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BERNSTEIN AND MATERIALISM



by
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Forgotten Books

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**Bernstein and
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Herr Bernstein continues the second series of his *Problems of Socialism*, in Issue 34 of *Neue Zeit*, where he discusses *in what measure present-day socialism is realistic, and in what measure it is an ideology.*” [1*] The method employed by the author of this study seems to me quite insufficient for a solution of the question raised therein, which is why I shall subject that method to criticism in another article. What interests me here is Herr Bernstein’s call for a return to Kant “up to a certain point”. “As a layman in the theory of knowledge,” says Herr Bernstein, “I lay no claim to bringing into this question anything more than the thoughts of a layman. In fact, it was an article on Kant, written by Conrad Schmidt and published in the scientific supplement to *Vorwärts!*, that made me take up the subject.”

Impelled by a reading of several columns of Herr Conrad Schmidt’s philosophical prose, Herr Bernstein informs other laymen of the following: “Pure or absolute materialism is just as spiritualistic as is pure or absolute idealism. The two simply assume, though from different viewpoints, that thinking and being are identical; they differ ultimately only in their mode of expression. The more recent materialists, on the contrary, have taken up a principled Kantian stand just as resolutely as have most of the greatest present-day natural scientists.”

These are highly interesting conclusions. But what is “pure or absolute materialism”? Herr Bernstein does not answer this question; instead, he quotes in a footnote a definition given by one of the “more recent” materialists, who says, quite “in the Kantian sense”, “We only believe in the atom.” [2*]

In Herr Bernstein's opinion, the "pure or absolute" materialists could obviously in no way admit the mode of thinking and expression characterised in the definition given above. "In what measure" is this understanding of Bernstein's borne out by the history of philosophy? "That is the question."

Who shall we number Holbach among: the "pure" or the "more recent" materialists? Evidently among the former. But what does Holbach think of matter?

The following passages will explain that to us:

"We do not know the essence of any object, if by the word essence one is to understand that which comprises its own nature; we know matter only from the sensations and ideas it gives us; then we judge of it, well or badly, in keeping with the arrangement of our organs." [1]

And further:

"Thus, relatively towards us, matter in general is anything that affects our senses in some way, and the properties that we attribute to different kinds of matter are based on the different impressions or on the changes that they produce in us." [2]

Here is another brief and characteristic passage:

"We know neither the essence nor the genuine nature of matter, though we are able to determine some of its properties and qualities according to the way in which it affects us." [3]

Let us now turn to another "pure" materialist, to wit. Helvetius. Does matter possess the power of sensation? Helvetius replies to this question, which held the attention of very many eighteenth-century French philosophers, and

to which we shall return later, as follows: “The subject was discussed over a long period.... Only very late was it asked what the argument was all about, and a precise idea was attached to the word matter. Had the meaning been established in the first place, it would have been recognised that *men are, so to say, the creators of matter.*” [4] I find this somewhat clearer than the statement, “We only believe in the atom”.

I have set forth the philosophical ideas of Holbach and Helvetius in my *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus*, so I shall not go into any detailed examination of them here. I shall, however remark that *to Helvetius the existence of bodies outside of us seems only a probability.* He makes mock of “philosophical flights of fancy”; in his opinion, we must “*go together with observation, halt at the instant it leaves us, and have the courage not to know what is as yet impossible to know.*” [5]

Robinet, author of the book *De la Nature*, remarks: “We have not been made to find out what constitutes the essence of things; we have no means of knowing that *The knowledge of essence (des essences) is beyond our compass.*” [6]

Elsewhere in the same book, he says: “The soul is no more instructed in its own essence than in other essences. It does not penetrate into itself more than into the mass of its own body, whose inner resources it neither senses nor sees.” [7] Is this not quite in the Kantian sense?

Let us now listen to La Mettrie, that *enfant perdu* of materialist philosophy, a man whose boldness daunted even the boldest. Here is what he said:

“The essence of soul in man and animals is unknown to us and will always remain so, just as the essence of matter and body ... But though we have no idea of the essence of matter, we are nevertheless obliged to recognise the properties revealed to us in matter by our external senses.” [8]

In his *Abrégé des Systèmes* La Mettrie writes the following, in a criticism of Spinoza’s philosophy:

“... It is not external things that the soul cognises but only certain individual properties of those things, all of them quite relative and arbitrary; finally, most of our sensations and ideas are so dependent on our organs that they change together with the latter ...”

As we can see, one of the most “absolute” materialists also speaks here “quite in the Kantian sense”. Compared with such statements, one cannot but consider most comical the proposition “We only believe in the atom”, which Herr Bernstein cites as something absolutely “new”.

Perhaps, Herr Bernstein imagines that Frederick Engels did not know that we only *believe* in the atom? Engels, it may be supposed, knew that very well [4*], but that did not prevent him from waging a struggle against Kantian philosophy and writing the following lines in his *Ludwig Feuerbach*: “If, nevertheless, the Neo-Kantians are attempting to resurrect the Kantian concept in Germany and the agnostics that of Hume in England (where in fact it never became extinct), this is, in view of their theoretical and practical refutation accomplished long ago, scientifically a regression and practically merely a shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism while denying it before the world.” [5*]

Perhaps Herr Bernstein will object that Engels himself did not have a clear understanding of the matter?

For many years, Herr Bernstein was in close touch with Frederick Engels [6*], but failed to understand his philosophy. He, who could have drawn so freely on the wealth of that great thinker's knowledge, had to read the quasi-philosophical article by Herr Conrad Schmidt to gain an interest in philosophical questions, and ask himself: wherein lies the essence of my teacher's philosophy? What is still worse, it was sufficient for him to learn a couple of Herr Conrad Schmidt's paralogisms to throw that philosophy overboard. Unbelievable, but a fact. It is very sad for the school of Marx and Engels, but first and foremost it is very sad for Herr Bernstein!

However that may be, we have not the least desire to follow this "critic's advice" when he calls us "*back to Kant*". On the contrary, we call him *back ... to a study of philosophy*.

In advising us to "return to Kant", Herr Bernstein tries to base himself on an article by Herr Stern: *Der ökonomische und der naturphilosophische Materialismus*, which was published in *Neue Zeit*. Herr Stern is immeasurably more competent in the field of philosophy than Herr Bernstein is, and his article deserves our readers' full attention.

While Herr Bernstein returns to Kant "to a certain point" Herr Stern speaks to us of the old Spinoza, and asks us to return to the philosophy of that great and noble Jewish thinker. That is something else, and far more reasonable than Herr Bernstein's call. Indeed, it is important and interesting to study the question of whether there is *something in common between the philosophical ideas of*

Marx and Engels on the one hand, and Spinoza's on the other.

To be able to reply correctly to this question, we must first ascertain how Herr Stern understands the genuine essence of materialism. Here is what he says:

“*Naturphilosophische* materialism, as represented in Ancient Greece by Democritus and his school, in the last century by the Encyclopedists, and in recent times by Karl Vogt, Ludwig Büchner and so on. and the economic materialism of Marx and Engels are, despite their common name, two different theories, which pertain to different areas of study. The former contains an explanation of Nature and in particular the relations between matter and spirit; the latter proposes an explanation of history, its course and its events, thus being a sociological theory.”

That is not quite the case.

In the first place, the philosophy of the Encyclopedists was not limited only to a study of the relations between matter and spirit; on the contrary, *it attempted to simultaneously explain history with the aid of the materialist concept.* [9] In the second place, Marx and Engels were materialists, not only in the sphere of historical studies *but also in the sphere of an understanding of the relation between spirit and matter.* Thirdly, it is quite erroneous to lump together the materialism of the Encyclopedists and that of Vogt and Büchner. Here, too, it may be said that we have “two quite different theories”.

“The fundamental idea of *naturphilosophische* materialism,” Herr Stern continues, “is that matter is the Absolute, something everlastingly existent; everything of the spirit (the mental: perception, sensation, will and thinking) is a product of matter. Matter possesses boundless forces (*Stoff und Kraft*), which can in general be reduced to movement, which

is also everlasting. Through the interaction of various forces in complex animal organisms, there arises in the latter the spiritual, which again disappears together with their disintegration. Everything that takes place, including human desires and actions, is governed by the law of causality and depends on material causes.”

That is how Herr Stern sees the materialist doctrine. Is he right, and can the description he has given be applied, for instance, to the materialism of the Encyclopedists?

Before replying to this question. I would remark that, in this case, the appellation of Encyclopedists is, on the one hand, not at all precise, and leads to error. Far from all the Encyclopedists were materialists. On the other hand, there were, in eighteenth-century France, materialists who did not write a single line in the *Encyclopédie*. To bear that out, it will suffice to name the selfsame La Mettrie.

All this is incidental. What is essential is that *neither the materialists among the Encyclopedists nor La Mettrie recognised that all the forces of matter can be reduced to movement*. Herr Stern seems to have been misled by the words of those who, despite their ignorance of the history of materialism, cannot deny themselves the pleasure of speaking about it. This can be proved immediately and most irrefutably.

This time I shall first let La Mettrie speak for himself.

The reader already knows that La Mettrie’s view on matter is worlds apart from “*dogmatism*” of any kind. Yet we must dwell at some length on his philosophy.

La Mettrie was simply a *Cartesian*, a man of consistent thought, who enriched his mind with all the biological knowledge of his times. Descartes asserts that animals are nothing more than machines, that, is to say, that they possess nothing that can be called the life of the mind. Taking Descartes at his word, La Mettrie says that if the former is right, then man too is nothing more than a machine because there is no *essential difference* between man and animal. Hence the title of his celebrated work *L'homme machine*. However, since man in no way lacks mental life, La Mettrie further concludes that animals are also endowed with mental life. Hence the title of another work: *Les animaux plus que machines*. Incidentally, La Mettrie thought that Descartes himself, in his heart of hearts, held the same view: "For on the whole, though he harps on the distinction between the two substances, it can be seen that this is nothing but a clever trick, a stylistic device." etc. [10] Though La Mettrie defines man as a machine, he does not at all say thereby that "*all the forces of matter can be reduced to movement*". On the contrary, he wishes to express something quite different. *He considered thinking one of the properties of matter*. "I believe thinking to be so little incompatible with organised matter that it seems to be a property of the latter in the same way as electricity, the faculty of movement, impenetrability, extent, etc." [11]

On that basis, Herr Stern will no doubt object that to La Mettrie thinking is a property of organised matter alone, this being the heel of Achilles in any materialism. "It is quite inexplicable," he says in the article we have quoted from, "how, in an animal cell, sensation (the basic physical element) appears *suddenly*, like a pistol shot; it must of

necessity be concluded that inorganic bodies, too, possess a psychical quality which is, of course, only minimal and simple, but which becomes more involved and refined as we mount the ladder of living beings”. That is so, but La Mettrie never asserted anything to the contrary. Here he simply puts the question, but does not attempt to give a definite answer. “It must be acknowledged,” he says, “that we do not know whether matter possesses the immediate faculty of sensation or only the ability to acquire it through modifications or forms it is susceptible of; for it is true that this faculty reveals itself only in inorganised bodies.” [12]

In his *l’Homme plante*, he expresses this idea in a somewhat different form, which makes it more definite. “In effect, Man is that one of all hitherto known beings who possesses soul in the highest degree, as it should be of necessity, while plants are those which should and do possess soul in the least degree.” This idea sums up the theory of the “animateness of matter”. However, La Mettrie discards this theory because “soul” is something quite embryonic in plants and minerals. “It is an excellent soul, indeed,” he exclaims, “which does not occupy itself with any objects and desires, and is without passions, without vices, without virtues and above all without needs, being free even of the need to counter the body’s disintegration.”

Herr Stern quotes the scholium to Theorem XIII in Part Two of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, which says that all individuals (*individua*) are animate in various degrees (*quamvis diversis gradibus*).

The reader now sees that the *degree* of animation was of decisive significance to La Mettrie, who considered that an

inanimate being was one in which the faculty of sensation did not rise above a certain minimum; if he declared that “*though*” is the outcome of *organisation*, he thereby wished to say that the comparatively higher forms of “*animateness*” could be met only in inorganised “individuals”.

That is why I see absolutely no substantial difference between *Spinozism and La Mettrie’s materialism*.

How does the matter stand with the Encyclopedists?

“The first faculty that we meet with in living man and which should be separated from all the others,” says Holbach, “is ‘*sensibility*’” (i.e., sensation – *G.P.*).

“However inexplicable that faculty may appear at first glance, yet, if we examine it at close quarters, we shall find that it is a consequence of the essence and the properties of an organised body in the same way as gravity, magnetism, elasticity, electricity, etc., result from the essence or the nature of certain other bodies.... Some philosophers think that sensibility is a universal quality of matter; in that case, it would be useless to search whence it gets that property which we know in its manifestations. If one admits this hypothesis, then one can distinguish two kinds of sensibilities, in the same way as one distinguishes two kinds of movement in Nature – one known by the name of *living force*, the other by the name of *the force of inertia* [13]; one is active or living perception while the other is passive or inert. In the latter case, the animateness of a substance would only consist in the absence of impediments to its being active and sensible. In a word, sensibility is either a quality that can be communicated, such as matter, and can be acquired thanks to combination, or else perception is a quality inherent in all matter; in either case an incorporeal being, such as the human soul is supposed to be, cannot be its subject.” [14]

Herr Stern will now see for himself that Holbach’s materialist philosophy has nothing in common with the doctrine ascribed by him to the Encyclopedists.

Holbach was very well aware that the forces of matter cannot all be reduced to movement. He had no objections to the hypothesis of the “*animateness of matter*” but he did not stop at this hypothesis because his attention was attracted by another task. He tried, first and foremost, to adduce proof that, to explain the phenomena of mental life, there is no need for us to presuppose the existence of non-corporeal substance ...

Let us go further. Holbach was not the sole author of *Système de la Nature*; Diderot, too, was an outstanding collaborator in it, and he was a materialist. Of what kind was the materialism of this man who, with more justification than anybody else, can be called an Encyclopedist. Diderot displayed his attitude to Spinoza in a short article *Spinosiste*, which was published in Volume 15 of the *Encyclopédie*.

“One should not,” he writes there, “confuse the old Spinozists with those of modern times. The general principle held by the latter is that matter is sensible, which they demonstrate by the development of the egg, an inert body which, through the sole instrumentality of graduated warmth, passes to the state of a sentient and living being, and by the growth of any animal which, in the beginning, is nothing but a point but which, through the assimilation of plant nutritives – in a word of all substances which serve as nutrition – turns into a big, sentient and living body. Hence they conclude that, there exists nothing but matter and that it is sufficient to explain everything; in everything else, they follow the old Spinozism in all its inferences.”

This does not show with clarity wherein, in Diderot’s opinion, lies the superiority of the new over the old Spinozism; what is quite indubitable is that Diderot recognised Spinozism as a correct doctrine, and had no fear of the]conclusions stemming from it. On the whole, it may

be said that Karl Rosenkranz was quite right when he wrote, in his well-known book *Diderot's Leben und Werke* (Vol.I, p. 149): "Spinozism. especially beginning with Boulainvilliers, was secretly recognised by all Frenchmen who had gone over, through sensualism, to materialism ..." [15]

How do the nineteenth-century materialists regard the question we are discussing?

Ludwig Feuerbach was quite disparaging of the French eighteenth-century materialists. "Nothing can be more erroneous," he said, "than to derive German materialism from *Système de la Nature* or, what is still worse, from La Mettrie's truffle pastry." [16] Yet, he stood firmly on the ground of French materialism.

Thus, in his *Spiritualismus und Materialismus*, he says: "To the abstract thinker ... thought is an extra-cerebral act; to the physician, it is an activity of the brain." It was this that La Mettrie set out to prove in his *L'homme machine*. "Medicine, general pathology, is the birthplace and source of materialism," Feuerbach says further on. [17] Again, La Mettrie says the same thing. [18] It is common knowledge that his own ailment served as a point of departure for his ideas on the relationship between soul and body.

"But medicine is the source ... not of an extravagant and transcendental materialism ... but of one that is immanent and *rests in and with Man*," says Feuerbach. "But therein lies the Archimedean viewpoint in the dispute between materialism and spiritualism, since it is ultimately a question, not of the divisibility or indivisibility of matter but of the divisibility or indivisibility of Man ... not of matter outside of Man ... but of matter as compressed within the human cranium. In a word, the dispute when conducted, not

without the participation of the head – is about nothing else but the human head.” [19]

That, too, is how the argument was viewed by La Mettrie, Holbach and many other materialists of the *Encyclopédie*. Because they held that opinion, they showed considerable coolness – with some few exceptions – for the theory of the “animateness” of matter that is not “*compressed within the human cranium*”. In this respect, too, Feuerbach’s point of view was that of the French materialists.

At the same time, it is unquestionable that Feuerbach was willing to be at one with the materialists up to a certain point, but no further. He repeatedly declared that, to him, the truth lay “neither in materialism, idealism, philosophy, nor in psychology”! Whence this departure from a theory which, in essence, contained his own view?

Engels explained it as follows: “Here Feuerbach lumps together ... materialism ... and the special form in which this world outlook was expressed at a definite historical stage, namely, in the eighteenth century.” As for French materialism proper, Feuerbach lumped it together with “the shallow and vulgarised form in which the materialism of the eighteenth century continues to exist today in the heads of naturalists and physicians, the form which was preached on their tours in the fifties by Büchner, Vogt and Moleschott”. [7*] I go further than Engels did, and say: Feuerbach was unaware that, in the nineteenth century, he was an actual restorer of eighteenth-century materialism, and that he was a representative of that latter materialism, with all its advantages and shortcomings.

Feuerbach held the view – now shared by Herr Stern – that the French materialists reduced to motion all the forces in matter. I have already shown that this view is wholly erroneous, and that the French materialists were no more “materialistic” in this respect than Feuerbach himself was. However, Feuerbach’s divergence from French materialism is deserving a very great attention because it characterises his own world-outlook just as distinctively as it did that of Marx and Engels.

According to Feuerbach, the source of cognition in psychology is quite different from what it is in physiology. But what is the distinction between these two sources of cognition? Feuerbach’s answer to this question is highly characteristic: “What to me, or subjectively, is a purely mental ... act, is in itself, or objectively, a material and sensuous one.” [20] As we see, this is the same as what Herr Stern says: “Hunger, for instance, is, materially considered, a lack of certain bodily juices; considered psychically, it is a sense of unease; satiety is, materially, the replenishment of a deficiency in the organism, while psychically it is a sense of satisfaction.” But Herr Schmidt is a Spinozist. *Ergo ... ergo*. Feuerbach, too, adheres to Spinoza’s viewpoint.

Indeed, there can be no doubt that Feuerbach was as much of a Spinozist as Diderot was in his time.

It is enough to read his writings with some attention and to possess at least some clear idea of the development of modern philosophy – beginning with Spinoza and ending with Hegel – to cast off the least doubt on that score. “Spinoza is the real originator of modern speculative philosophy; Schelling is its restorer, and Hegel its

consumator,” he says in one of his most outstanding writings. *Nature*, according to Feuerbach, is the “secret”, the true meaning of Spinozism. “What is it, on closer examination, that Spinoza *logically or metaphysically calls Substance, and theologically God?* Nothing else but Nature.” [21] This is Spinoza’s strong point; herein lie “his historical significance and merit”. (Nature is Feuerbach’s “secret”, too. – G.P.) But Spinoza was incapable of breaking with theology. “For him. Nature is not Nature; the sensuous and antitheological essence of Nature is for him merely an abstract, metaphysical and theological essence – Spinoza makes Nature one with God” [22]. Therein lies his “*main shortcoming*”. Feuerbach rectifies that shortcoming in Spinozism by *inserting aut-aut for sive*. “Not ‘*Deus sive Natura*’ but ‘*aut Deus aut Natura*’ is the watchword of truth; where (loci is identified with Nature ... there is neither God nor Nature, but only a mystical amphibiological hermaphrodite.” [23]

We have already seen that this was exactly the reproach Diderot levelled against Spinozism, in the article cited above, which was published in the *Encyclopédie*. Herr Stern may possibly object that Spinoza did not deserve the reproach, but that is no concern of ours: what interests us here is the answer to the question of the relation of Feuerbach’s philosophy to Spinoza’s. As for the answer, it is as follows:

Feuerbach’s materialist philosophy was, like Diderot’s, merely a brand of Spinozism.

And now let us proceed to Marx and Engels.

For some time, these writers were enthusiastic adherents of Feuerbach. “Enthusiasm was general” (following the

publication of Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums* – G.P.), Engels wrote: “we all became at once Feuerbachians. How enthusiastically Marx greeted the new conception and how much – in spite of all critical reservations – he was influenced by it, one may read in *Die heilige Familie*.” [8*]

By the February of 1845, however, Marx had, with the insight of genius, seen the “chief defect” of Feuerbach's materialism, namely that “the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively”. [9*] This criticism became the point of departure in the new phase in the development of materialism, a phase that led up to the *materialist explanation of history*. The preface to Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* contains what might he called “*Prolegomena to any future sociology that could operate as a science*”.

Note, however, that Marx and Engels's critique does not bear upon the fundamental viewpoint of Feuerbach's materialism. Quite the reverse!

When Engels wrote that “those who regard Nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism” [10*]” (see his *Ludwig Feuerbach*) he was merely repeating Feuerbach's words: “The true relationship of thinking to being is only this: Being is the subject, thinking the predicate. Thinking derives from being, not being from thinking.” [24] Since Feuerbach's viewpoint was that of a Spinozist, it is clear that Engels's philosophical view, which was identical, could not be different.

Strictly speaking, the proposition that “thinking derives from being, not being from thinking” is not in agreement with Spinoza's doctrine. But the “thinking” in question is *human consciousness*, i.e., the highest form of “thinking”;

being as preceding that thinking in no way precludes the “animaleness of matter”. To realise that, one has only to read page 230 in Volume 2 of Feuerbach’s *Werke*, and pages 21 and 22 of Engels’s book *Ludwig Feuerbach*. The contempt in which Engels held the materialism of Karl Vogt, Moleschott and the like is common knowledge. However, it was that very materialism which could with some justification be reproached for a striving to reduce all the forces of matter to motion. I am convinced that publication of the manuscripts in the literary heritage of Marx and Engels will cast new light on the question. [25] Meanwhile, I assert with full conviction that, in the *materialist* period of their development, Marx and Engels never abandoned Spinoza’s point of view. [12*] That conviction, incidentally, is based on Engels’s personal testimony.

After visiting the Paris World Exhibition in 1889, I went to London to make Engels’s acquaintance. For almost a whole week, I had the pleasure of having long talks with him on a variety of practical and theoretical subjects. When, on one occasion, we were discussing philosophy, Engels sharply condemned what Stern had most *inaccurately* called “*naturphilosophische* materialism”. “So do you think,” I asked, “old Spinoza was right when he said that *thought* and *extent* are nothing but two attributes of one and the same substance?” “Of course,” Engels replied, “old Spinoza was quite right.”

If my recollections are not letting me down, present during our talk was the well-known chemist Schorlemmer. P.B. Axelrod, too, was present. Schorlemmer is no longer alive, but the other interlocutor is, and I feel sure that he will bear out the accuracy of my words.

A few more words: in his preface to *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Engels speaks, *inter alia*, of the “pauper’s broth of eclecticism” which is ladled out in the universities in

Germany under the name of philosophy. [13*] In his lifetime, that splendid broth was not yet being dished out to the German workers. That is now being done by Conrad Schmidt. It is that very broth that has so happily “worked up” Herr Bernstein. Conrad Schmidt is now setting up a school. It would therefore not be superfluous to analyse his eclectic broth with the aid of that sensitive reagent: the philosophy of Marx and Engels. I shall do that in the following article. [14*]

* * *

Footnotes

1. *Système de la Nature*, II, p.1. [3*]
2. *ibid.*, I, p.28.
3. *ibid.*, II, p.116.
4. *De l'Esprit*, Discours I, chap.IV.
5. Cf. *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus*, p.77 and ff.
6. *De la Nature*, Amsterdam MDCCLXIII, tome premier, p.265.
7. *ibid.*, p. 259.
8. *Œuvres philosophiques de Monsieur de La Mettrie*, Amsterdam MDCCLXIV, t.I, *Traité de l'âme*, p.83 et 87.
9. I showed that in my essay on Helvetius.
10. *Œuvres philosophiques de Monsieur de La Mettrie*, t.X, p.72.
11. *ibid.*, p.73.
12. *Traité de l'âme*, etc., chap.VI. In this work. La Mettrie still adhered to the old terminology, which he later abandoned.
13. Holbach's terms *force vive* and *force morte* are no longer in use.
14. *Système de la Nature*, t.I, pp.88-89 et 90-91.
15. At the same time, it is highly probable and even, perhaps quite true that Diderot denied only what is called Spinoza's pantheism.
16. *Werke*, Bd.10, S.8, 123.

17. Werke, Bd.10, S.128.

18. The spiritualists are well aware of this. The author of La Mettrie's biography in *Biographie Universelle ancienne et moderne* describes L'Homme machine as "an infamous production, in which the cheerless doctrine of materialism is set forth in plain terms". But what does that doctrine consist in? Here is the explanation: "Having observed, during his malady, that an enfeebling of the moral faculties followed that of his bodily organs, he drew the conclusion that thinking is merely the product of corporal organisation, and had the temerity to publish his conjectures on this score." How horrible! What an absurd pseudodocctrine!!

19. Feuerbach, Werke, Bd.10. S.128-29.

20. Note for Marxists who are going "back to Kant": Feuerbach's "in itself" has nothing in common with "an sich" of the author of *Critique of Pure Reason*.

21. Werke, Bd.2, S.244; Bd.4, S.380.

22. *ibid.*, Bd.4, S.391.

23. *ibid.*, Bd.4, S.392.

24. *ibid.*, Bd.2, S.261.

25. When I wrote those lines (in 1898), I had in mind, in the main, Marx's dissertation on Epicurus [11*], which had not yet been published and of whose existence I had learnt from Engels as early as 1889. The dissertation was subsequently published in a collection of the early works of Marx and Engels which was brought out by Franz Mehring. However, it did not live up to my expectations, because in it Marx still held the idealist view.

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Notes

This was the first article published by Plekhanov against revisionism. Plekhanov realised the danger Bernsteinianism was bringing in its wake earlier than did the other theorists of the Second International, and he resolutely came out against it.

The article was published in the journal *Neue Zeit*, No.44, July 30, 1898 and in Russian in the symposium *Critique of Our Critics* in 1906.

1*. The reference is to Bernstein's article *Das realistische und das ideologische Moment des Sozialismus. Probleme des Sozialismus. 2. Serie II (Realistic and Ideological Moments of Socialism. Problems of Socialism, 2, Series II)* published in Nos.34-35 of *Neue Zeit* for 1898.

2*. Bernstein is citing from Strecker's book *Die Welt und Menschheit (The World and Mankind)*.

3*. Plekhanov is mistaken in his reference; the quotation is on p. 91 of the French edition.

4*. Plekhanov is in error when he says that Engels agreed with the proposition that "we only believe in the atom". Engels, like Marx, held the stand of the materialist theory of reflection, and considered matter as knowable. By this formulation Plekhanov is making a concession to agnosticism that is linked with another mistake, his assertion that our notions are not the copies, reflections of objects but hieroglyphs, the signs of objects.

5*. K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works in three volumes, Vol.3, Moscow 1973, p.347.*

6*. In 1881 Eduard Bernstein was editor of *Sozial-Demokrat*, organ of the German Social-Democratic Party, which was published in Zurich. In 1888 Bernstein moved to London where, under the influence of trade unionism and bourgeois economic literature, he went over to revisionism.

7*. K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works in three volumes, Vol.3, Moscow 1973, p.349.*

8*. K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works in three volumes, Vol.3, Moscow 1973, p.344.*

9*. K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works in three volumes, Vol.3, Moscow 1973, p.13.*

10*. K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works, in three volumes, Vol.3, Moscow 1973, p.346.

11*. The reference is to Marx's doctoral thesis, Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature.

12*. While stressing the unity of the basic principles of pre-Marxian and dialectical materialism (in dealing with the principal question of philosophy), Plekhanov does not show the essential difference between them. He is in error in placing on a par Spinoza's materialism and philosophical positions of Marx and Engels. In his article On the Alleged Crisis in Marxism Plekhanov says: "...Present-day materialism is a Spinozism that has become more or less aware of itself."

13*. K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works in three volumes, Vol.3, Moscow 1973, p.335.

14*. The supposed title of the following article is Frederick Engels and Conrad Schmidt.