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CONTENTS

**Introduction to Land Problem in
English Revolution**

Hidachi HORIE 1

**Unemployment Relief Work in
Japan**

Kaichi MAEGAWA 27

**Accumulation and Renewal of
Fixed Capital in Expanded
Reproduction**

Tatsuji YOSHIMURA 42

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UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF WORK IN JAPAN

By Kaichi MAEKAWA*

I

It is widely known that capitalistic accumulation or the development of productivity causes, through the process of high change in organic composition of the capital, relative surplus population or the unemployed labourers. Its inevitability can be explained by the law of disproportion in the capitalistic production. The labourers are at once attracted on the one hand and on the other repelled. In other words, employment and unemployment occur at the same time in the various enterprises of productive branches, and thus in the society as a whole relative surplus population or the unemployed labourers always exist and increase.

Relative surplus population is thus the result of capitalistic accumulation and also a necessary condition for its development. The existence of the unemployed labourers plays a part of a lever for capitalistic accumulation. The fact has two aspects.

In the first place, "Capitalist production can by no means content itself with the quantity of disposable labour-power which the natural increase of population yields. It requires for its free play an industrial reserve army independent of these natural limits."¹⁾ The unemployed are exactly what Marx called "the human material always ready for use being independently of the limits of actual increase of population"²⁾ and mean the existence of freely disposable labour power under the absolute control of the capital. Therefore, when the capital requires a greater amount of labour at the prosperous phase of economic cycle, relative surplus population answers that demand and supplies with labour power. The unemployed are produced as a result of multiplying in value of the capital in the process of progress of organic composition of the capital with disproportioned development, while the same factor causes them to function as a source of necessary additional labour power.

Secondly, the existence of the unemployed lowers the various conditions

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1) Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, Vol. 1, p. 669.

2) *ibid.*, p. 666.

of labour power as a commodity. The unemployed work as a curb to the labour conditions of the employed. Their existence influences the actual condition of the law of demand and supply of labour. It brings pressure upon the wage of the employed, forces them to work excessively and gives impetus to their subordination to the capital. So if the capital can make the unemployed work as a curb effectively enough, the lust of multiplying in value of the capital is heightened from the intensive side of the labour of the employed.

Because relative surplus population or the unemployed is a necessary condition for the development of capitalistic production, a policy towards the unemployed can be formed by both the capital and the labour from their respective standpoints. The capital tries to keep the "pure" function of the "holy" law of demand and supply in which the unemployed influence the employed. On the other hand, the working class intends to stop such influence of the unemployed. These are the basic standpoints of the capital and the labour concerning the unemployed.

What kind of policy will actually be formed from these standpoints? If the permanent existence of the unemployed is necessary for capitalistic production, the essential problem to the capital is not how to extinguish the unemployed but how to make them function as a lever for capitalistic accumulation. As was already mentioned, the unemployed to the capital are more than anything else replaceable labour power to be reinstalled in the process of production when necessary. For this purpose replaceable labour power of the unemployed has freely to be changed by the capital into working labour power of the employed. In other words, they have to exist as labour power to be *freely disposed* by the capital. Therefore the capital has to keep "the fluidity of labour market" *under its own control*. It is also necessary to keep labour power as a replaceable one. Of course this does not objectify all of the unemployed. If a sudden intensification of capitalistic accumulation should completely absorb the industrial reserve army,¹⁾ it would be necessary to adopt a policy of keeping all of the unemployed as replaceable labour power. But when capitalistic composition is highly developed, the complete exhaustion of the industrial reserve army²⁾ cannot be possible, nor it is necessary to adopt a policy of keeping all the

1) P. M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development*, 1942, p. 150.

2) Prof. Eitaro Kishimoto (Kyoto University) has criticized Sweezy's theory of the exhaustion of the industrial reserve army caused by a sudden intensification of capitalistic accumulation: "Sweezy has taken Marx's discussion (*Das kapital*, Vol. I, Book 7, Ch. 23) of the exhaustion of labour power that can take place when the demand for labour power increases with the development of accumulation increase capitalistic composition remains unchanged and has applied it to the case of high development of capitalistic composition. His is nothing but a wild argument," Kishimoto; *Law of Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 24.

labour power in hand. It should be noted, however, that the high development of the capital causes qualitative changes in labour and demands equivalent labour power and that such development, when it takes place unevenly in various industries and enterprises, causes disproportion in the demand of labour power. Therefore, although the capital gets labour power from the unemployed, it absorbs only the suitable labour power, which means a part of the unemployed, and the demand often cannot be supplied quantitatively for the qualification of the suitable labour power. In that case, the capital not only keeps some of the unemployed as replaceable labour power but tries to endow some of them with such replaceability.

The second policy of the capital concerning the unemployed is to make them work fully as a curb to the employed. Essentially the existence of the unemployed "weighs down the active labour-army during the periods of stagnation and average prosperity and holds its pretensions in check during the period of over-production and paroxysm."⁵⁾ In order to let the unemployed work effectively for the low wage and excessive labour, it is necessary to keep their living condition fairly lower than the standard one. Furthermore the "holy" law of demand and supply must not be infringed to enable their pressure, and therefore the absolute control of the capital must be established over the unemployed. In other words, their organization and their contact with the employed must be prevented. It is necessary to control them separately from the employed.

As a condition of capital accumulation whose basic purpose is multiplying in value, the unemployment relief to the capital is such as we have seen. It is clear that the policy of the labourers concerning the unemployed is first of all to check such policies of the capital. Organization of the unemployed, organic contact of the unemployed with the employed and establishment of stable employment policy are the solution of the first problem. (No labourer will be against the change of the unemployed into the employed. The problem is not fluidity of labour power in this sense but fluidity of labour power under the control of the capital.) The second problem or the pressure of the unemployed on the employed will be solved by heightening living conditions of the unemployed and establishing labour conditions of the employed.

What we have discussed is the basic policies of the labour and the capital concerning the unemployment. Actually the unemployment policy is realized in the reciprocal action of the two with social and economical conditions as its background. Anyway the final aim of the two regarding

5) Mark: *Das Kapital*, Vol. I. p. 673.

the unemployment has now become clear.

It will be natural that a movement toward this aim should take place in the confrontation of the two when the actual unemployment relief work is greatly alienated from the basic standpoint. Unemployment relief work in Japan is in such a situation. We are going to examine it taking an actual aspect, but before doing so I would like to summarize the historical development of unemployment relief work in Japan.

II

In Japan unemployment policy was first established as a system in 1925. It was not materialized as a social policy until that recent date because of a unique quality of Japanese capitalism and its capitalistic accumulation, which had made the existence of relative surplus population latent and stagnant rather than actual. The unusual development of productivity during the World War I caused an unbalance between the intrinsic narrowness of Japanese domestic market and the diminishing of its market outside the country after the end of the war, which eventually led to a panic caused by over-production. Because of this, mass unemployment grew more distinct in various industries after 1920. This objective condition plus the advice of International Labourers Organization¹⁾ encouraged modern trade unions to start an organized activity against unemployment. Gradually unemployment policy got more interest as a problem of social policy and was finally materialized as an actual work in 1925.

The contents of the unemployment policy were "back-to-agriculture" policy, public employment exchange system and partial unemployment relief work.²⁾

The world-wide panic in 1929 naturally influenced Japan, and unemployment relief work got bigger in scale. But this work was in fact a legalized substitute for unemployment insurance (much demanded by labourers) in the first place, and then it was merely a work of charity which gave the labourers low wage, long working hours and no public right.³⁾

Later Japanese economy found in militaristic imperialism a way to avoid the general crisis of capitalism, and unemployment policy also metamorphosed itself in this order. That is, the unemployed or surplus labour

1) The first assembly of International Labourers Organization held in 1919 decided that each country should legalize the establishment of free public employment agencies and prohibit those with commercial purposes.

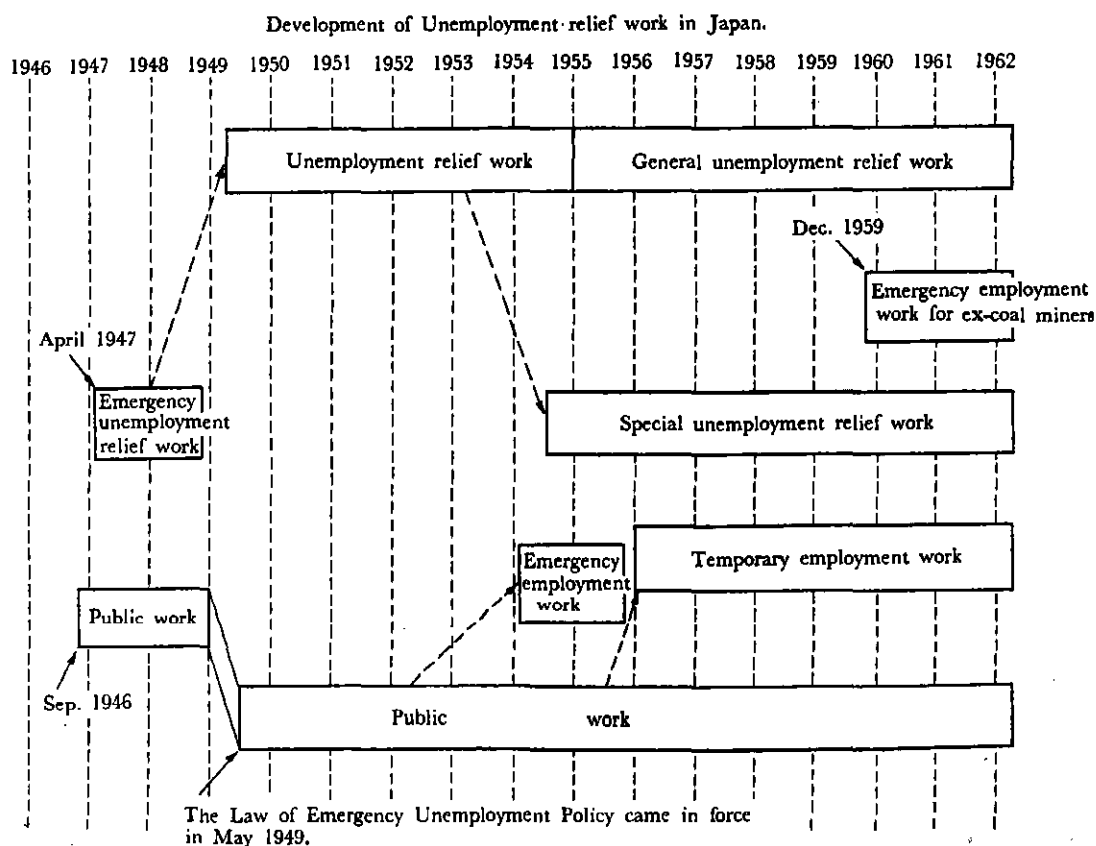
2) It was applied only to six big cities (Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Yokohama, Kobe and Nagoya) and was carried out only in winter.

3) Yasoji Kazahaya: *History of Social Policy in Japan*, pp. 313-317.

power was no longer an object of "relief", but it was on one hand so trained that it might increase wartime productivity, and on the other hand it was supposed to work as labour power in the colonies in the form of emigrants. The subject of main concern was development of vocational training, functional change of employment exchange system into more positive employment regulation policy and emigration policy. This meant an interruption of unemployment relief work.

Social policy is realized through an organized activity of trade unions. But the trade unions in pre-war Japan were extremely weak both in their organization and in their function under the pressure of the state authority. (The highest organization rate was 7.9% in 1931.) The circumstances were not good enough for the realization of unemployment policy as social policy.

To Japan defeat was the end of World War II. Wartime unemployment which had been latent was now made gravely distinct by discharge of wartime labour power following dissolution of munition productivity, a great amount of demobilization and repatriation of overseas citizens. Democratic policy of post-war Japan included encouraging trade unions, which developing rapidly got much interested in the unemployment problem. In



the postwar crisis in politics and economy, unemployment policy inevitably became political problem. Thus unemployment insurance was legalized in 1947 and unemployment policy whose main subject was relief work was materialized. The development of the postwar unemployment relief work is shown by diagram (p. 5).

As the diagram shows, unemployment relief work at present is divided into these four kinds:

(1) General unemployment relief work which is under the jurisdiction of a regional public body with the financial aid from Ministry of Labour.

(2) Special unemployment relief work of which Ministry of Labour takes budgetary measures and which is carried out by Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Transportation and other authorities.

(3) Temporary employment work which is carried out by Ministry of Construction as a part of road construction work with the income of gasoline tax as financial resources.

(4) Emergency employment work for ex-coal miners.

Among the four, the first kind has absorbed the greatest number of unemployed labourers, as is shown in Plate 1. Therefore, I should like to limit my subject to general unemployment relief work and, by analysing it, examine the problems of unemployment relief work in Japan.

Plate 1. Average number get a job at the unemployment relief work per day (000, pers)

Date	General unemployment relief work	Special unemployment relief work	Temporary employment work	Emergency employment work for ex-coal miners
1958	212	18	20	—
1959	218	19	21	5.5
1960	200	18	22	7.5
1961	198	18	17	7.5

III

In post-war Japan unemployment relief work was legalized for the first time on a full scale (except for some temporary works) as the Law of Emergency Unemployment Policy which came into force in May 1949. Needless to say it was a precaution against mass unemployment and ensuing social unrest which would be caused by execution of Nine Principles of Economy. It was in fact a compromising policy adopted by the state which

was supposed to make the Principles still more effective.¹⁾

The emergency unemployment policy whose purpose was "to absorb a great number of unemployed labourers, try to stabilize their lives and contribute to economy"²⁾ was, as this phrase well shows, a labour supplying policy adopted by state capital. Its direct purpose was to *absorb* as many unemployed labourers as possible. At the early stage of capitalistic accumulation in post-war Japan where unemployment caused by the capital was going to be more permanent and more extensive, the problem was how to prevent social unrest resulting from the unstable living of the unemployed and to keep capitalistic production in order. In other words, the problem was to absorb the unemployed and stabilize their lives, and transformation of them into the employed was beyond consideration. In this sense, the policy dealt with only one aspect of flow of labour power, that is, the problem which was caused from transformation of the employed into the unemployed. It did not deal with another aspect of flow of labour power, that is, the problem concerning transformation of the unemployed into the employed. From the beginning the unemployment relief work by the capital emphasized one aspect of this flow.

Capitalistic accumulation is accompanied with continuous isolation and absorption of labourers, but has a tendency of accumulating isolated unemployed labourers. In post-war Japan actual unemployed labourers who are the object of unemployment relief work tended to increase in number and become more frozen. Plate 2 shows increase of the persons qualified for unemployment relief work.

The problem here is not more quantitative increase of the qualified unemployed labourers but its quality. In other words, we have to examine whether this increase was accompanied with the reciprocal transformation

1) Before Nine Principles of Economy were put in force, the Cabinet decided the following "Unemployment Policy towards the Present Situation" on March 4th, 1949, which well shows the true purpose of Law of Emergency Unemployment Policy:

It is inevitable that strong enforcement of Nine Principles of Economy will in the near future cause mass unemployment. Furthermore, actualization of latent unemployment and unemployment of the repatriated people are getting more and more serious. In order to give them a chance of employment and by doing so stabilize the situation, the basic solution is rapidly to promote the development of private industries—mainly export industries—and to increase the amount of employment. But it takes time to promote the industries and at the moment it seems to be difficult to improve the employment condition effectively enough to absorb the unemployment at once.

In such a situation we are going to plan the following unemployment policy lest a serious unemployment problem should cause social unrest and prevent Nine Principles of Economy from working effectively.....(Italics are mine.)

—*Unemployment Policy Annual 1951* edited by Department of Unemployment Policy, Ministry of Labour, p. 23.

2) *ibid.*, p. 28.

Plate 2. Number of qualified unemployed labourers (0,000 pers)

Date	Wholly unemployed (Labour force survey)	Compensative Claimants of Unemployment Insurance. (Average of months)	No. of insured Day labourers	No. of qualified Unemployed labourers
1949	38	16.7	16.1	—
1950	44	38.5	40.6	28.0
1951	39	24.5	38.4	26.2
1952	47	32.1	35.1	25.0
1953	45	35.0	34.4	24.3
1954	58	46.5	37.5	26.0
1955	68	46.9	44.1	30.5
1956	63	33.1	47.4	33.2
1957	52	30.9	47.0	32.4
1958	56	45.5	49.9	33.6
1959	58	40.4	53.2	35.6
1960	43	36.5	54.2	35.3
1961	39	38.0	53.9	35.0

Plate 3. The period of time after the qualification of the unemployed labourers for all Japan—1961. (%)

total	1 year Under	1~2	2~3	3~4	4~5	5~6	6~8	8~10	10 years Over
100%	6.4	7.5	9.6	10.4	7.8	8.5	17.9	11.7	20.1

Plate 4. The period of time after the qualification of the unemployed labourers for six big cities (%)

Date	total	Under 3 months	3~6 months	6 months ~1 year	1~2 year	2 years and over
1950	100%	10.7	21.3	34.8	18.9	14.3
1951	100%	5.6	9.3	13.6	42.6	29.0
1952	100%	4.7	5.0	9.6	18.5	62.2
1953	100%	2.9	5.2	7.9	13.7	70.3
1954	100%	2.3	4.6	9.4	13.4	70.3
1955	100%	4.8	6.4	12.4	15.6	60.8
1956	100%	3.6	5.3	8.9	14.7	67.5
1957	100%	4.4	6.3	7.7	12.3	69.3
1958	100%	4.5	5.7	8.0	11.3	70.5
1959	100%	4.6	5.0	6.9	12.3	71.2

of the employed and the qualified unemployed.

The period of time after the qualification of the unemployed labourers is shown in Plate 3 and Plate 4. It is about twelve years since emergency

unemployment relief work started. Plate 3 shows that 20.1% of the labourers have been unchanged since the beginning and more than half (58.2%) have remained qualified for more than five years. According to Plate 4 about 70% of the labourers are always those with more than two years of the qualification period, which has remained unchanged for the last ten years. The average rate of flow of the qualified labourers (men and women) is about 15% every year.¹⁾ We should remember that 76% of those labourers do not intend to take up another employment, and that, even among a quarter of them who do, 85% of them cannot get 'a chance of finding employment despite their intention.'²⁾ It is quite natural that in this context the rate of flow should be very low and the labourers frozen. It should also be noted that the rate of 15% indicates the number of the labourers who lose their qualification, and so the number of those who find an employment in general private companies is much smaller. In the case of an industrial city named Amagasaki,³⁾ it is less than 2% as Plate 5 shows.

This tendency of fixation among the qualified unemployed signifies that, contrary to the notion that they are a form of "human material freely disposed by the capital", they are *not* in fact "freely disposed" and relatively diminish the amount of replaceable labour power as "human material" needed by the capital. Here we should investigate actual conditions of the qualified unemployed from the viewpoint of replaceable labour power.

Fixation of the qualified unemployed results in the rise of their age (the average age was 45.8 in 1955, 47.3 in 1958 and 49.4 in 1961).⁴⁾ The number of the qualified unemployed whose skill and physical strength are good enough to be counted as replaceable labour power is only about 100,000 (28.3%) out of 345,000 in the whole country.⁵⁾ In Amagasaki City the number is still smaller.

Even when their physical strength is good enough, they cannot always

1) According to *Operational Report of Public Employment Security Office*, the rate of flow of the qualified unemployed is as the plate shows. (The rate is the number of the outflow labourers divided by the number of the qualified at the beginning of the year plus inflow labourers.)

2) See *Unemployment Policy Annual 1959* edited by Division of Unemployment Policy, Ministry of Labour, p. 490 and *Problems of Unemployment Relief Work* edited by Ministry of Labour.

3) Amagasaki is one of the representative industrial cities in Japan mainly known for iron industry. Its population in 1961 was 430,000.

4) See *Research on the Living Condition of Day Labourers*.

5) According to *Regional Research on the Qualified Day Labourers* (May 1961), the ratio of the qualified labourers is 28.3% who pass the physical examination for heavy work and therefore are eligible for private and public works.

Date	Male	Female	Average
1959	20.2%	11.1%	16.9%
1960	18.4%	10.3%	15.2%
1961	18.1%	9.9%	14.8%

Plate 5. No. of the qualified unemployed labourers who find an employment in general private companies—Amagasaki City.

Date	total No. of the qualified unemployed labourers	Transferred to general private companies	%
1957	3,315	55	1.6
1958	3,731	61	1.6
1959	3,915	56	1.4
1960	3,795	64	1.7

Plate 6. Percent of the qualified unemployed labourers who find an employment in general private companies by Age—Amagasaki City (Jan. 1961–June 1962)

Age	Transferred to general private companies	%
total	77	100
30 years under	11	14
31~40	44	57
41~50	6	8
51~60	13	17
60 years over	3	4

Plate 7. Physical examination of the qualified labourers—Amagasaki City.

Division of work	Qualified members	%
heavy work A	184	} 12.3
heavy work B	262	
light work A	1,042	} 87.7
light work B	2,144	
total	3,632	100

(Those who passed the physical examination for heavy work A or B are eligible for private and public works.)

answer the demand of labour, which at present is mainly concerned with that of youth because of technological progress. Therefore the social age limit (which is roughly speaking 40 years of age as Plate 6 shows) still more diminishes the amount of replaceable labour power. Thus while the qualified unemployed increases in number, very few of them remain as the genuine unemployed and most of them degrade themselves to “the third category of the indigent to be relieved”¹⁾ with no useful labour power. The process of accumulation of the qualified unemployed is the process of their disintegration into “the genuine unemployed” and “the indigent to be relieved” and the process of accumulation of the latter, too. This general tendency of accumulation of the unemployed is still more intensified by technological progress.

Very few of the qualified unemployed have replaceable labour power to change themselves into the normal employed, and even among them this transformation does not easily occur. The existence of the qualified unem-

1) The indigent to be relieved belong to three categories: those with labour power, orphans and poor children, tramps and those without labour power. See Marx: *Das Kapital*, Vol. I. P. 678.

ployed does not mean any longer "the inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour-power¹⁾ to the capital. The fact is that the capital has to distinguish those few of the qualified unemployed that have replaceable labour power clearly from the others and change them so that they can freely be used by the capital.

IV

If the unemployed are by nature a curb to the employed, what is the actual condition regarding this aspect of the qualified unemployed as a form of the unemployed?

In order to let the qualified unemployed work as a curb, their working conditions should be kept low. This results in a basic principle that their wage should be lower than that of the normal labourers engaged in the same kind of work in the same place.²⁾ So-called low wage policy towards the qualified unemployed has been adopted together with a special form of wage (wage by kind of works) and a special way of payment. In spite of this political intention, their wage has gradually been rising because of their organized movement. (See Plate 8.) Their daily wage of ¥425 is not high by any means. Actually, however, this is merely a standard wage and when supplies from general finances of a local self-government body and the summer and year-end bonus are added, the amount is not much lower than

Plate 8. Wage Difference per day by Regular, Casual workers and Unemployed qualified labourers.

Date	Regular Worker (A)	Casual Worker (B)	Unemployed qualified labourers (C)	B/A	C/A
1956 Average	644 Yen	359 Yen	282 Yen	55.7%	43.8%
1957 "	673	380	302	56.5	49.9
1958 "	669	376	306	56.2	45.6
1959 "	711	383	306	53.9	43.0
1960 "	757	421	334	55.6	44.1
1961 "	829	502	386	60.6	46.6

\$1 = 360 yen

1) Mark: *Das Kapital*, Vol. I. p. 677.

2) According to the Law of Emergency Unemployment Policy, the wage of the labourers is actually determined through the following process:

The wage of unemployment relief work is the same as the wage of the similar kind of work paid to direct employees of public work at present. ("Rule of Standard Wage for Direct Employees of Public Works" which was put in force on November 13, 1947.) Its minimum wage is the same as the lowest daily wage (75% of standard daily wage) of Prevailing Wages by Occupation, and its highest is the highest daily wage divided by 1.1. (125% of standard daily wage).

that of minor enterprise labourers. (As for women, it is even higher. We should notice that the average wage is over ¥400 for the unemployed including, as we have seen, the majority without replaceable labour power. This is one of the causes of their fixation and their having little intention of getting a new employment. The fact is that the wage of minor enterprise labourers is low rather than that of the qualified unemployed is high.)

We cannot say that their wage is lowering the general wage standard, standard, when it almost always higher than the minimum wage decided by agreement of minor enterprise administrators. It rather raises the wage of minor enterprise labourers. The part of a curb is being played to the opposite direction.

This kind of thing is not limited to the wage. The labourers are supposed to work from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. with actual working hours of eight, and "Settlement of Working Disciplines" has been held as the chief motto of work. But the real situation is not so strict. The average working hours are said to range from three to four, and the working conditions are not necessarily low compared with those of minor enterprises. This is yet another reason of stagnation.¹⁾ The average working days per month used to be sixteen but nowadays they are twenty-two, and "irregularity of work" does not fit of the present situation.

Of course the wage and working conditions have been acquired through organized movement of the qualified unemployed. They have organized trade unions in various places, which have been united into a nation-wide organization.²⁾ Their movement has been getting more powerful with a wage struggle as its pivot. This inevitably seems to the capital to be a movement infringing that "pure" functioning of the law of demand and supply.

V

From what we have examined so far, we can summarize the actual condition of the qualified unemployed as follows. The first point is that through the process of accumulation they are disintegrated into the genuine unemployed or the fixed surplus population and the indigent to be relieved that have no replaceable labour power. The ratio of the former gets smaller, while that of the latter increases. The second is that not only there takes place a certain change in their quantity and quality, but there is also a

1) See *Employment and Unemployment in Japan* edited by Unemployment Policy Council, p. 268.

2) The membership of all unemployed trade union is 254,164 in 1959 and the ratio of organisation is 54.3%.

tendency of stagnation. This tendency applies to all of the qualified unemployed including those with replaceable labour power. This means that there is little transformation of them into the normal employed. The third is that their wage and working conditions are not always inferior to those of minor enterprise labourers. The fourth point is that their organization has been getting stronger which is working in contact with other trade unions.

These facts show that their existence is not that of relative surplus population as a necessary condition to capitalistic accumulation. As I already mentioned, their conditions have to be something like this if they are to function as the basis of capitalistic accumulation: "Their employment is extremely irregular. Hence it furnishes to capital an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour-power. Its conditions of life sink below the average normal level of the working-class; this makes it at once the broad basis of special branches of capitalist exploitation. It is characterised by maximum of working-time, and minimum of wages."¹⁾

If, through the process of their accumulation, more and more members of the third category of the indigent to be relieved remain fixed surplus population, and if the relatively diminishing genuine unemployed cannot transform themselves, the qualified unemployed cannot be an industrial reserve army and accordingly a lever for capitalistic accumulation. Nor they work as a curb when their organized movement prevents their working conditions from getting lower, which indeed are not inferior to those of the low class employed. Therefore the qualified unemployed in such a situation are quite insufficient as a condition to capitalistic accumulation to the capital. They are nothing but waste to capitalistic production unless they have not any replaceable labour power. Furthermore, when their organized activity hinders a free flow of labour operated by the capital and improves working conditions, their existence will seem to be a check rather than a lever to capitalistic accumulation. It will be unbearable to the capital when the system of capitalistic production is rationalized as capitalistic accumulation and the labourers are at once repelled and partially absorbed. This is because mass unemployment resulting from rationalization policy is nothing but expansion of waste and hindrance, if they take the form of such qualified unemployed. In this situation, the capital will follow the already mentioned basic principles and try to reorganize the qualified unemployed. In other words, it will prevent the newly produced unemployed from flowing indiscriminately into them, while it will categorize the qualified unemployed

1) Marx: *Das Kapital*, Vol. I, p. 677.

more clearly and find a new policy depending whether they belong to the genuine unemployed or to the object of public aid. It will also control their working conditions and organized movement.¹⁾ Of course the qualified unemployed will be opposed to this.

Needless to say, unemployment relief work is carried out by the state, and so the political logics of the capital and the labour regarding unemployment is not necessarily that of the state. A capitalistic state actually decides a policy according to the relation between the capital and the labour, though basically it follows the logic of the capital. The problems of unemployment relief work may be the problems of the limit of social policy. In other words, there are an economic limit regarding economic burden and a social limit when the qualified unemployed are not "an industrial reserve army" in the true sense of the words. These facts will lead to modification of policy. It depends on economic and social conditions whether social policy will exceed its range and be directed towards expansion of social security system with the realization of "national minimum" as its aim, or it will be reduced to a mere aid system based on the idea of relief. Unemployment relief work in Japan is at a critical turning point.

1) The actual policy will include strict qualification test (prevention of inflow), strict physical and medical examination (clear grading of labourers), rigid working disciplines, improvement of working effect, grading of wages, control of bonus (control of working conditions) and control of organized activity.