

require any written procedure because he was a temporary hand.

The professor for whose reinstatement the Employees Union has been agitating is Mr Subramaniam Swamy, the Jana Sangh economist of 'Swadeshi Plan' fame. He writes regularly in RSS-JS papers, *Motherland* and *Organiser*, expounding and extolling the economic, foreign and defence policies of the Jana Sangh. He participates in the Working Committee and Council meetings in the capacity of a permanent invitee and delivers speeches as one of the party leaders. All this in an institution which has apparently no place for politics.

Recent reports of vastly stepped up CIA activities in the country may be

a case of shadows being mistaken for spectres, but outsiders are led to wonder why an academic from the School of International studies of Missouri University is residing on the campus when he has come to India for research in Hindi philology. The Central Hindi Institute has its headquarters at Agra and only a branch establishment in New Delhi.

It is also reported that American foundations have been funnelling grants from PL-480 funds to selected nominees for various projects. One of the pedagogues was on a 22,000-dollar year-long stint with the NASA.

Recently four active members of the IIT Pradyogik Adhyapak Samiti got lucrative assignments in the USA.

A False Brother

MONI GUHA

MR Arun Majumdar's paper on "Mode of Production in the USSR" (December 16 and 23) "establishes" that the Soviet economy throughout the last fifty years was never a socialist one. It was on the contrary, state-capitalist and instead of weakening state-capitalism, the four five-year plans strengthened it and the "nature of difficulties as they were in the Soviet Union was more akin to those prevalent in the capitalist world", "and it was these difficulties which prepared the ideological premise of the now famous 1965 economic reforms".

Mr Majumdar begins his paper by attempting to create an impression that the public ownership of the means of production is not a "prime requisite for a socialist mode of production". He establishes that the "prime requisite" for a socialist economy is to implement "his discovery" of the basic economic law of socialism, i.e., implementation of the theory of "surplus value". We shall, of course, come to that point, but meanwhile let us say that Mr Majumdar's "discovery" is not a unique one. Proudhon, once advo-

cated that socialism was possible without socialising private property and without doing away with commodities and Marx, in a letter to Weydemeyer wrote that "Proudhonist socialism... wants to leave private property in existence but to organise the exchange of private properties... wants commodities but not money (Marx's italics)". Then Marx warned Weydemeyer and all communists: "Above all things communism must rid itself of this 'false brother'." (Marx-Engels Correspondence, Letter no. 43, p. 105, Indian edition, NBA, 1945).

To justify his argument Mr Majumdar further writes that the pattern of ownership of the means of production has no relation or connection with the basic economic law of society. He writes, "In no economic formation the basic economic laws have a pattern of ownership of the means of production as the nucleus around which they operate". In a back-note, No. 4, he tries to justify it by saying that "the basic economic law under feudalism does operate even when the means of production i.e., land units, are un-

der community or tribal ownership", (emphasis added). Queerly enough, in the same breath, he says, "But as we all know, such community ownership of the means of production in course of its maturity yields place to private ownership of the means of production". The question is: does the basic economic law under feudalism operate when land units are under community or tribal ownership or when the community or tribal ownership yields place to private ownership of the feudal lords? His observation is based on complete ignorance of dialectics. The mode of production never exists in a pure form. It is an abstraction and summing up of the decisive properties of social production. It is always subject to change through the development of productive forces, which at a certain stage of development undermines the existing mode of production and first creates shoots of a new mode of production and then in this process the shoots take full form and dominate. Mr Majumdar should know that land units under community or tribal ownership and under private ownership of the feudal lords mean neither the same property relations nor the same mode of production nor does the same basic economic law operate in different property relations and mode of production. To Mr Majumdar "yes" is always "yes" and "no" is always "no" and there is neither the process of change nor the transformation from quantity into quality.

Evidently, Mr Majumdar confuses the pattern of ownership of the means of production with the basic economic law and that is why he asks, "If neither the balanced proportionate development nor the law of social ownership of the means of production constitute the basic economic law of the socialist mode of production, then can we say that Stalin's formulation of the basic economic law of socialism is correct?" He here invents a "law of social ownership". Unfortunately, social ownership is not in itself a law, but the material basis which, toge-

ther with property relations, generates the basic economic law of the socialist mode of production. It appears that Mr Majumdar is not in a mood to agree with this. That is why he himself "discovers" the concrete basic economic law of socialism refuting and replacing the "vague" formulation of Stalin. What is the basic economic law of socialism according to him? He says, "While the purpose of the capitalist reproduction is the expansion of exchange value the very process of realisation of the law of surplus exchange value under the capitalist mode of production generates within its womb the law of surplus use-value i.e., the law which determines the essence of the socialist mode of production." (emphasis added). Thus, according to him, this surplus use value is the basic economic law of socialism. It is now as certain as noon-day that Mr Majumdar is not only completely ignorant of dialectics but also completely ignorant of history and especially the economic history of the development of human civilisation. Without useful labour there cannot be any society and this useful labour is the use-value. Again without surplus use-value there cannot be any march to human civilisation. The prime question for the social scientists is how to use this surplus use-value which labour produces in all social formations. Surplus use-value is not the characteristic of a particular society, but a "nature-imposed" thing without which there would have been "no life". Marx said, "So far therefore as labour is the creator of use value, is useful labour,

it is a necessary condition, independent of all forms of society, for the existence of the human race; it is an eternal nature-imposed necessity, without which there can be no material exchange between man and nature, and therefore no life." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 50, Modern Library, New York). This is so far as use-value is concerned. What about the surplus use-value for reproduction? Marx said, "Variable capital is therefore only a particular form of appearance of the fund for providing the necessaries of life, or the labour fund which the labourer requires for the maintenance of himself and his family, and which, whatever be the system of social production he must produce and reproduce." (emphasis added, *ibid*, p. 573). Marx explained it further in one of his letter to Kugelmann: "The unfortunate fellow does not see that, even if there were no chapter on value in my book, the analysis of the real relationships which I give would contain the proof and demonstration of real value relation... Every child knows that a country which ceased to work, I will not say for a year, but for a few weeks, would die. Every child knows too that the mass of products corresponding to the different needs require different and quantitatively determined masses of total labour of society. That this necessity of distributing social labour in definite proportions cannot be done away with by the particular form (Marx's italics) of social production, but can only change the form it assumes, (Marx's italics) is self-evident. No natural law can be done away with. What can change, in changing historical circumstances, is the form (Marx's italics) in which these laws operate. And the form in which this proportional division of labour operates, in a state of society where the interconnection of social labour is manifested in the private exchange (Marx's italics) of the individual products of labour, is precisely the exchange value (Marx's italics) of these products." (Marx-Engels Cor-

respondence, Letter no. 109, pp. 218-19).

Perhaps it is now clear that creation of surplus use-value is a "natural law" associated with useful social labour without which human society cannot "exchange" with nature. It assumes different forms in different economic formations. How, then, can it be the basic economic law of socialism, which Mr Majumdar so painstakingly discovers after refuting Stalin's basic economic law of socialism? This social fund of surplus use value under socialism is increased enormously in extended reproduction. The surplus use value becomes the surplus useful labour, the commodity becomes the product, the fixed and commodity capital become the instruments of labour. The social labour fund increases enormously in extended reproduction in socialist society and "through the continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques" the society as a whole "secures the maximum satisfaction"! (Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*). That is why it is the basic economic law.

Other questions raised in Mr Majumdar's paper will possibly be covered by my article "Economic roots of restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union", written long before the publication of the paper under reference and likely to be published in *Frontier*.

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