

1. Exploitation in the private sector today

In Vietnam today, realities of the economic reform in the past decade prove the role of the private sector in the economic growth and social progress. This also recognizes and justifies the existence of the exploitation of surplus value.

In addition, due to balance of power between economic sectors and the socialist government, the exploitation of surplus value isn't the main and dominant relations of production as in capitalist regimes. The exploitation of labor is limited to an acceptable level that is regulated by the

able. No solution will be found if we separate theory from practice.

2. Keeping VCP members from exploitation

After the economic reform was launched many VCP members engaged in private businesses in order to improve their living standard. Some of them had their private businesses run by their families, others started private concerns after retirement. This was, in fact, a normal development. The problem of exploitation was discussed only among VCP members. It isn't a widespread public concern.

It's really hard to define to what

in real estate, etc. There is no criterion for deciding whether persons who gain such income are exploiters or not. In short, the effort to draw a line between exploitation and non-exploitation seems to end in failure.

In my opinion, VCP members could be allowed to do private business according to the following criteria:

- Contributing to the economic growth and national budget.
- Contributing to social programs.
- Paying full attention to the quality of life of workers and solving properly industrial relations.
- Assisting operation of trade union and civic organization.

A VIEW ON PRIVATE BUSINESS DONE BY VCP MEMBERS

by TRẦN BẠCH ĐĂNG

State with a view to ensuring interests of laborers, the State and capitalists. This approach aims at developing productive forces and ensuring a civilized, democratic and equal society.

The relation between employers and employees in Vietnam today includes both conflict and coexistence. Employees know that their salary is much smaller than profit for the employers but they get jobs, income and a chance to escape poverty and hunger along with social benefits based on contributions from employers to the Treasury. Moreover, the Government always tries its best to force employers to ensure legal interests of laborers ruled by law. Government inspectors and trade union also play important roles in resolving the conflict between those two parties.

Like Engels' observation of English workers during the Industrial Revolution, Vietnamese laborers, whether they are aware of the exploitation of labor or not, are ready to work for the best paid and treated companies regardless of sector the company belongs to. They prefer working for well-paid private companies to staying with state-owned ones where they get low wages and a belief that they are free from exploitation. The brain drain found in state-owned concerns has been discussed for a long time and no solution was worked out. It seems unresolv-



extent one doing private business become an exploiter. Many VCP members and cells suggest various criteria, especially quantitative ones, for deciding who are exploiters. Some of them are: having more than a 30% stake in a private concern, investing more than VND5 billion, employing more than 100 workers, net profit of more than VND10 million a month, etc.

However, there are too many sources of income, such as bank interest, dividend, stock brokerage commission, profit from investment

- Keeping close relation with VCP cells and help them operate better.

In reality, any VCP member who solves properly relations with workers, the State and local community when running private business could be seen as a good member. At present, many VCP members are doing private business very well and meet the above-mentioned criteria. So this problem must be studied more completely before a solution could be worked out.

All citizens are under obligation to obey law. If VCP members are for-



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bidden to do private business, it is only the VCP by-law and has nothing to do with the social ethics. It couldn't be inequal when a VCP member receives a salary much higher than the wage of an average laborer if he is making rich legally.

The socialism is developed based on specific conditions of each country and it couldn't be separated from universal laws that regulate the evolution of all societies. Vietnam, with the VCP as its ruling party, is trying to build an equal, civilized and democratic society without being separated from the universal laws, such as the law of value of the market economy. If all citizens can produce anything they want, they will never need a government and accumulation of wealth. The surplus value under the capitalist system is of service to capitalists, but it could be used for the good of the society if the government knows how to do it.

To improve the public living standard, putting money in savings accounts isn't a solution. Savings must be put in production, or business in general. In other words, laborers must refrain themselves from spending all the fruits of their labor and put their money in business in order to produce more wealth, that is, more surplus value.

A civic society must be based on the rule of law that defines rights and duties of citizens. A VCP member is at first a citizen. In all relations and respects, a VCP member enjoys no privilege. The civic society allows and encourages citizens to make rich legally, and citizens are free to do anything that isn't forbidden by law. Moreover, VCP members bear more responsibility than ordi-

nary citizens do because they must put their shoulder to all wheels and set examples to their communities. Is there anything wrong when VCP members, besides working in the public sector, do private business in their free time or help their families do it? But the VCP by-laws ban them from doing it. Many VCP members can contribute their managerial skills, technical knowledge and idle money to the economic growth by doing private business. It's a loss to the society when they are forbidden to do so.

It's worth noting that there is a way of interpreting the concept of exploitation originated from the envy at others' property and traditional egalitarianism. This way of thinking explains why many people are against the private business. It's necessary to analyze and have a new view on the concept of exploitation

based on specific conditions and characteristics of Vietnam in the modern world instead of limiting ourselves to the concept of surplus value and the belief that "a communist mustn't employ laborers." If a member of the communist party does business well, pays taxes as required by law, supplies jobs and income to many workers, provides more social benefits for his employees, and remains loyal to communist ideals, then what is wrong with him? Should a communist work hard and be an employee and never think of being an employer? It isn't certain that any VCP member will change his mind and ideal when doing private business. We have witnessed a lot of VCP members who were corrupted although they do no private business. In my opinion, the VCP could encourage members making rich by doing



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business well to contribute to the fund of the party that is used for party activities and charity programs with a view to reducing dependence on grant-in-aid.

Vietnam is in its first stages of development. It's important to pay full attention to the distribution of wealth. Most laborers don't protest the "exploitation of surplus value" but they never agree with unfair distribution, corruption among civil servants, heavy and unreasonable taxation, etc. Before distributing the wealth, however, the first thing we must do is to produce it.

The problem requires industrious studies and we have had a lot of experience from the history and other countries. The interpretation of the concept of exploitation must be based on Marx's dialectical materialism. It's a problem for sciences and realities. ■