

The Limitation of Wage Differentials by Priamo Bollano

In socialist Albania the social product is distributed to the working people according to their social contribution, according to the quantity and quality of work which each performs, according to the principle "equal pay for equal work", without discrimination as to sex, age, nationality or race. Of course, wage categories are adjusted to allow for the complexity and difficulty of the work performed and the qualification of the worker. These categories are uniform throughout the country.

This system stimulates inventiveness and production; it harmonises individual personal interest with the general interests of society.

The Albanian system, however, rejects not only equalitarianism, but also excessive differentials. The experience of the Soviet Union and other former socialist countries has shown that unfounded excessive differentials led to the transformation of this privileged stratum into a new capitalist class which exploits the working class. It leads in time to the restoration of an essentially capitalist society.

Applying the lessons of this experience, in Albania the difference between the highest and lowest incomes in society as a whole is limited to 2:1, that between the director and the workers of an enterprise to 1.7:1.

The Pay Ratio 1:2

In socialist Albania the law on distribution according to work is applied on the basis that the product for oneself is divided among the members of society in conformity with the contribution of each person, the quality and quantity of work done. This has its bases on the nature of the socialist order. In Albania, every plant or factory, every farm or school are the fruit of the labour of their entire working people and as such they serve the development and progress of the entire country, the well-being of all the working people. The way of evaluating the worker is a result of this. The only criterion for this is the participation and contribution of each person in the development and progress of the Homeland and the economy, the work and efforts he makes for the successful implementation of the tasks set by society.

According to this criterion of evaluation which also derives from the demands of the law of distribution according to labour, the work remuneration is equal for equal work, not taking account of age, sex, nationality or race.

The amount of remuneration depends on the importance and difficulty of the job, the level of the job and the qualification of the working people. As a result of this in Socialist Albania the wages for each category of Labour are unified all over the country.

The historical experience of the construction of socialism in Albania shows that distribution according to labour is the only just distribution of the material blessings. It encourages the increase of production, the improvement of the quality of the products, correctly harmonizes the personal interests of the working people with the general interest of the entire society, giving priority to the latter. Such a way of distribution engages the working people in social productive activity according to their abilities and possibilities, it establishes labour at the basis of the raising of the well-being of each person. In socialism the distribution of the product for oneself, according to the quality and quantity of labour realizes the equal rights of each person in his relations with the society.

Consequently, the amount of remuneration depends on the work put in by each member of the

society. It combats the tendencies towards the petty bourgeoisie equalising of the wages and the distribution of the product for oneself, along with the marked, unfounded differences in this field.

The equal distribution of the product for oneself is alien to socialism. It is a result of a petty bourgeois concept and bears a series of dangerous consequences for the socialist society. Its implementation would lead to anarchy, would hinder the development of the productive forces, would encourage laziness and parasitism. However, it must be accepted, that within the social equality which exists in socialism, in the field of distribution, inequality also emerges, or as Marx has called it the "bourgeois right" is still preserved despite the absence of the bourgeoisie. This inequality is connected with the fact that in socialism essential distinctions exist between town and countryside, physical labour and mental work etc. These define the indispensability of differentiation in the distribution of the material blessings, according to the kind of job, its social importance, the qualification level of the working people.

In conformity with this, the wage system is being continually perfected in Albania. Hence, the work done in the main sectors of the economy is paid better than the work done in the auxiliary branches and sectors; difficult work is paid better than easy work, the work carried out in difficult conditions (underground work, in wet places, with gases etc.), is paid better than the work which demands higher qualification is paid better than less qualified or simple work etc.

Socialism cannot eliminate the inequality in the field of distribution of the product for oneself. Gradually, together with the development of the productive forces and the maturing of the socialist relations of production, it diminishes it, the differences among wages are narrowed, the sphere of activity of the "bourgeois right" is limited. Such a thing is an indispensable condition to preserve the socialist character of the relations of production, not to allow their capitalist-revisionist degeneration and the emergence of new bourgeois elements. The Party of Labour of Albania has continually stressed that private property gives birth to capitalism with each passing day likewise the "fat" wages give rise to the desire to live only to eat, to be dressed better than the masses, than the working class. They serve as a soil which produces bourgeois feelings.

Experience has shown that the deepening of pay differentials, as the modern revisionists have done, leads without fail to the class polarisation of society, to the deepening of economic inequality, which serve as a basis for the ideological and political degeneration of the people. Here we have to do with what F. Engels pointed out in his work "Anti-Dühring" that when changes appear in distribution, class distinctions immediately appear.

The state of the dictatorship of the proletariat has taken continuous measures in socialist Albania for the limitation and narrowing of the sphere of the activity of the "Bourgeois right" in the field of distribution of product for oneself. These measures and implementation of a revolutionary policy in the setting up of the wage system, with the continual narrowing of the essential distinctions between town and countryside, between physical labour and mental work as well as with the ever better fulfilment of some of the needs of the working people by means of the fund of social consumption.

With its policy, the PLA has fought and is fighting to continually improve the life of all the working people, proceeding from the correct Marxist-Leninist principle that there should be no total equality among wages, but neither should there be favours for anybody.

"Every remuneration must conform with the quantity and quality of the work done by each person", stressed Comrade Enver Hoxha, "and the differences of remuneration among the working people should continually be narrowed."

On the basis of this Marxist-Leninist course at present, the distinctions among the level of income

of the working people are the narrowest in Albania. The ratio between the average wage and the highest wage is 1 : 2, whereas the ratio between the salary of the director of an enterprise and the average of a worker is 1 : 1, 7.

The tendency to narrow the distinctions in the remuneration system which has continually permeated the wage policy of the PLA and the socialist distribution of the material blessings has for its part aided in the narrowing of the differences between physical labour and mental work, it has raised the spirit of collaboration and socialist solidarity between the cadres and the workers, it has influenced the harmonization of the interests giving priority to the interests of society and those of the future.

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