e.g. as advocated by James S. Fishkin²). Fourth, it doesn't decide between presidential democracies (e.g. the U.S.) versus cabinet democracies (in which the executive component of the government – the prime minister and cabinet – is an extension of the legislative branch, as in, e.g., the U.K.). Fifth, it doesn't decide between electoral systems of purposive (assured) representation (e.g. Hong Kong), versus proportional representation (from party lists, e.g. Italy), versus winner-take-all systems (e.g. the U.S. and U.K.), versus hybrid systems that combine one or more of these kinds of electoral systems (e.g. Germany and Japan). Fifth, it doesn't decide between electoral systems that have preferential (ranked) voting and “instant run-offs” (e.g. Australia) and those that don't (most other democratic systems).

Just as capitalist socioeconomic systems are compatible with many of these types of democracy (at least in the short run), socialist socioeconomic systems would also seem to be compatible with many of them. So just being in favor of socialism as a socioeconomic system doesn't automatically decide what kind of political system one should advocate. Thus, there is value in theoretical discussions of such issues as well as practical political activity to create genuinely just societies which, from a Marxist point of view, in the end analysis can only be societies that are both socialist and democratic.

¹ *Rethinking Democracy: Freedom and Social Co-operation in Politics, Economy, and Society*, Cambridge University Press, 1989 and *Interactive Democracy: The Social Roots of Global Justice*, Cambridge University Press, 2014.

² *Democracy and Deliberation: New Directions for Democratic Reform*, Yale University Press, 1993; *The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy*, Yale University Press, 1997; *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*, Oxford University Press, 2011; and *Democracy When the People Are Thinking: Revitalizing Our Politics Through Public Deliberation*, Oxford University Press, 2018.

SOCIAL JUSTICE - A DRIVING FORCE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT? ON EXPERIENCES OF THE LATE GDR

Brangsch Lutz^(*)

The question of where a post-capitalist society should derive its momentum is still an open question. The previous attempts also failed, among other things, because the previously chosen ways of non-capitalist development in the long term were not suitable for sustainably linking social and cultural innovations with stable economic and ecological development. Real socialism failed economically in the 1980s because of the lack of interest in coping with the demands of the scientific-technological revolution and related innovations. The demand made in numerous party resolutions to combine the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution with the advantages of socialism proved to be unrealizable. This problem existed at its core since the end of the reconstruction of economies in the early 1960s. Economic reforms have sought to direct the interests of workers and enterprises towards a higher economy of living and objectified labor, as well as a constant renewal of production processes and products. Ota Šik, in his 1962 book *Economy-Interest-Politics*¹, developed this problem by looking at the demands of the peculiarity of the movement of interests on the development of the economic mechanism. Although the book disappeared from the official canon of the political economy of socialism after the suppression of the “Prague Spring” in 1968, the considerations made here for the following years formed an essential background for economic and social research. The economic reforms in the real socialist countries always revolved around the question of how the interests of employees, business units (companies) and society could be put into a productive relationship with each

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¹ Šik, Ota (1966). *Ökonomie - Interessen - Politik*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.

other. Another formulation of this question was the relationship between market and planning, the position of the companies and the planning bodies in the economic mechanism or the responsibility of the companies and the planning bodies for the decisions they made. What was missing was an actual systematic and unprejudiced study of the interests of the different social actors.

It was not until the late 1970s, for example, that in the GDR, a more systematic exploration of the question of the drivers of social development. But this long path between the political establishment of the real socialist state power and a consistent analysis of their laws of motion indicates that we are dealing here with a very complicated field, whose processing is complicated by political-ideological components. It should be remembered that in the 1920s there was still discussion in the young Soviet Union about whether there could be a political economy of socialism at all since social conditions were open and the party with its decisions had become the decisive driving force. Even if such simplistic ideas were overcome, their after-effects were still felt in the GDR until the end. An expression of this was the underestimation of the role of a living democracy as a driving force of economic and social development.

Actually, this situation is surprising. Although Karl Marx himself always spoke very cautiously about a post-capitalist society, even these statements, and above all his approach to such questions, provide sufficient material to gain his own research approaches.

For Marx and Engels, the key point is that capitalism creates the possibility for people to behave consciously in that sense. The post-capitalist society must give this possibility the space of realization. How this works then, both could not know. This is a question that has been and still is to be solved practically under the given conditions. They therefore rightfully

objected to demands for the description of the future society. But they named the tendencies that these possibilities produce.

Marx sees the decisive driving force of capitalist economies in the constant solution and renewal of the contradiction between the level of development of the productive forces and the relations of production achieved in each case. Chapters 9 to 13 of Marx' Capital vol.1 are directly devoted to the movement of this contradiction. The perfection of the machinery forces another type of social relations and a different behavior of the producers, the workers. The competition between the capitals and the workers, between the capital itself and among the workers themselves, accelerates the adaptation and ever-repeated destruction of the equilibrium between the various social forces. The price of failure is the destruction of social existence, the loss of status as a capitalist or as a worker. Unlike in earlier societies, there is no longer any social space to dodge. This dynamic, arising from the social movement of the capital relation, appears as a natural compulsion to grow, to increase production and to increase the consumption of human, spiritual and natural resources. At the same time, this development forces and enables a comprehensive development of human capabilities - but not equally for all people. At the same time, the way of life of wage laborers enables the development of solidarity as a prerequisite for overcoming capitalism. However, this is not itself an automatic process, but requires the conscious action of the workers themselves, their self-organization. If we consider the level of technical, cultural and social education achieved alone, the transition to a socially fairer society could not actually be a problem. Computerization and automation have already penetrated deep into everyday life and are for a significant part of humanity a prerequisite for a meaningful life, or are at least so considered. The use of computers and the Internet has become an immediate social and political sphere. Social media are both mass media, which are largely dominated by large companies and governments, as well as

places of cultural education, social learning and political organization of various forces of civil society.

Put simply, in Marx's tradition, the question should be asked how the unfolding of the dialectics of productive forces and relations of production can be shaped so that the dynamics of economic and social development are not born out of the fear of annihilation of social existence but out of one Conscious behavior in solidarity to the process of its own reproduction as a human being in society arises.

The Russo-Soviet Marxist Nikolai Bukharin posed the following question for the situation in post-revolutionary Soviet Russia in 1920: Why should workers in Soviet Russia behave differently than in Tsarist Russia when working conditions and technological conditions under Soviet power play a major role? remain the same as under the rule of the Czar?¹. It was already evident at this time that the consistent suppression of all social differences within the framework of the war communism was not suitable for developing its own economic and social dynamics. The activists' heroism proved not to be prolonged in infinite times and not generalizable. Following on from Marx's question is how the new society shapes its “becoming to totality”² and how it achieves the development of the elements of its own quality of social conditions, which are not in the previous stage of social life Development, in capitalism and in bourgeois society, already created and prepared. In the Marxist logic itself, this leads to another question: what possibilities and limits are set for the process of general human emancipation? A post-capitalist society is “not” after the revolutionary act, but is only beginning to develop, it is, but at the same time, it is not. It is, as the Hungarian philosopher Georg Lukacs put it, “just like that”. It is a mere

¹ See: Bucharin, Nikolai (1990). *Ökonomik der Transformationsperiode*. Mit Randbemerkungen von Lenin, Berlin: Dietz Verlag Berlin, p.108.

² See: Marx, Karl (1974). *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*. (Rohentwurf) 1857-1858, Berlin: Dietz Verlag Berlin, p.189.

social-historical category, the necessary manifestation of the contradictory interplay of... each effective economic-social forces within a social struggle at a certain stage of its... historical development. For theory and practice, therefore, the knowledge of the particular lawfulness of straightforwardness is (at least) as important as that of the general determinations and laws¹. In agreement with Marx and Lenin, he considers “the development of new habits” as central to the movement of the new society.

Such an approach presupposes, of course, that the transition from bourgeois-capitalist to post-capitalist society is understood as a very long process. In fact, the recognition of the recognition of Lukacs' “special legality of the straightforward” opposed the expectation of a quick transition to communist relations. Although Marx occasionally followed the hope of an early proletarian revolution, he was always aware of the long-term nature of the processes involved. He characterized the proletarian revolution as a process of constant criticism and self-criticism, that is, as a social process of searching and learning².

Looking at the history of the 20th century, this has been fully confirmed. The first stages of this search were the war communism and subsequent establishment of the New Economic Policy. Lenin called this a transition to “state capitalism under the dictatorship of the proletariat.” However, this state capitalism should not function as it did in the imperialist countries, and so Lenin's concept is also unfortunate. He should follow other laws and release other social dynamics. The achievements of the bourgeois-capitalist era should be used in a way that would activate the initiative and creativity of social groups in unprecedented ways.

This task is still unresolved.

¹ Lukács, Georg (1985). *Demokratisierung heute und morgen*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

² See: Marx, Karl (1982). *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, in: Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED (Hrsg.): *Karl Marx Friedrich Engels Werke Bd. 8*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag Berlin, p.118.

The re-admission of market and commodity relations in Soviet Russia effectively unleashed new drivers of economic and social development in all sectors. The balance between the emerging social differences and the promised comprehensive claim to emancipation was and still is hard to find. The discussions in the seventy years of the existence of real socialism were characterized by the fact that the implementation of social justice into a driving force of economic and social development is an extraordinarily complex question. Lenin considered in the early 1920s the unity of personal and collective material interest, development of the productive forces according to the level of the capitalist states, cooperatives, cultural revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat (real dictatorship of the apparatus of the Communist Party) including the possibility of terror against individual social Groups as crucial foundations for securing the unity of social justice and economic growth. For European real socialist countries, this concept formed the defining framework of their politics until the 1980s. In this context, an attempt was made to meet the complexity of social drive development more and more. The Social Science Conference was an important stage for the GDR in 1983¹. This conference, or discussions before and after the conference, unfolded the breadth of conditions that existed in a socially just society, in the United States the level of life depends largely on the output and not on the acquisition of capital needed to develop the drivers of further development. The following elements came to the fore:

1. Following on from Marx, the importance of developing the individuality of man was understood as a central challenge. Until then, the meaning of the “subjective factor” was emphasized again and again, but not understood in all its complexity. The importance and content of moral values, aspirations, freedom, and the sense of social responsibility of scientists and

¹ See: Gewi. Konferenz (1984). Gesetzmäßigkeiten unserer Epoche - Triebkräfte und Werte des Sozialismus. Diskussionsreden auf der Gesellschaftswissenschaftlichen Konferenz des ZK der SED am 15. und 16. Dezember 1983 in Berlin, Berlin: Dietz Verlag

technicians have been attributed a growing importance as drivers of social development¹.

2. The social differentiation arising in socialism was understood as the inevitable result of the unfolding of the dialectic of productive forces and relations of production and not as the expression of subjective inadequacies of the members of certain social strata. It is the consequence of the self-emancipation of man demanded by Marx and the unfolding of his individuality and was accordingly determined as a driving force of social development.

3. The connection between social justice and social dynamics was increasingly discussed in these years in terms of the contradictions in these relationships². The development of socialist democracy as a way of solving and re-enforcing these contradictions has increasingly come to the fore as the condition of social dynamics. The existing forms in the economy and society would have to be further developed.

4. The importance of an active environmental policy was addressed with great clarity. It was not just about conservation in the traditional sense, but the closer integration of environmental concerns in all social decision-making.

5. The conference formed the starting point for further reform attempts in the economic field. The role of central government planning was confirmed, but the question of relations between the companies and the planning bodies was re-stated. This was also due to the fact that the link between individual, collective and social interests increasingly depended on the provision of high-quality technical consumer goods and social and cultural services. Recognition of democracy and the individuality of people as drivers of social development also required changes in the economic mechanism.

¹ See: Bauer, Adolf/Eichhorn I, Wolfgang (Hrsg.) (1987). *Der tätige Mensch. Gesellschaftsveränderung und menschliche Entwicklung*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.

² See: Kosing, Alfred (Ltr)/Hagen, Michael/Hahn, Erich/Schliwa, Harald/et al. (1984). *Dialektik des Sozialismus* 4. Aufl. Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften (Hrsg.), Berlin: Dietz Verlag.

Behind the debates of the conference is the crucial question of how the redistribution processes required to ensure social justice and an active social policy on the one hand and the interests of companies and employees on the other could be reconciled.

6. Emphasized the importance of a “global thinking” of social scientists in uncovering the specific driving forces of social development in socialism and anchoring such thinking in society. This concerned aspects such as peacekeeping, international economic integration within the framework of CMEA, international solidarity, as well as the global interdependencies in science, culture and the economy as a whole. Again, unmistakable is the reference to the Marxist notions of a post-capitalist as a global society.

Thus, the entire lifestyle originated in the GDR was discussed and ultimately questioned. That was not pronounced. Marx's critical self-criticism was hidden under a thick layer of confessions on party strategy and quotations from party documents. And that was the problem - and one of the moments of the demise of the GDR. These discussions and the corresponding political decisions always came up against the question of the role and responsibility of the party apparatus. At the conference mentioned, the demand for a strict unity of rights and duties was always applied to the working people and the heads of the enterprises - not to mention the officials in the state and the party. In addition, in many parts of the party and state apparatus, a deep mistrust was present in science and above all in the citizens. Although there were always a large number of democratic opportunities to participate in the GDR in the decades of their existence, they could not develop as a sustainable driving force. Marx noted in his third Feuerbachthese:

“The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated. This doctrine must, therefore, divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. The coincidence of

the changing of circumstances and of human activity or selfchange can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice”¹.

The required “education of educators” could not be achieved.

Historical experience thus shows that the effect of social justice as a driving force of social development depends on a large number of factors. The example of the GDR shows that the underestimation of this complexity, and in particular the restriction of citizens 'and citizens' ability to participate in political decision-making processes, can lead to crises even in the case of developed social justice and can lead to the collapse of order. In this respect, the decline of real socialism in the GDR confirms Marx's thesis that the emancipation of the working class can only be the work of the working class itself. For this reason, the PDS that emerged from the SED in 1990 placed the democratization of its own structures at the center of its reorganization. By that time, however, the masses had already lost faith in their former elites.

The GDR thus failed in its attempt to develop the elements of the totality of a post-capitalist society that were necessary to achieve them, despite relatively favorable starting conditions. Finally, from these points of view, the aspects of Marx's legacy that are essential for the analysis of the conditions under which social justice can develop as a driving force are to be emphasized once more:

1. His investigations on the contradictions of social development beyond the contradiction between capital and labor.
2. His understanding of social development as a self-contradictory search and learning process.
3. The growing role of individuality and the possibilities of conscious action associated with the development of productive forces.

¹ Marx, Karl (1975). [Theses on Feuerbach], in: Karl Marx / Frederick Engels Collected Works Vol. 5, New York: International Publishers, p.4.

4. The uncompromising orientation to the self-emancipation of man as a criterion of social progress.

BUILDING A SPECIFIC THEORY OF CAPITALIST DOMINATION BASED ON AND EXTENDING MARX(*)

Judith Dellheim()**

Frieder Otto Wolf(*)**

Our argument addresses a central point of present critical and radical theory: We argue for the following twofold claim:

(a) that under modern structures of domination (which, in contradistinction to traditional structures of domination, are not defined any more by personal relations of submission between individual persons, but by structural determinations of domination operated and institutionalized by impersonal role-takers) effective structural change can only be brought about by subverting and overcoming these very relations as such.

(b) that only a subversive and transformative, i.e. revolutionary practice (in the sense just implicitly defined) which is fully informed about these structures will be capable of addressing the task of such a transformation effectively.

In this perspective, our theoretical work is explicitly focused upon fully understanding specifically those singular historical conditions – which may be summarized by the existence of structures of domination within the human metabolism within nature – which do make such a revolutionary practice necessary and – in principle – also possible¹.

(*) This paper is based upon and improves on two of our own papers on the issue of intersectionality (from 2016 and 2017 https://www.academia.edu/34598971/Intersectionality_in_working_on_socio-ecological_transformation_II_; https://www.academia.edu/29446232/Intersectionality_in_working_on_socio-ecological_transformation)

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¹ In other words, in order to make our scientific contribution to “changing the world” in a non-trivial way, we are working to carry out the following operations: analyzing reality, criticizing theories and ideologies, building critical theories of societal and historical reality and its tendencies of development, reflecting available experiences of on-going or historical struggles against established societal power relations,

It is to be, finally, admitted that Marx himself (or his critical continuators, like Luxemburg) have never been dominant within the Marxist tradition. Accordingly, the activities of theoretically explaining and of practically changing these realities, which differ in important ways, in their presuppositions, in their possibilities, and in their very structure of “grounding”, have for the most time been conflated within the Marxist mainstream in a simplified postulate of the ‘unity of theory and practice’, so that the critical dimension and potential of both has been destroyed or, at the very least, has been tendentially marginalized. This has been especially relevant in bringing about the kinds of reductionisms with Marxist claims which have later been criticized by feminist or post-colonial theory. Engels and Luxemburg had criticized simplifications often read out of Marx’ and their own theories, by always and again analyzing and critically discussing real struggles of emancipation, i.e. of liberation from specific forms of domination. The real Marxian (Marxist?) tradition, however, has not “only” been a theoretical venture, but also a very practical one. Marx, indeed, has been active both as a scientist and as a politician – as a member of the board of the IWA, the International Workingmen’s Association. Its political existence has been a first historical example for a practice of intersectionality adequately defined. Especially thanks to Harriet Law, the women’s question was permanently present, and, thanks to Marx and others, also the question of colonialism¹². Marx has concentrated on analysing the structures of capitalist domination, as they realize the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production and of its determining role within modern societies. This

deliberating on perspectives of radical practice and struggle, reflecting our own past practices relating to these struggles, while criticizing our own contributions to analyzing such processes and our participation in deliberations on future practice.

¹ William Pelz (2017), *Capital and the First International in: Reading 'Capital' Today. Marx after 150 Years*, Edited by Ingo Schmidt and Carlo Fanelli. PlutoPress, London, 2017, pp.36-47. In parallel, the recent book of the historian Wolfgang Schieder on „Marx as a Politician” (Marx als Politiker) deserves close scrutiny.

concentration of Marx in his theoretical work has often been mis-understood to justify a kind of economic or class-reductionism which has, however, remained quite alien even to his and Engels's theoretical work, and, even more so, to their practice of political analysis and action.

Already in the *Communist Manifesto*, the general idea of modernization as a process of “liquidification” of all traditional kinds of social relations in the very process, by which the accumulation of capital has become dominant in modern bourgeois societies, has been clearly spelled out. This idea has then been central to Marx’s further work in theoretically reconstructing the reproduction process of capital and its domination within modern bourgeois societies, based upon the systematic exploitation of labour power by capital. Since the late 19th century, this process of modernization has also brought forth modernized kinds of gender domination, after the dissolution of traditional structures of patriarchy, as well of the transnational relations of dependency after the defeat of traditional colonialism. Such developments have been already addressed *in practice* by Marx’s International, as well as by the later internationals, but they have not been adequately taken up in further Marxist scientific analyses. For instance, we may underline that Marx and Engels have appreciated the translation by Helen Macfarlane in their preface to the Manifesto. In their preface from June 1872, Marx and Engels stated: „In view of the gigantic strides of Modern Industry since 1848, and of the accompanying improved and extended organization of the working class, in view of the practical experience gained, first in the February Revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, this programme has in some details been antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes”... Further, it is self-evident that the criticism of socialist literature is deficient in relation to the present time...;

also that the remarks on the relation of the Communists to the various opposition parties (Section IV)... in practice are antiquated, because the political situation has been entirely changed, and the progress of history has swept from off the earth the greater portion of the political parties there enumerated”¹.

A significant example for a political approach not limited to a reductionist class perspective can also be found in Rosa Luxemburg: In 1903, when she wrote “Dem Andenken des 'Proletariat'“ (In Memory of the 'Proletariat' Party)², she concentrated on the political perspectives articulated by this party in its programmatic document: She stated that “this document sees the socialist future of Poland finding a foothold on the ground of scientific socialism and in the principles of the class struggle and historical materialism. The character of the actual program is, however, not so easily determined. Here there are three parallel sections, namely demands of the party “in the economic area” “in the political area”, and “in the area of moral life”³. And she goes on to state, among other things, “they take so strongly into account the actual social order based on inequality of classes, sexes, and nationalities”⁴. These areas, which have been reflected in the political practice of Marxist parties, but not adequately taken up in theory, and then been marginalized in the later practice of Communist and Socialist parties, have been the main references in the justification for the neglect and exclusion of Marxist theory, as it started with the new social movements of the 1960s – at the price of finally replacing the critique of domination structures by the affirmation of identities.

¹ Marx, Karl, Engels, Frederick (1872): Communist Manifesto, Preface to the German edition, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/preface.htm#preface-1872>

² Luxemburg, Rosa (1903/1968): In Memory of the Proletariat Party, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1903/02/proletariat-party.htm#foot-21>

³ Quoted from Z Pola Walki, pp.30-31. Also, Przedświt, Year II No.4 (October 1882). (R.L.).

⁴ Luxemburg, Rosa (1903/1968): In Memory of the Proletariat Party, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1903/02/proletariat-party.htm#foot-21>

In recent debates in the social and political sciences, the concept of intersectionality has been introduced in order to find a way of specifically criticising those practices in research (and in political life) which are marked by forms of unilateral reductionism (as e.g. in the over-stretching of the micro-economic utility function in neo-classical economic theory), insisting upon the distinctness and specificity of e.g. gender asymmetries and race discrimination. Especially feminist authors have made use of the concept of “intersectionality” simply to defend feminist theory against various kinds of economic reductionism (within the Marxist, as well as within the neo-classical tradition) – often with the side effect of simply eliminating class domination and class struggle, so that their claims became fuzzy to the point of effectively only stating the truism that the complexity of socio-historical reality is constituted by different, more or less contradictory regularities, phenomenal developments, actions and structures. Marx did not make use of the concept of “intersectionality” – not even with a different terminology – in his referring to these hierarchies (or to their effects, e.g. in political struggles).

In the perspective we have just referred to, the very concept of “intersectionality”, if understood adequately, simply describes something which is rather typical for Marx’s effective “method of research”, something, which Althusser has undertaken to capture in theory by the concept of “over-determination”.

The term “intersectionality” has been used only since the beginning of the nineties, when the feminist Kimberly Crenshaw has analysed the specific problems of women of black colour and when she has worked for a community building of women facing sexism and racism – in a practice of community building connected with the social movements against racism, on the one hand, and against sexism, on the other hand. Further Crenshaw has criticized that, in mainstream liberal discourse, race, gender, and other identity categories are most often treated as vestiges of bias or personal

domination. She has brought out that the violence many women do experience is often also shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class. Some other motives for the introduction of the concept of intersectionality, however, do indeed deserve a critical discussion, before it will become possible to make a sustainable critical use of it: *On the one hand*, the concept has been instrumentalized in order to restrict politics to identity politics, and even to eliminate the struggle against structures of domination from the horizon of radical movements altogether. *On the other hand*, such an approach has, indeed, lead to a radical elimination of class struggle from the debate – replacing it – as a maximum of presence – by class identity affirmation which is only a limited aspect of it¹. Any constructive use of the underlying claim for plurality – more or less retroactively directed against Engels's (misunderstood) claim for a “fundamental contradiction”² to be found in the relation between capital and the proletariat³ – will have to fully take on board first Marx's analysis of the impact of the capitalist mode of production within modern bourgeois societies, and then take up the study of the specifically modern structures of domination indeed overdetermining it within these very same societies⁴. In this sense, the “intersectionality debate” has taken a quite anti-emancipatory turn: On the one hand, theories of intersectionality have had a strong tendency to lose sight of the role of the capital relation in the reproduction process of modern societies, while at the same time reducing the problematic of domination to mere inequalities of

¹ This operation is exemplified by Laclau/Mouffe's treatment of the class issue, cf. Laclau/Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, London 1985.

² “Fundamental contradiction, whence arise all the contradictions in which our present-day society moves, and which modern industry brings to light.” Engels, Friederick (1880/1970): *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/ch03.htm>.

³ While in reality directed against the Stalinist claim of „proletarian politics” and its insufficient critique in Mao's distinction between „main” and „secondary” contradictions.

⁴ Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Bernstein, Luxemburg, Lenin, Gramsci, Hilferding, to name only some of the most significant theorists of historical Marxism have conducted their concrete analyses in a historical time, when the specifically modern gender structures had only begun to emerge, and the imperial structures still were in their older colonial mode – so that their modern shapes, as they have become dominant in the phase of „fordism”, were not yet relevant for their global analysis.

power. These weaknesses and destructive usages, however, do not eliminate the elementary and indubitable merit of this debate – i.e. that of calling attention to the theoretical and political insufficiencies of class-reductionism. In our perspective, the important and elementary fact that the articulation of different structures of domination overdetermining each other within modern bourgeois societies cannot be determined in general, but has to be analysed in the specific historical moments of actual modern societies, still constitutes a central starting point for converging analytical efforts, as well as a common orientation of struggles and for alliances. It would be counter-productive, however, to (mis-)direct the debate into a general discussion of the articulation of the existing structures of domination on the level of some “general theory of modern society”, instead of addressing their specific articulations within given singular societies in their full plurality.

Instead of attempting to fully elaborating the relations between different concepts of “intersectionality”, we should, therefore, like to concentrate on a central issue in this problematic area – which we may introduce by a quote from Balibar: “Marx removed one of philosophy's most ancient taboos: the radical distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis*”¹ – thereby giving a new meaning to the notion of materialist critique, as combining an awareness of the effective material conditions and structures with a full understanding of the specificities of human history, especially with regard to the history of the struggles of liberation marking its dynamics. Marx’s method of critique (and of self-criticism) has been so radical, because it persistently asks the question of how relations of domination can be *specifically* overcome, based on the idea of making human individuals effectively free and on the insight into the need of overcoming specific structures of domination which have to be analyzed and understood as such. In the political practice developed on its basis so far (and still to be further developed) this calls for the readiness to

¹ Balibar, Étienne (1995), *The philosophy of Marx*, Verso, London, New York, 40.

organise societal forces in a sufficient and adequate way, for changing all societal relations which prevent human beings from becoming free from the existing forms of domination, as they are constantly reproduced by all kinds of practices of violence, heteronomy, discrimination, exploitation, oppression, or constraint.

In his part of the book written in common with Wallerstein “Race, Nation, Class”, Étienne Balibar had considered to “form the preliminaries of an ‘anthropology of the nation form’ in modern times, involving at the same time a description of the model of subjectivity that could be called homo nationalis... This was supposed... to help... understand how, in the wake of the constitution of ‘nations’ in the bourgeois sense... a certain community-effect was produced and maintained, where racism was... a necessary “internal supplement”“¹. This quotation reflects not only a significant enlargement of the use of the term „intersectionality”, but leads also to our central question, i.e. to the issue of a comprehensive critique of all relations of domination overdetermining in the complex reality of modern society, in a way which neither excludes class-domination, nor falls back into the class-reductionism characteristic for large parts of the “Marxist” tradition. Such a critique will most certainly not become a kind of “integral universalism” which will be capable of tackling all relations of dominance by ONE comprehensive theory and result in ONE integrated practice of liberation. It will rather have to take on board the real material differences and the irreducible plurality of the existing structures and mechanisms of domination, while at the same time fully understanding their over-determination.

However, in a perspective of liberation, the central strategical question to be asked and to be answered is the following: How to make possible a mutually shared critique of all different kinds of domination and how to conceive and to develop a real and effective practice of liberation in which all

¹ Balibar (2011), The Genealogical Scheme: Race or Culture?, in Trans-Scripts 1 (2011), 1-9, 2.

these – very differently – oppressed and dominated forces – could get together in a combined political struggle against the politically maintained structures of reproduction of all these forms of domination which maintain people in a subaltern or subordinated position, i.e. without freedom or with limited freedom¹ – and how to make it effectively real.

A productive help for a further discussion of this question can be found in an analysis proposed by Patricia Hill Collins: She analyses “intersectionality as a knowledge project whose *raison d’être* lies in its attentiveness to power relations and social inequalities”. Collins examines “three interdependent sets of concerns: (a) intersectionality as a field of study that is situated within the power relations that it studies; (b) intersectionality as an analytical strategy that provides new angles of vision on social phenomena; and (c) intersectionality as critical praxis that informs social justice projects”². The specific grounds, reasons, causes of these structures and processes, and the responsible agencies and actors involved in such practices are certainly different, but ultimately they all go along with a specific kind of strong inequality – i.e. of a dominating and of a dominated element – between individuals and groups of them as members of their society, within their different social and societal contexts. This inequality is structural and it is connected to societal hierarchies in which the one can command the other, simply because of occupying a specific place in the structure of societal relations that stands in a relation of domination to the subservient place allotted to other members of society. Racism, sexism and the subordination or dependency of specific societies to other societies do indeed often intersect in the real lives of people, but they are not addressed as such by all feminist and anti-racist practices. Because of this lack of

¹ Wolf, Frieder Otto (2011): in Louis Althusser, *Für Marx*, mit einem Nachwort herausgegeben von Frieder Otto Wolf, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 371.

² Hill Collins, Patricia (2015): *Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas*, First published online as a Review in *Advances for Annual Review of Sociology* on March 23, 2015 at soc.annualreviews.org, 1.

understanding and, therefore, addressing real intersectionality, with its effects of domination, such practices tend, in effect, mostly to relegate the identity of women of colour to a location that prevents any telling about their real, namely complex experiences of domination and violence. Crenshaw's "focus on the intersections of race and gender... highlights the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed"¹. While sharing the desire with Crenshaw to understand the development of modern societies and the ways in which our common world presently operates, as well as to empower victims of violence to change that world, our efforts go beyond the horizon of "identity politics" within which Crenshaw has remained: We undertake to address the issues of structures and causal determinations for such specific relations of domination and the ways in which they are overdetermining each other. On this basis, we proceed to take up again the critique of political economy, as it has been theoretically developed by Marx, more generally as a model for reconstructing processes of reproduction of existing forms of domination, and thereby attempt to widen Crenshaw's insistence on the intersectionality of violence to an analysis of the specific societal hierarchies which effectively function to reproduce them, while at the same time opening our analysis to class domination and class struggle beyond the current concentration on "race" and "gender" – thereby adding capitalist domination again to the specific structures of domination to be analysed, to be fought against and to be overcome.

The processes of ecological destruction could not meaningfully defined as being modern in this sense. They are the outcome of the entire complexity of modern, as well as still effective pre-modern structures of human and societal reproduction, filtered by the flexibilities of the terrestrial eco-sphere. Only the processes of reflecting and reacting to them within human societies

¹ Crenshaw, Kimberly (1991): Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color, Stanford Law Review, Vol. 43, No. 6., S. 1241–1299, 1245.

have a specific modern dimension – and therefore certainly are an indispensable part of any political project adequate to modern realities.

In order to address strategically – and adequately – what is at stake in the globalizing bourgeois societies of the 21st century, it will not be sufficient to rediscover the realities of class domination and class struggle, as well as to decipher the overdetermination processes due to modern structures of gender domination or dependency, it will also be required critically to address the new structures of capitalist domination as they have emerged with “finance capital”, i.e. in the process of further development leading to the emergence of globally operating capitalist oligarchies as a new modality of the domination of capital – in which credit relations and finance capital have taken a central role. It will have to be analyzed how this development of capitalist exploitation and domination has acted upon these relations of domination outside of the capital relation (capital-wage labour) emerging and crystallizing as a modern kind of “androcentrism”, as well as a new, comprehensive kind of effective transnational dependency. The resulting complexification of the elementary structures of societal reproduction has been answered by a corresponding complexification of ideological and institutional “suprastructures”: The modern state, civil society, and modern mass culture have ceased to retroact only or mainly on the class struggles in the economic basis of modern bourgeois societies – they have extended the “theatre of conflict” to all the existing structures of domination.

For us, who make use of past debates on “over-determination” (Althusser), as well as on the “politics of human rights” (Balibar) in order to resituate the experience of identity politics within a perspective of struggles of liberation addressing the plurality of structures and mechanisms effectively operative at once in the reproduction of domination, this is a challenge and an offer to cooperate. As we are strongly marked by the critique of the political economy elaborated by Marx as the science dealing with the capitalist mode

of production and its domination within modern bourgeois societies¹, as well as by Marx's sketches of a *critique of politics*², we do start to co-operate from our side, by taking up and widening the concept of intersectionality. Critically making use of Marx's heritage, we build our approach upon a specific understanding of society which also explains our approach to intersectionality: We understand "society" as the articulation of individuals, belonging to and dealing with nature existing within a territory and at the same time as the complex of relations, especially power relations, as they exist between these individuals with their gender, their physical and mental constitution, their social, ethnic, cultural, confessional, national origin and affiliation. Accordingly, the metabolism of humankind is going on in a societal form based upon relations between individuals, who at the same time are embedded into specific societal contexts with their collective power relations and individual "roles". Within our contemporary societies, societal hierarchies are significantly determined by capitalist oligarchies, and by the specific interrelations they are capable of establishing – in a kind of "intersectionality from above" – between class, gender, and ethnic issues and the underlying societal, social, ecological and global problems, *on the one hand*, and by the development of agencies like the EU (in its complex relations to the US, to NATO and to other global actors), *on the other*. Such an approach allows us to co-operate with individuals and collectives following Crenshaw's and Collins's understanding of intersectionality, but also with all those who deal with structural hierarchies, and their underlying trends and mechanisms in transnational and international relations.

Furthermore, our approach allows us, in an active and egalitarian way, to co-operate with critical ecologists - and with the many activists and groups who are getting involved in just, solidarity-based and democratic struggles

¹ Wolf, Frieder Otto (2011): in: Althusser... 370.

² cf. Balibar et al., Marx et sa critique de la politique, Paris 1979.

with regard to the humanitarian, food, ecological, resources, financial, and economic crises, as well as with the waves of crisis concerning the Euro and the EU. For working towards such a co-operation it is worth-while to make use of the presently renewing discussion on Marx, in order to highlight the growing awareness of Marx for the ecological issue. Authors like Hannah Holleman and Kohei Saito have shown that Marx in his later years became ever more aware of the ecological problem¹, whereas these learning processes of Marx have later been obscured and then marginalized by ‘official’ Marxists, as well as, of course, by the dominant forms of the bourgeois sciences of society and history.

Facing the enormous strength of the capitalist oligarchies as networks of the strongest owners of finance capital in industry and finance and of the ruling elites in politics, management, state administration, law, military and “security”, science, culture and media, accounting, consulting and lobbying and their international organisations on the one hand and the on-going political defensive of the left on the other hand, we argue for the further enlargement of the notion of intersectionality in the following directions:

- By searching for and exposing the causes and causers of the different crises, deepening the complex reproduction crisis of humankind – namely in exposing the ‘intersectionality from above’ in the strategies of the capitalist oligarchies,

- In analysing conceptions and concepts for alternatives and in elaborating our own proposals and conceptions, which aim to build a broad alliance of societal forces, in the form of an extended “intersectionality from below”,

- In searching for agents and agencies capable of dealing with causes and consequences of the crises, i.e. of violence against people and nature, as

¹ Hannah Holleman (2017), Capital and Ecology in: Reading 'Capital' today ..., 160-180; Kohei Saito (2016), Natur gegen Kapital. Marx' Ökologie in seiner unvollendeten Kritik des Kapitalismus (Frankfurt am Main: Campus).

counter-powers with the capability of struggling for the emergence of alternative structures,

- in organising new political alliances capable of struggling for hegemony within the political processes within civil society, as well as within national or trans-national state structures.

In thinking, researching and acting on this basis, we propose to extend Collins's orientation on power relations and social inequalities to the ecological and global dimensions of justice in a complex way.

Doing so, we focus on:

- Building a politics against the capitalist oligarchies as the main causers of the crises who are based in the energy, transportation, finance and high-tech spheres, in the military-industrial “security” complex and in agribusiness, and who effectively put into practice a strategy of “intersectionality from above”,

- Taking up and reinforcing the on-going struggles to protect and to strengthen existing democratic, social, ecological standards,

- Helping to develop on-going struggles to protect, to democratise and to enlarge the public spheres,

- Organising solidarity-based emancipatory forces on the local and regional levels, while at the same time working on their intersectional co-operation on the levels of the (member) states, of the EU, of Europe and of global politics, and working to bring them together in broad alliances admitting of plurality.

In sum: We propose to take up the common work for an “intersectionality of the struggles!”¹, i.e. for a common work towards supporting the multitude in becoming capable to change the world. In this

¹ Wolf, Frieder Otto (2010/2011), Die Rückkehr des Staates, die Intersektionalität der Kämpfe, das Gemeinsame der Neuen Zeit und die Suche nach gemeinsamen Perspektiven, in: Rückkehr in die Zukunft – Krisen und Alternativen, Beiträge zur radikalen Philosophie, Westfälisches Dampfboot, Münster, 2012, 366-424.

connection, it is necessary to stress at least the central questions concerning the organisation of agents and agencies. These are slightly contradictory and very complicated:

1) An organisation that should change power relations has to respond to societal power structures but while doing so, these structures have a strong negative impact on democracy in the framework of this very organisation – and, therefore, on its attractiveness for members and for interested, “sympathising” people – how can this be avoided?

2) How can these forces learn to be politically and culturally very different, but at the same time really effective in terms of changing societal reality?

3) How can these forces learn to respect and respond fully the existing different individual interests and desires, while still being capable to protect the socially and globally weakest – and to respond immediately to actions and reactions by the other, dominating side?

4) How can these forces learn to be a party and a movement at the same time?

5) How can these forces learn to cooperate sincerely and fully with grass roots movements, while developing co- operation with trade unions and other agents of organized societal resistance, while at the same time seeing and dealing with the important limitations of their present capacity to act?

6) How can these forces learn to make use of all possibilities to act, while establishing and keeping one’s own durability and resilience as a political organisation and as an effective alliance?

7) How can these forces learn to realise the continuity, durability and flexibility of struggling organisations and especially of political alliances, with a perspective of dealing adequately with the underlying contradictions and their backgrounds in the very structures of interest of all participants?

Or, in one word, we propose to ask again: How to be radically democratical, but able to act in a really radical, revolutionary and transformative way?

WHAT MARX'S *CAPITAL* CLARIFIED AND NOT LARIFIED

Hiroshi ONISHI^(*)

Introduction

Last year was the 150th anniversary of the publication of the first edition of *Capital's* Volume 1, and this year is the 200th anniversary of Marx's birth and the 170th anniversary of the publication of *Communist Manifest*. On this occasion I would like to mention that the main work of Marx is *Capital*, but that it did not cover all the discussion on capitalism. This type of correct understanding of Capital is very important for the present class struggle in Japan.

For example, serious of current political issues in Japan such as the US military bases in Japan, the Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution belong to the issues which was discussed in Lenin's Imperialism. In this sense, we should reevaluate Lenin more, but of course it is also indispensable to reconsider the present class conflicts fundamentally. For example, what I am always aware of my students is their too busy job search activities, and this situation shows their too weak bargaining power against the capitalist class. In other words, what should be discussed on capitalism is, first of all, the class relation.

Indeed, Marx devoted all of his energy to complete *Capital* rather than all other issues. It was because he thought that the class problem lies in all sources. For example, in an article 'The Housing Question,' Engels said that this problem cannot be solved without abolition of exploitation, because so terrible housing conditions are the inevitable result of the terrible poverty created by the labor exploitation. In this way, Engels pointed out the essential issue is the class issue which should be discussed before any other issues, and this way of discussion was same with Lenin, because Lenin's Imperialism

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argued that imperialist wars are the inevitable result of the rule of the monopoly capital. The standpoint of revolutionists which is distinguished from the liberalists must focus on “class issue” in these meanings. In this context, it can be understood that Miss Yoshiko Kira, a communist candidate, who put a black company problem in the front won 700 thousand votes in the House of Council election in 2003.

Capitalist Exploitation without Violence

However, Marx did not simply discuss “class” as a problem but as a matter of “capitalist exploitation” as a core proposition of capitalistic class relations. After the bourgeois revolution, society cannot be identified easily as a class society, because already the feudalistic class system had been overwhelmed and now all the people has equal legal rights. It was the reason why Marx had to write such a thin book *Capital* to reveal the secret of capitalism.

In fact, this exploitation was quite different from exploitation in the earlier society. For example, exploitation in the early stage of serfdom had the form that the lord made serfs work in the land for three days of the week, for example, and therefore, the serfs could work in their own land for the rest of the week, that is, four days. In that case, it was clear to everyone that 3/7 of his total labor was exploited. Or, in the era of slavery, the percentage of the total agricultural products produced by slaves which could be given to the slaves as their food directly indicates the rate of exploitation. In these meanings exploitation prior to capitalism was obvious, requiring no special theoretical work.

However, capitalist exploitation has not taken such a form. In capitalism where all economic relations have appeared as product exchanges, the relationship between capitalists and workers also has become a relationship between buyers and sellers of labor force, but since it is also a product exchange, it must be an equal exchange. In other words, the capitalist

“is paying the equal value for the labor power!”, Nothing is fraud or cheating. Then, what is the exploitation under the equal exchange without fraud or cheating? Marx had to write such a thick *Capital* to clarify that secret. Conversely, the elucidation of this secret is the main purpose of *Capital* and not the others. *Capital* is not a book that tried to write all of the issues in capitalism, but to clarify the limited object which is the essence of capitalism which must not be misunderstood.

Okishio’s Mathematical Proof of Labor Exploitation

By the way, the proof of capitalist exploitation, which is the core theory of *Capital*, was carried out mathematically by Nobuo Okishio in the 1950s, and it was named as ‘Fundamental Marxian Theorem’. To tell the truth, I was a member of his research group for two years, and I was also so influenced by his politically sincere attitude, because he was so active in the peace movement as a member of communist party. However, his greatest contribution to the human history is undoubtedly that proof. The name of this proof directly and clearly shows that it is the core theory of *Capital*. Therefore, many mainstream economists were also so shocked by this proof.

In fact, this proof has led Professor Okishio to be elected as president of the biggest Japanese association of the mainstream economists, and his proof had become well-known in the world. Together with professor Michio Morishima at London School of Economics, two of them had become the representatives of the Japanese mathematical Marxists. Due to the nature of this paper, we can not prove this proof here, but the basic structure of the proof is briefly shown as follows.

- ① Condition that profit exists
selling price > cost of means of production + expenses (wages) for labor force paid by capitalists
- ② Value equation expressing the composition of the product value

product value = value transferred from means of production + input labor directly expensed in the process of production

③ Relations derived from ① and ② (derivation process omitted)

amount of labor that can be bought back by wages received by workers in one hour work < 1 hour

Readers should confirm that this conclusion ③ means the existence of exploitation. Even if workers work for one hour, the wages earned by this work will only include less than one hour of labor. In other words, workers work for 1 hour for the capitalists, but they can receive less than one hour. In this sense, there is no difference from the exploitation in the slavery system. We can find the form of exploitation, but there is no difference of the essence. In this sense, Marx calls wage labor under capitalism “wage slave”.

However, important point of this transactions between capitalists and workers are not 'unequal exchanges'. What workers have sold here is the ability to work that his labor force has rather than “labor” itself, and if it is being socially reproduced society, it means that it can be defined as reproductive costs. The commodity value will be paid properly. In other words, exploitation can exist even if the value of the labor force is firmly paid in this way. In capitalism, exploitation does not require any fraud or cheating.

Of course, real capitalism is full of fraud, cheating, and violence. And you can also explain them from “the law of movement of capitalism”. This is exactly the same as the era of Marx. However, what Marx explained in *Capital* was not such a thing. It was a proof of exploitation in a world without fraud, cheating and violence at all.¹ Only by this way, we can reveal that capitalist society is also a class society (exploitation society), together with its characteristics different from slavery and serfdom system.

¹ Eugen Karl Dühring tried to explain the evils of capitalism as its fraud, cheating and violence, but Engels criticized his way of criticism was out of point. See a chapter titled as ‘on violence’ in Engels’s book *Anti-Dühring*.

Marxian economics criticizes capitalism in its pure form

In addition, such a way of criticism of capitalism by Marx is also posing a problem to the presently prevailing way of “criticism of capitalism”. We tend to have criticize the existing fraud, cheating, violence, injustice etc. It is because that 'fraud' is evident to everyone's eyes. But we cannot finalize capitalism simply by criticize these problems. And there is no “Marxist” who does not want to finalize capitalism, that is to finalize the class society as the ultimate aim. Although Marxists also criticize various type of fraud and violence in the real world, Marxists have to know that it is not enough and Marxists’ final task is to finalize capitalism itself, in other words, to abolish all kind of exploitation.

Such kind of criticism of capitalism is decisively different from non-Marxian criticism of capitalism. Anti-mainstream factions in modern economics such as Keynesians and Post-Keynesians point out defects in market mechanisms as a problem of externalities, imperfect competition, imperfect information, transaction costs and so on which exist in real capitalism. However, Marx 's Capital does not have any mentions on externalities, imperfect competition, imperfect information and transaction costs. This was not because Marx did not know these problems, but because Marx thought such type of criticism of capitalism is not the true and essential criticism of the capitalist itself. Although such kind of criticism can be against a certain type of capitalism, it cannot be a criticism of capitalism itself. Anti-mainstream factions in modern economics such as Keynesians and Post-Keynesians do not really criticize capitalism in this meaning. It is because they are not criticizing “pure capitalism” at all. Even though it looks like a criticism of capitalism, it is really a defender of capitalism who never criticizes “capitalism itself” in this sense.

Such a situation actually forms some unexpected relationship within the economic world. Scholars who are mainstream modern economics,

Neoclassical scholars are more likely to read Marx seriously and regard Marxian economics as an object for discussion. For example, in our university, a Professor Emeritus Fukuoka Masao who is still active after his retirement. Dr. Fukuoka, a researcher of the general equilibrium theory, is discussing in detail what is the conditions under which the labor theory of value becomes effective. In other words, under a certain condition, Marx's theory can be accepted by him. Although such conditions we Marxists think of are wider than his conditions, in any case Marx is considered to be an object of discussion of the modern economics. It is impossible for Keynesian or Post Keynesian economists who are only interested in issues such as externalities, imperfect competition, imperfect information, or transaction costs. On the other hand, Neoclassical economists stand on a common basis with Marxism as it tries to theoretically discuss capitalism in its pure form. In this sense we would like to emphasize that we are not Keynesian, Post Keynesian, but Neoclassical economist which is on the same foundation as Marxist.

What is necessary and not necessary to clarify exploitation

Thus it was found that the core concept for Marxism is exploitation and that it is the concept that can be discussed only by the analysis of pure capitalism, but in fact the scope of *Capital* also contains some other contents beyond. Rather, strictly speaking, contents such as “wage labor” and “land ownership” that Marx originally did not include in its original plan are included in the final version of *Capital*. And while it is important that these parts were not included originally, on the other hand, we also want to pay attention to the importance of these contents had become included finally.

The original purpose of *Capital* was to clarify exploitation as mentioned above, and therefore it is necessary to discuss the essence of money as a phenomenon form of capital and various type of methods to produce surplus value, and at the same time, it should also clarify the essence

of average profit, commercial profit, interest, rent as phenomenon forms. Also, in order to elucidate such last average profit, commercial profit, interest, rent, etc., the second volume of *Capital* should clarify the relationships among industries and the mechanism of the process of circulation. This is the theory of reproduction scheme in the third part of the second volume of *Capital*. These were indispensable parts for the original purpose of *Capital*. But when I look at that, we can find some other major propositions, which were not necessary for these purposes. For example, the explanation of the falling rate of profit, because this part is not dispensable to explain the essence of surplus value and profit as the phenomenon of surplus value. Marx had changed his mind to add some points which are not on the essence of exploitation and capitalism but related to the problem of the historical law of capitalism.

As a matter of fact, this problem creates a critical issue for determining the scope of *Capital*. It is because this change made *Capital* be a book of historical materialism as well as a book of surplus value theory both of which are the exact two parts of “Scientific socialism” which Engels defined in his book *From Utopia to Science*. In Japanese Marxian economics, we have a non-mainstream Marxian economics called “Uno school” which started from the University of Tokyo, and it has a special category of “pure capitalism”. This category is good for to understand capitalism without any category of externalities, imperfect competition, imperfect information, etc.. However, it negates historical materialism as a science. In this sense, we have to say that this school as failed to understand the final structure and purpose of Marx’s *Capital*. Marx’s *Capital* also discussed the end of capitalism.

Historical Law in *Capital*

Indeed, “falling rate of profit” is a reality of developed economies and an important issue to discuss the “end of capitalism”. For example, a major bestseller book, *The End of Capitalism and Crisis of History*, which was written prof. Kazuo Mizuno several years ago, discusses the long term decline

of the interest rate. It goes without saying that this decline in the interest rate is caused by the falling rate of profit. In addition, Marxian economists analyzes that the global financial crisis that broke out in 2008 should be regarded as a systemic crisis that was caused by the long-term decline in profit rate rather than a cyclical crisis¹. In this sense, in the discussions on “the end of capitalism” currently under way, we cannot forget the laws of history which are explained also in Capital.

To tell the truth, I am emphasizing this point because my model called “Marxian Optimal Growth Model” is formulated to prove the end of capitalism by enough capital accumulation which can be expressed as the optimal capital labor ratio accompanying falling rate of profit. This can be explained by the following way of Marxian economics. That is, if we denote annual use in raw material and depreciation of the fixed capital in macroeconomy as c , wage part as v , profit part as m in value term, the profit rate can be expressed as $m / (c + v)$ which can be transformed into

$$\frac{m}{c+v} = \frac{\frac{m}{v}}{\left(\frac{c}{v}\right)+1}.$$

It shows that profit rate decreases when the capital composition c / v increases at given surplus value ratio (m / v). In our Marxian Optimal Growth Model, the capital composition, which is expressed in physical term, has a tendency to rise and this tendency decrease the marginal productivity of capital and then decrease economic growth rate as a result. It is because capital accumulation ratio $\frac{\Delta c + \Delta v}{c + v}$ is smaller than the profit rate $\frac{m}{c+v}$. In other words, the economic stagnation of the current advanced capitalist country can be described as the inevitable consequence of capitalism. Although Marx did not mention the declining trend of economic growth rate, first of all, it is

¹ See Fundamental Institute for Political Economy, *World Economic Crisis and Marxian Economics*, Otsuki Publishers, 2011, in Japanese.

surprising that such historical trends of capitalism were shown 150 years ago. This is the perspective of *Capital*.

Therefore, in fact, Marx's *Capital* had challenged not only "elucidation of exploitation" but also the tasks in the field of historical materialism to some extent, and three of them are:

- ① Rise in capital labor ratio
- ② Long-term decline in profit rate
- ③ Long-term decline in growth rate (capital accumulation rate) as we explained above. However, our Marxian Optimal Growth Model has also proved the following historical trends long-term rise in asset prices
- ④ Increase in wage rate
- ⑤ Falling ratio of investment goods sector compared with consumption goods sector
- ⑥ General expansion of social division of labor through market
- ⑦ Relative rise of the weight of commercial sector
- ⑧ Long-term shrinking trend of the size of government¹

In addition, *Capital* had also provided a low of

- ⑨ Increasing relative surplus population

One of my complaint to the present Marxist economists in the Western world is that they are not taking into consideration such many apparatuses provided by Marx's *Capital* especially when they want to analyze the present economic and social issues. They always only accuse neoliberalism as the cause of everything without conducting any deep analyses. In my opinion, this tendency comes from their attitude without any deep concern of the range and potentiality of Marx's *Capital*, and such an attitude makes no difference from the social democrats. In the level of economic theory, it means no difference from the non-mainstream economists in modern economics.

¹ Almost all of these tendencies were explained in Onishi(2015).

In my opinion, the above historical tendency of ① - ⑨ show that now we are in the final stage of capitalism, capitalism is awaiting the declaration of death, and revolutionists can fight against capitalism to a considerable extent with this logic. However, if we cannot do so, we cannot be beyond the social democrats. I hope this readers to think about this problem in the year of the 200th anniversary of Marx's birth.

Theoretical Position of Peace Movement and Ecological Movement

Thus, this paper has clarified that the core of criticism of capitalism is the problem of exploitation, but Marx's Capital also provided the some laws of tendency including falling rate of profit and they are very useful to analyze the modern capitalism. However, as mentioned above, we must not forget the importance of the problem raised by Lenin's Imperialism besides the above laws of tendency. At least in Japan, issues of the Japan-U.S. military alliance is deeply concerned with the problem of the contemporary imperialism represented by US imperialism, and it has also caused a very dangerous situation with North Korea in Northeast Asia. In addition, the US military has been committing a lot of crimes in Okinawa islands about 400,000 crimes in Okinawa. Even limiting to violent crimes including homicide, hundreds of crimes have been committed. This is real occupation, and there are same problems not only in Japan but also in the Middle East, South America and other many areas.

Therefore, our fights against of imperialism, for example, to defend the peace constitution of Japan and to be the Japanese Self Defense Force can be regarded as being guided by Lenin who clarified that the present age is the imperialist era. The current opposition alliance against Abe administration in Japan is also in extension of the movement against the war law in 2015. These current problems are in the field of Lenin's Imperialism which was published 101 years ago from now.

Another point I would like to discuss here is the political alliance with ecologists, which is particularly important in Japan after the accident of Fukushima nuclear power plant. Because both Marxism as “productivism” and ecologism as “anti-productivism” are fighting against capitalism together in the advanced capitalism who’s economic growth rate is now zero. That is, different ideological groups have same aim in the real world in this field, and this mystery was cleared up by our Marxian Optimal Growth Theory which clarified the necessity to allocate much social wealth to consumption, not to accumulation, after reaching at the zero growth economy. Although the declining capital accumulation rate itself was mentioned as the historical tendency ③ in the previous section, Capital did not mention that there will be a ultimate target ahead of the “decline”, in other words, “the end of capital accumulation”. This ultimate target can be explained briefly as follows;

Let us now assume following four production technologies that produce a certain amount of final products with various ratios of “machine” and “labor”.

Technology ① utilizes zero machine and 1000 hours human labor

Technology ② utilizes 5 machine and 200 hours human labor

Technology ③ utilizes 10 machine and 50 hours human labor

Technology ④ utilizes 20 machine and 20 hours human labor

In this case, if we look only the amount of direct labor, technology ④ becomes the most “productive”, but “true labor productivity” should be measured by the total labor including indirect labor. Suppose now that 10 hours of labor is required to produce one machine (strictly speaking, not one machine but the amount of depreciation of the machine used to produce this amount of final products). Then, the total amounts of labor that is consumed in each technology can be calculated as

Technology ①; $0 \times 10 + 1000 = 1000$ hours human labor

Technology ②; $5 \times 10 + 200 = 250$ hours human labor

Technology ③; $10 \times 10 + 50 = 150$ hours human labor

Technology ④; $20 \times 10 + 20 = 220$ hours human labor

These are the true labor productivity, and we can understand easily that the technology ③ is the best and it shows the optimal capital labor ratio. That is, there is a certain level of target of the capital accumulation, which means that we do not need capital accumulation any more after reaching at this level.

Therefore, here the assertions for real society of Marxism and ecologism coincide. Marxism opposes the continuation of capital accumulation, and of course ecologism also opposes. When capitalism approaches the end, its problems appear variously, and the coherent areas expand. This is the theoretical basis of the political and social alliance of these two ideologies¹.

In any case, *Capital* is a book written by Marx who was also an activist, and therefore, the content of *Capital* had been selected carefully. He thought that the content of *Capital* is the core issue of capitalism, which we should be elucidated, while committing so many actual tasks of the class struggle. And, far from being over in the expiration date, still now Marx's *Capital* is continuously suggesting more and more on the present real problem.

¹¹ In the advanced countries, because the problem of asset disparity has also become serious, there is a possible another alliance with the social democrats who centralize their interest in the issues of distribution. However, this paper does not prepare to explain this issue. I want to try another day.

MARX AND THE PROBLEM OF JOINT-STOCK COMPANY - REFLECTION ON THE POSSIBILITY OF SOCIALIST MARKET ECONOMY

Kim Sang Bong^()*

1. Questions about the possibility of socialist countries and socialist market economy in East Asia

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, it seemed that the experiments of socialism attempted by realistic socialist countries in the 20th century had failed. People spoke of the end of socialism as if it were self-evident.¹ Despite the fact that there were still socialist nations in Asia, it seems that people did not believe that Asians could do what the Soviet Union could not. But it has become clear that it was too hasty to say the end of socialism now, almost 30 years from now. This is because in East Asia, Vietnam, China and North Korea still maintain the socialist system. And it does not seem that these countries will easily give up the socialist system in the near future. Given these circumstances, the experiment of socialism seems to have not yet ended in history.

But there may also be a voice against this judgment. One of the most important reasons for such counterarguments is that the socialist countries of East Asia are nothing more than a nominal socialist state. There are many reasons for this judgment. For example, philosophically, because of the influence of Confucianism or patriarchal elements², politically, due to nationalism,³ it can be said that the socialist countries of East Asia are not

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¹ F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Free Press, 1992.

² 李澤厚 interprets modern China's communism as modern Confucianism. It is difficult to say that North Korea, a hereditary hereditary country like the feudal dynasty, is a socialist or communist country in its original sense.

³ According to 鐵鐵軍 the core of the new democratic founding policy established in 1949 ~ 1950 was national capitalism under the leadership of the Communist Party. In that sense, he argued, "There was a radical in China after the foundation of the country, but there was no left," and argues that China's

pure communist countries. Considering the fact that any ideology or philosophy cannot but be transformed by time and place, it seems inappropriate to judge that East Asian countries are not true socialist countries for the reasons mentioned above.

But whatever it may be, the question we may raise recently about the socialist identity of communist countries in East Asia is: 'How can the capitalist market economy order introduced after reform and opening be compatible with the socialist state system?' As is well known, China calls its economic system “socialist market economy” after reform and opening, and Vietnam calls it “socialist oriented market economy” after Doi Moi. But here we can ask: Is not the market economy automatically capitalistic? If not, in what sense can the market economy be socialist?

If we want to ask this question thoroughly, we must ask what socialism and capitalism are, what the market is and what the economy is. The question of how capitalist economic order can be reconciled with the publicness of the socialist economy is worth asking for the stability and sustainability of the socialist political system, even if we ignore such fundamental questions not to infinitely extend the theoretical debate. In particular, if the capitalist market economy leads to the subordination of labor by capital, it can be questioned how this can be reconciled with the socialist political system.

Here we cannot give a complete and sufficient answer to this question. But in Marx's *Capital* we can find a basis for the possibility of reconciling and harmonizing market economy and socialist values. In Marx's chapter 27 of *Capital*, he refers to a corporation.

revolutionary ideology was a tool for primitive accumulation essential for economic development. “Because of this revolutionary ideology, Chinese workers and farmers voluntarily provided their labor force, even at the cost of sacrifice. At the stage of primitive accumulation of state capital, revolutionary ideology worked very effectively. The mass mobilized through revolutionary ideology devoted much of the surplus created by labor to the state. This is one of the main reasons why China has been able to complete the primitive accumulation of national industrialization and repay foreign debt for a very short period of time at a low cost.” (원테쥘, 「백년의 급진」, Korean edition, pp.38, 53).

“This result of capitalist production in its highest development is a necessary point of transition towards the transformation of capital back into the property of the producers, but rather as their property as associated producers, as directly social property. It is furthermore a point of transition towards the transformation of all functions formerly bound up with capital ownership in the reproduction process into a simple functions of the associated producers, into social functions”¹.

Here, Marx refers to the corporation as “a necessary point of transition towards the transformation of capital into the property of the producers”. If, indeed, the corporation is not the private property of the capitalists but is a property of the associated producers, then the workers are no longer the slave of the wages of the capital but become the owner of the enterprise and the enterprise is not the place of exploitation, will be a realization of association of free producers. Marx, referring to this character of the corporation, argues that “this is the abolition of a capitalist private property within the confines of the capitalist mode of production itself”². I'm talking. Thus, a corporation is a form of enterprise that emerges at the highest stage of development of the capitalist mode of production, in which the private ownership of capital is transformed into social property through such corporations, so that the capitalist mode of production is abandoned within capitalism itself. If we can imagine that the abandonment of capitalism implies the transition to socialism or communism³, we can call the transition that takes place through the corporation as a “necessary point of transition” towards the socialist mode of production.

It is clear that the state-owned enterprises have been privatized and transformed into the joint-stock company after the reform and opening in the

¹ K.Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, (Penguin Books, 1991) p.568.

² op.cit., p.567.

³ cf. 松原智雄, 「マルクスの株式會社論-『經濟學批判要綱』の検討」, 『經濟學研究』, 北海道大學, 1974, p.265.

socialist countries in East Asia. It is also clear that when foreign capital invests in these countries, most of the forms of the enterprises they establish are joint-stock companies. As Marx correctly said in the passage quoted above, the joint-stock company is the most advanced corporate form in the capitalist economy today. Thus, if the joint-stock company is really the necessary point of transition towards the transformation of capital back into the property of the associated producers, then we might hope that the socialist oriented market economy driven by the East Asian socialist states is to free the working people from slavery and exploitation and ultimately make them become associated free producers.

But it is not at all clear whether Marx's view is true or not. Today, in many countries on the planet, the joint-stock company becomes the dominant corporate form, but it is difficult to say that thanks to joint-stock company the private ownership of capital turns into social ownership and the status of workers in the enterprise has changed. If so, in what sense can the joint stock company be the necessary point of transition towards socialist production mode? If Marx's view of a corporation is not wrong at all, and if it is still possible to discover the possibility of overcoming the capitalist exploitation and plunder economy through the corporation system, what can kind it be? This is what we are thinking about in this article.

2. Marx on the progressive nature of joint-stock company

To answer this question, we must first look at what Marx describes as a corporation. According to him, corporations are the products of massive capital accumulation that is possible only in capitalist society. From the earliest stages of capitalist mode of production, there was required a huge amount of capital that individuals could not afford alone. In this case, the capital is procured through the aid of the state, or the enterprise is established with monopoly rights from the state. In this case, companies can recruit a wider range of capital thanks to their exclusive monopoly, which is the

forerunner of modern corporations¹. However, when the capitalist economy develops highly, the size of the corporation's business is greatly expanded beyond the limit that individual capitalists alone can afford. As a result, companies that were formerly owned by the state are socialized in the form of corporations². There are two main reasons for Marx saying that a corporation is a social enterprise. The first is the Zentralisation of capital itself. Centralization is not a mere accumulation. "It is concentration of capitals already formed, destruction or their individual independence, expropriation of capitalist by capitalist, transformation of many small into few large capitals"³. According to Marx, the process by which the existing small capital transforms into the large capital by exploitation of the capitalist by the capitalist belongs to the three cardinal facts of capitalist production, which he explains as follows:

"We have seen how the growing accumulation of capital involves its growing concentration. Thus the power of capital grows, in other words the *autonomy of the social conditions of production*, as personified by the capitalist, is asserted more and more as against the actual producers. Capital shows itself more and more to be a social power, with the capitalist as its functionary-a power that no longer stands in any possible kind of relationship to what the work of one particular individual can create, but an *alienated social power* which has gained an autonomous position and confronts society as a thing, and as the power that the capitalist has through this thing. The contradiction between the general social power into which capital has developed and the private power of the individual capitalists over the social

¹ "K.Marx, Capital, Vol. I, p.424. "Certain spheres, even at the beginning of capitalist production, require a minimum of capital which is not in the hands of single individuals. Colbert and some German states are right in our own epoch, and partly to the formation of companies with a legally secured monopoly over the conduct of certain branches of industry and commerce-the forerunners of modern joint-stock companies."

² K.Marx, Capital, Vol. III, p."Formation of joint-stock companies. This involves: 1. Tremendous expansion in the scale of production, and enterprises which would be impossible for individual capitals. At the same time, corporations that were previously government ones became social. "

³ K.Marx, Capital, Vol. I. p.777.

conditions of production develops ever more blatantly, while this development also contains the solution to this situation, in that it simultaneously raises the conditions of production into general, communal, social conditions”¹.

The concentration of capital through the stock system appears superficially as a monopoly on the means of production by a few capitalists, but ultimately the “alienated social power”, in which the means of production acquire autonomy beyond individual control. However, the reason why the capitalist is alienated from the capital or the means of production he owns is that he is alienated from the production process of large corporations.

“Joint-stock companies in general (with this credit system) have the tendency to separate this function of managerial work and more from the possession of capital, whether one's own or borrowed; ... But it is not the case that the capitalist is the capitalist, and the capitalist is the capital of the capital. by its direct proprietors; and so on, and so on, and the other hand, who does not possess any capital, any other title, neither by any other way, takes care of all the functions that fall, the capitalist vanishes from the production process as someone superfluous”².

Here, according to Marx, money capitalists are separated from functioning capitalists in the production process of corporations. This is because the formers do not participate in the production process. No matter how much money he owns, the money capitalist does not participate in the production process of the corporation, because the money is invested in stock corporations in the form of stocks, or into banks in the form of deposits and loans to corporations through banks. Instead, the production process is directed by an independently functioning capitalist. However, as the corporation system develops, the functioning capitalist becomes more and

¹ K.Marx, Capital, Vol. III, p.373. The italic is my own.

² Ibid., p.512.

more “mere manager who does not possess capital under any title”. Thus, in this production process “the capitalist vanishes from the production process as someone superfluous”.

In the language of our days, this is the socialization of capital through the separation of ownership and management in the joint stock company. In the capitalist economy, as well as in the ancient slave economy, “the work of supervision and management” first occur as “domination of capital over labor”¹. But after the company came out, it's kind of a division of labor, like the conductor of an orchestra². And the industrial capitalist who oversees and manages the workers is getting closer to the wage-worker³. And the “process of exploitation itself appears as simply a labour process, in which the functioning capitalist simply performs different work from that of workers. The labour of exploiting and the labour exploited are identical, both being labour”⁴.

If the exploiting and exploited labors are all equal in terms of labor, the production process is rationally organized according to internal purpose, independent of the external intervention of the money capitalists. Thus, the process of production is “socially combined and scientifically arranged”⁵. This is the second of the three cardinal facts of capitalist production, which refers to the socialization of the production process itself and the production activity itself. Thus, together with corporations, capital

¹ Ibid., p.510.

² Ibid., p.511. “Capitalist production has itself brought it about that the work of supervision is readily available, quite independent of the ownership of capital. It has therefore become superfluous for this work of supervision to be performed by the capitalist. A musical conductor need in no way be the owner of the instruments in his orchestra, nor does it form part of his function as a conductor that he should have any part in paying the wages of the other musicians.”

³ K.Marx, Capital, Vol. III, p.505. “However, the production process, when separated from capital, is simply the labour process in general. The industrial capitalist, as distinct from the owner of capital, appears therefore not as functioning capital but rather as a functionary independent of capital, as a simple bearer of the labour process in general; as a worker, and a wage worker at that.”

⁴ Ibid. p.506.

⁵ K.Marx, Capital, Vol. I, 780. “Everywhere is an increasingly industrialized establishment of the collective labor of many people for a broader development of their material motive forces. for the progressive transformation of isolated processes of production, carried on by customary methods, into socially combined and scientifically arranged processes of production. “

becomes a form of social capital rather than private capital, and the corporation becomes a form of social enterprise rather than private enterprise¹.

As we have seen so far, because of this social nature of the corporation, Marx said that the joint stock company is the necessary point of transition towards a new mode of production, also refers to the stock system, “which is an abolition of capitalist private industry on the basis of capitalist system, and which destroys private industry to the same degree that it spreads and takes over new spheres of production”².

3. Limitations of corporations

So far, we have looked at Marx's view of the corporation, focusing on Capital. According to him, corporations have the potential to transcend capitalism as “point of transition” or self-abolishing contradiction. However, no matter how large a progressive potential it has in itself, it cannot be denied that it is still within the limits of the capitalist mode of production in itself.

“In the joint-stock system, there is already a conflict with the old form, in which the means of social production appear as individual property. But the transformation into the form of shares still remains trapped within the capitalist barriers; instead of overcoming the opposition between the character of wealth as something social, and private wealth, this transformation only develops this opposition in a new form”³.

Here, Marx says that the corporation only changes the confrontation between social wealth and private wealth in a new form. But what is the new form? According to the explanation of Park Ji-woong, a Korean economist, it

¹ K.Marx, Capital, Vol. III, p.567. “Capital, which is inherently based on a social mode of production and presupposes a social concentration of means of production and labour power, now receives the form of social capital (capital of directly associated individuals) in contrast to private capital, and its enterprises appear as social enterprises as opposed to private ones.”

² Ibid., p.570.

³ K.Marx, Capital, Vol., III, p.571.

can be said that the individual capitalist has been transformed into a capitalist who has joined through the corporation.

“Social capital is the capital of society, but the corporation is only a limited capital of the capitalist union. In other words, the capital of a corporation does not have a form of capitalist production but still exists in a form of capitalist production, in the form of private ownership. If so, the corporation means that the function of capital is not free from capital ownership despite this separation. At first glance, the united capitalists seem to be in a position to shrink their position compared to the traditional individual capitalists. For example, the role of shareholders seems insignificant compared to conventional capitalists. But the united capitalists can enjoy the private ownership of capitalism through the power of unity”¹.

Marx also thought that co-operatives were a more advanced form than joint-stock company because the ownership of the stocks that constituted the physical foundation of corporations was still held in the hands of money capitalists, although the former and latter forms of enterprise are similar in that they are the points of transition which appear in the capitalist economy.

“Capitalist joint-stock companies as much as cooperative factories should be viewed as transition forms from the capitalist mode of production to the associated one, simply that in the one case the opposition is abolished in a negative way, and in the other in a positive way”².

We might see the associated mode of production, which Marx describes here, as the same with “the association of free men, working with the means of production in common, and expending their different forms of labor power in one single social labor force,” as Marx invite us to imagine in Capital, Vol.

¹박지웅, 「자유로운 개인들의 연합에서의 자유, 개인 및 연합」, 『마르크스주의 연구』(경상대학교 사회과학 연구소, 2013), 제10권 제1호, p.231.

² Ibid., p.572.

I¹. However, Marx here considers the cooperative to be a more advanced form of the enterprise than the corporation on the way to the associated mode of production. This is because, as we have seen, the corporation is an association of capital, rather than an association of free producers.

4. Corporations and labor management rights

If we pay attention only to the limitations of the corporation, it seems that the corporation deepens the monopoly of capital but does not seem to open the constructive prospect for the association of free producers beyond the limits of capitalism. And it seems to be nothing but an exaggerated investigation that Marx called the corporation a necessary point of transition. For this reason, many Marxists, while trying to overcome the contradictions of capitalism through the idea of association of free producers, prefer cooperatives as specific forms of business rather than corporations. However, as Marx pointed out, it is undeniable that most co-operatives are too small to overthrow the highly developed capitalist economic system from within. Marx encouraged cooperatives to overcome such weaknesses through the credit system of capitalist society, but it is also not so easy to overcome the smallness of the scale through the capitalist credit system if we think the nature of cooperatives that do not aim at profit.

So, is there really no alternative that we can choose to secure the sociality and publicness of the economy within the capitalist economic system? It is not. Although the corporation itself has the possibility of promoting the socialization of production in various senses, many people think that it cannot abolish the domination of capital over the labour, because it is an enterprise founded on the capital of shareholders and therefore is not a community of free producers, but only that of capitalists. But I have argued for many years that such problems can be solved simply by giving the

¹ Capital, Vol. I, p.171.

management rights of corporations to employees¹. In other words, shareholders do not elect a director of a corporation at a shareholders' meeting, but we can give employees the right to appoint a director.

But even Marxists cannot imagine this because they believe it is a prerogative of stockholders. But it is a myth that has no basis. This is because corporations are firm with legal personality. A legal person, like natural persons, can be the subject of ownership, but it cannot be the object of ownership. However, Marx did not consider the corporation from a legal viewpoint, merely considering it from an economic point of view. And so on most of the Marxists. Therefore, in order to socialize the corporation, it was thought that employees and citizens should own stocks in some way. Thus, they have either devised a special way of distributing stock coupons to citizens, like Roemer², or pursuing employee stock ownership through Employee Stock Ownership Association.

But it does not require such a cumbersome device to make a corporation a community of free producers. This is because, among the provisions of the Corporation Act, only one clause on the appointment of a director of a corporation is required. In other words, in most company laws of the country, the clause stipulating the election of a director of a corporation at a general meeting of shareholders shall be amended and the director of the corporation shall be elected at the general meeting of the employees.

In the stock market, shareholders are generally buying and selling stock on the condition of corporation of which they do not participate in management, so there is nothing they lose even if shareholders who own shares do not participate in the election of directors of corporations. If the companies of which they own the stocks are doing well, it will be profitable

¹김상봉, 『기업은 누구의 것인가-노동자 경영권을 위한 철학적 성찰』, 도서출판 꾸리에, 2012. (Kim Sang-bong, *Who is owner of corporation? A philosophical reflection on the right of management of workers*, Book Publishing Courier., 2012.)

² J. E. Roemer, *A Future for Socialism*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1994.

for them because the stock price will rise and the dividend will increase, and in the opposite case, it will be enough to sell the stock.

But if this seems to be a radical alternative, it would be just as good as Germany to adopt the co-determination system. In the case of more than 2,000 corporations, the German law requires that directors of the Supervisory Board be recommended by shareholders and employees in half. This would prevent workers from falling into wage-slavery if they can exercise equal rights to capital. In Korea, a listed corporation should appoint one-quarter of its directors and Companies with capital of more than 2 trillion won a majority of the directors as outside directors. However, if employees have right to recommend the outside directors, the codetermination of labor and management can be expected.

Things have gotten worse while many people with progressive enthusiasm have sought far too far an alternative to overcome the subordination of labor by capital. But the road is surprisingly close. If we are free from long prejudices and superstitions, we will find a way out of the hell of capitalism around us.

MARXISM AND VIETNAM

Tatiana Gorchakova^()*

Karl Marx was one of the greatest minds of the 19th century, but above all he was a specialist in economics. He devoted most of his life to the economic theory of capitalism, which was the most developed and complete part of Marxism. His brilliant 4-volume work “Capital” is relevant even today.

Being engaged in the analysis of capitalist reality, he certainly could not ignore the political features of capitalism. According to the social philosophy of Marxism, “not the consciousness of people determines their being, but on the contrary their social being determines their consciousness.” The basis of social life is the mode of production (basis), which represents the unity of production forces and production relations. It conditions the superstructure - the spheres of politics, law, morality, philosophy, religion and art, which in turn have an active reverse effect on social being.

The source of social progress is the dialectics of production forces and production relations. When the contradiction between production forces and production relations is maturing, a social revolution (as the means of transition from one stage of development of society to another) begins.

In the late 1980s real socialism both in the USSR and Vietnam faced serious problems, which each country solved in its own way. The leadership of the USSR followed the path of political reforms - publicity, pluralism, multi-party system and etc. The CPV leadership took a fundamentally different concept as the basis for reforms, which actually proceeded from the fundamental ideas of Karl Marx: economic reforms should precede political ones, while the latter should be carried out on the basis of economic achievements and improvement of the material welfare of the population.

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In December 1986 the VI Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), stating that the model of command-and-control socialism had practically exhausted itself, formulated a new strategic course for the development of the Vietnamese society, which was later called the “renewal policy” (“Doi Moi”).

There were formulated the following main components of the Doi Moi policy at that time:

- Implementation of radical, structural economic reforms in order to break the command-and-control model in the economy and establish market relations;
- Building “market socialism” while maintaining the traditional political mechanism in the society on the basis of the political stability, provided by the CPV;
- Creating an open, multi-vector foreign policy, aimed at accelerating the integration of the country (economically and politically) into the world community.

It became completely clear by the end of the first decade of the new course, that the name the “renewal policy” was absolutely visionary. If in the 1970s and 80s Vietnam was among the 25 most backward and poorest countries in the world (according to the United Nations Organization), by the mid-1990s it was rapidly entering the group of world leaders in terms of economic growth. The country, which population lived for decades on the verge of starvation, unexpectedly quickly solved the problem of food shortages and became one of the world's largest exporters of rice.

However in order to withdraw the Vietnamese economy from the post-war devastation, there required external donors. With the beginning of perestroika the Soviet aid to Vietnam began to decline and stopped completely with the collapse of the USSR. And then Hanoi came to an indisputable conclusion: it is necessary for the party and the state to

concentrate their energy on active and multi-dimensional foreign policy activities.

The VI Congress of the CPV, taking a decision on the Doi Moi policy, formulated foreign policy tasks in the following way: “In the coming years, the tasks of our Party and our State in the field of foreign policy are to combine the power of the nation with the power of the epoch in every possible way ...”. Over the next three years, the CPV constantly specified this formula. So in May 1988 the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Sixth Convocation adopted the Resolution No. 13 on “foreign policy tasks in new conditions”, where two tasks were identified as priorities, which are “to consolidate peace and develop the economy, increase the number of friends, reduce the number of enemies”, diversify relations on the principles of respect for independence, sovereignty, mutual benefit.

In order to imagine the scope of work, which the Vietnamese diplomacy had to do in the framework of the Doi Moi policy, it is essential to recall the unenviable international position of Vietnam in the mid-1980s. At that time there was a multi-thousand contingent of the Vietnamese army in Cambodia, because of which Hanoi was subjected to increasing condemnation of the UN and a large part of the world community.

The relations of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam with the six countries of ASEAN, which were the pioneers of the international company, condemning the protracted Vietnamese military presence in Cambodia, were extremely tense. The confrontation with a powerful neighbor China reached its peak. The United States continued to maintain a tough trade and economic embargo against Vietnam. Finally, as mentioned above, the relations with the Soviet Union (the main military and political ally of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam) started to become less and less “fraternal”.

Under these conditions, there required urgent measures to quickly change the international image of the country for the better and to integrate

politically and economically into the world community at an accelerated pace. With this in mind, Hanoi based its foreign strategy on diversification of international relations, the open-door policy in the foreign economic sphere, the establishment of normal relations primarily with its Asian neighbors, as well as with the great powers.

On the one hand, all the activities of the Vietnamese diplomacy were subject to a single strategic goal - to contribute in every possible way to solving the economic tasks of renewal, to overcome the social and economic crisis, to ensure a continuous economic recovery and early integration of Vietnam into the global economic relations.

On the other hand, several major adjustments were made in the military doctrine and military policy. Following the withdrawal of all Vietnamese troops from Cambodia in 1989 and then from Laos, there began a planned large-scale reduction of the regular armed forces of Vietnam. These actions received a very positive assessment, especially among the Southeast Asian countries. They were considered one of the most important Hanoi's contributions to the creation of an atmosphere of mutual trust in the region, which could not but strengthen the regional positions of Vietnam.

With the start of the "Doi Moi" policy, Vietnam finally turned its face to its own region and Asian neighbors. A very important component of the new foreign policy of Hanoi was the targeted regionalization of the foreign policy accents and priorities. For a long time in the past, both before and after reunification, Vietnam (in its policy) was guided either by one or another great power.

Being in the Southeast Asian region geographically, where the processes of integration and the search for a regional community got reinforced in the 1960s and 1970s, Vietnam, due to well-known reasons, including its own fault, found itself outside these processes, which naturally

had a negative effect both in its regional positions and in economic development.

The “revaluation of values” has led to the fact that since the late 1980s, the priority development of relations with states and regional organizations of the Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region has become the main strategic task of the Vietnamese diplomacy.

Having begun implementing the foreign policy of renewal, the Vietnamese leadership first of all turned to its closest and economically developed neighbors - the six ASEAN countries. In 1970-80s the relations with this large regional organization was developing in a wary and hostile way: in political circles of the ASEAN countries, Vietnam was viewed as representing a real military threat to them. And Hanoi certainly was unhappy about the support, which a number of ASEAN countries lent to the US aggression in Vietnam, as well as with the anti-Vietnamese position of ASEAN in the Cambodian question.

The implementation of the UN plan for a settlement in Cambodia and the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from this country gave the “green light” to the process of establishing normal relations between Vietnam and ASEAN. In January 1992 in the Singapore Declaration the six ASEAN countries expressed their determination to develop new relations with Vietnam and their readiness to take an active part in the program of restoring its economy. In July 1992 Vietnam officially joined the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in the Southeast Asia.

Finally, in July 1995 a political action of historic significance took place: the official admission of Vietnam as a full-fledged member of ASEAN (one of the largest regional organizations, uniting today 10 states of the Southeast Asia) took place. Undoubtedly, this event can be called the largest and historically significant foreign policy achievement of the Doi Moi policy. For Hanoi, ASEAN is its first and the most powerful ally. Hanoi has the right

to expect its support and it actually already gets it, especially in solving such tasks, as the country's economic modernization, strengthening its national security and international positions.

On the other hand, with the entry of Vietnam, which possesses a large military and political weight and growing economic potential, ASEAN has become a more powerful regional organization, positioning itself in the UN, in the APR and in the international arena as a kind of “collective power” of political and economic cooperation of the Southeast Asian countries, being able to support long-term peace and security in the region.

By joining ASEAN, which is one of the fastest growing regional economic groupings, Vietnam got a real opportunity to connect to the gaining momentum of the regional economic development and to reach new economic frontiers in a short historical timeframe, relying on ASEAN. The economic motives were also important for ASEAN. Today and in the foreseeable future, Vietnam is one of the most promising markets for the consumption of goods and capitals of developed ASEAN countries, which are beginning to experience an excess of both.

Vietnam's determination to become a competent member of ASEAN was a kind of push for other countries in the region, that were outside of its framework. So in 1997 Laos and Myanmar became members of ASEAN and later Cambodia. This finally opened the way to the full-scale implementation of the idea of the founding fathers of ASEAN about a regional community and the creation of the unified Southeast Asia.

In conclusion, let me show you in numbers and facts the outstanding success, which Viet Nam has achieved in three decades of implementing the renewal policy. Today the Vietnamese economy is one of the most dynamic in the world and in the East Asia. The annual GDP growth averages 6–7%. Its exports reached 214 billion dollars (21% growth in 2017), imports reached 211 billion (20% growth in 2017), and in 2018 the country's external trade

turnover is expected to increase to 474 billion dollars. As an exporter, Vietnam rose from the 50th to 26th place in the world, and as an importer – from the 41st to 25th.

During the years of reforms, Vietnam made a huge leap forward, managed to reach a qualitatively higher level of development, becoming one of the notable forces not only of the Southeast Asia, but also of the East Asia as a whole. Vietnam is recognized as one of the fastest emerging markets in the world. The economy of the country in terms of per capita incomes, which reached \$ 2.4 thousand per year, which is 25 times higher than 1985, rose to the category of moderately developed ones. The GDP volume of the SRV (calculated by PPP) exceeded 0.62 trillion dollars in 2017, and in nominal terms is 221 billion dollars. By this indicator the country today occupies a rather high 32nd place in the world economy.

In short, the development experience of Vietnam once again shows that Marx's teaching continues to maintain its effectiveness and vitality even 200 years later. The words of Fridrih Engels, spoken by him at the funeral of Karl Marx on March 17, 1883, turned out to be truly predictive: "Both his name and work will survive the centuries!"