

Questions and Answers

Question 4.—What is the size and the forms of the unemployed workers' movement?

In view of the present scale of unemployment and its rapid growth, "quantity will give way to quality," or in other words, the very character of unemployment and the unemployment movement itself will be changed.

During the last few years unemployment had become chronic and incurable in the chief capitalist countries.

Realizing that present-day widespread unemployment was menacing the very continuance of the capitalist system, the bourgeoisie in one way or the other "fed" the unemployed, State subsidies being voted for this purpose as well as special assignments for the so-called Ghent System, which provides the issuance of unemployment relief through the unions, which dole is partly subsidized by the State.

The "dole" and the chronic character of present day unemployment created a feeling of passivity and inertia among the unemployed and went a long way to ally their grievances. Further, the chronic character of unemployment set up certain barriers between the employed workers and those unemployed, created a gulf between these workers, which the bourgeoisie, the fascists and the social-fascists have done their best to deepen, isolating the unemployed from those employed.

The stupendous growth of unemployment today is (1) breaking down the barriers between the employed and the unemployed; (2) creating a huge army of semi-employed, i. e. workers on short time (two or three days in the

week) (3) the bourgeoisie reducing the "unemployment dole" which will make further existence impossible and starvation inevitable for the unemployed.

The colossal growth of unemployment with the simultaneous reduction of the "dole" with short time being introduced in many enterprises are all factors that will make for a marked rise of the unemployed workers' movement. We see that the movement today is becoming really mass in character and is becoming more aggressive, more determined and militant.

Communications are being received from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Roumania, Greece, the U. S. A., Canada and elsewhere of demonstrations of unemployed workers of collisions with the police and the troops, and even of street fighting as was seen for example in Germany.

These mass movements of the unemployed show clearly that the revolutionary movement is penetrating and getting a stronger hold on even the most backward sections of the working class.

Marx says that a crisis is a sharp conflict between the developing productive forces and the social relations in modern capitalist society, that it is, as it were, a revolt of the productive forces against the capitalist system which permits no further growth.

The working class, as one of these productive forces comes to grips with capitalism precisely during a period of economic depression, and the clearest expression of this conflict is the development and growth of a revolutionary movement among the unemployed.