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A 'LINGUISTIC PHILOSOPHER' LOOKS AT LENIN'S MATERIALISM AND EMPIRIO-CRITICISM

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1. LIMITATIONS OF LENIN'S APPROACH

Lenin starts by considering the views of Bishop Berkeley, and offers two short definitions: »Materialism is the recognition of 'objects in themselves', or outside the mind; ideas and sensations are copies or images of those objects. The opposite doctrine (idealism) claims that objects do not exist 'without the mind'; objects are 'combinations of sensations'« (Lenin (1), p. 17). This is a fair and admirably brief account of what is at stake between Berkeley and his opponents; and, as Lenin at once goes on to note, it is materialism in this sense which Berkeley thinks in the »foundation . . . of Atheism and Irreligion . . . How great a friend material substance has been to Atheists in all ages were needless to relate« (Berkeley, § 92: quoted Lenin (1), p. 19).

Yet if this were all that was involved in the notions of materialism and idealism, then those critics who have complained that Marxists speak of materialism when they ought to be talking of realism would be right (Wetter, p. 46). Nor, on this limited interpretation of the two terms, is it immediately obvious why materialism is to be taken as necessarily irreligious and idealism as characteristically religious. The most, probably, which Berkeley himself would have wanted to claim was: that – in this narrow sense of *materialism*, in which the word means the same as *realism* – atheism somehow requires or presupposes materialism; not that materialism – in this same narrow sense – implies atheism. For in this narrow sense of *materialism* most religious people, and most religious philosophers too, have been materialists; and it would be very implausible indeed to suggest that they have been, in this respect, inconsistent.

It appears, therefore, that there must be more to this fundamental distinction than Lenin's first outline account here might suggest; and, as we shall see later (in 6, below) there is. However, most of the critique of idealism in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* engages

with the limited aspect defined in the account which we have just been examining. What Lenin does again and again, with great force and acuteness, is: first, to insist that some view – often a view which had been put forward as hardheaded and scientific – really is in this narrow sense idealistic; and then, second, to urge that these idealistic implications are inconsistent with known facts – particularly known scientific facts. All this is salutary, splendid, and sound.

Nevertheless, although Lenin's critique is so far as it goes excellent, it does not go far enough. It was said of Francis Bacon, one of the founding fathers of modern materialism, that he wrote philosophy like a Lord Chancellor; which, indeed, he was. It might similarly be said that Lenin wrote philosophy like a professional revolutionary; which, in fact, he was. The point is that Lenin was a dedicated and disciplined practical man, and when he discussed philosophical doctrines he was interested: first, in whether they were true; second, in how they fitted in with the ideas of his party; and, third, in what their social impact was or would be. So, having recognized that idealism must be false, he seems never to have gone on to ask himself what are the arguments which have in generation after generation misled acute and honest men to defend views which are not merely false but, one might have thought, obviously false.

Such neglect is, no doubt, excusable in a practical man. Yet it is unfortunate. For until it has been made good no critique of idealism can be said to be complete. Lenin's failure to ask himself about the arguments for idealism had another and equally important consequence. It led him to put forward what he always calls »the materialist theory of knowledge« (e.g. Lenin (1), pp. 58–59) in terms which give an opening to a powerful idealist counter-attack. (See 5, below.) This is both unfortunate and unnecessary.

2. BEGINNING WITH DESCARTES

Lenin starts, as we have seen, with Berkeley. But the story of modern idealism really begins with Descartes. For it was Descartes who, borrowing arguments from the ancient Pyrrhonian Scepticism, proceeded systematically to doubt everything but his own present consciousness: »since all the same thoughts which we have while awake may also come to us in sleep, without any of them being at that time true, I resolved to assume that everything that ever entered into my mind was no more true than the illusions of my dreams« (Descartes (1), Part IV). The problem therefore arises of how, if at all, Descartes can know that anything else exists in addition to, and as it were 'behind', his own thoughts. (Descartes, we remember, used the word *thought* to include every form of consciousness – particularly what both Lenin and his opponents called sensations – what in Britain are called sense-data.) It is this problem, as formulated by Descartes, which has come to be known as The Problem of the External World.

It is important to realize, and too easy to forget, how much this external world includes. The crucial point is that people are all parts of the external world; for people are, obviously, things. It is these too often and too easily forgotten facts which make Lenin's triumphant insistence on the solipsistic consequences of idealism so relevant and so decisive: »If bodies are 'complexes of sensations', as Mach says, or 'combinations of sensations', as Berkeley said, it inevitably follows that the whole world is but my idea. Starting from such a premise it is impossible to arrive at the existence of other people besides oneself: it is the purest solipsism« (Lenin (1), p. 34). As Lenin said again and again, it is these totally unacceptable and yet wholly unavoidable solipsistic implications which idealistic thinkers are forever trying to escape or to ignore. Thus Lenin quotes Mach: »It is then correct that the world consists only of our sensations. In which case we have knowledge *only* of sensations . . .«. Lenin comments: »From which there is only one possible inference, namely, that the 'world consists only of *my* sensations'. The word *our* employed by Mach instead of *my* is employed illegitimately. By this word alone Mach betrays that 'halfheartedness' of which he accuses others« (Lenin (1), pp. 35-36).

Another consequence of the fact that people are things is that the idealist himself must be part of his own external world. To which Descartes would, of course, have replied that Descartes was not really an object in the physical world. Really Descartes was an incorporeal thinking substance, a soul »entirely distinct from body«, and hence potentially immortal (Descartes (1), Part IV: compare Part V, especially *ad. fin.*). Really it was only his body which was part of the external world, and mortal. Had Lenin gone back to Descartes he could have made effective use of this as evidence that idealism, even in the limited aspect which we have been considering so far, tends to support an other-worldly view of the nature of man. As it was, the nearest which Lenin got to this point that all people, and not just other people, are parts of 'the external world' was in his attacks on Mach's inconsistency: »if elements are sensations, you have no right even for a moment to accept the existence of 'elements' *independent* of . . . my mind. But if you do admit physical objects that are independent of . . . my sensations and that cause sensation only be acting on my retina – you are disgracefully abandoning your 'one-sided' idealism and adopting the standpoint of 'one-sided' materialism« (Lenin (1), p. 48).

The Problem of the External World as it was presented to modern philosophy by Descartes is the problem of showing that a person can know, and how he can know, about an external world independent of, and somehow 'behind', the appearances – his own thoughts, his own sensations, his own sense-data. Those whom Marxists call idealists or agnostics are all, in their characteristic but different ways, responding to this challenge. Descartes believed that he could have knowledge of this external world; but only because he believed he had proved the existence of a good God, and proved too that such a God must arrange that sense-data are normally caused by physical

objects. This is, as Hume and other critics pointed out, an implausible and unsound theory of knowledge (Hume (2), § XII (iii)). But we do not understand Descartes unless we understand that to him this seemed to be a way – and indeed the only way – to avoid total agnosticism.

Again, Hume, one of the two great philosophers of the Eighteenth Century Enlightenment, certainly did not want to reach the radically agnostic conclusions of the first Book of the *Treatise of Human Nature*. Yet he found himself forced to these unwelcome conclusions. For he followed Descartes in assuming that all his knowledge must be founded on his own thoughts – »perceptions of the mind«. But, unlike Descartes, Hume saw that it must be impossible to build any structure of knowledge about an external world upon these foundations; which nonetheless still seemed to him to be the only possible foundations.

Again, consider idealism. Idealism may have either an ontological or a phenomenalist emphasis. In their ontological moments idealists maintain that thoughts, in the Cartesian sense of *thoughts*, are all that there is; with the possible exception of incorporeal spiritual beings to have the thoughts. In this emphasis things and people are seen as somehow collections or constructions of thoughts. In their phenomenalist moments idealists urge that statements about things and people are, or ought to be, in some way reducible to statements about thoughts. All such idealist views, and indeed the agnostic ones also, are, I agree with Lenin, both incredible and in fact known to be false. But if you start where Descartes started, and if you then see that from this starting point it is impossible to arrive at any knowledge of an external world, then it becomes very tempting to take some sort of idealist stand. This is especially so if this Cartesian starting point is for you – as perhaps for most lay philosophers for the last three hundred years – so fundamental an assumption that it is not noticed as an assumption at all. If this is your situation then you may well want to urge: either, ontologically, that these thoughts, which are all you know and all you can know, are all that there in fact is; or, phenomenally, that all talk about things and people really amounts to nothing more than talk about thoughts.

3. LIMITATIONS OF THE APPEAL TO PRACTICE

We are now, at last, ready to show (what we suggested in 1, above) that and how Lenin's critique of idealism is inadequate. Lenin (as we said there) was not really interested in the arguments which misled people into their idealist errors. Consequently he never examines the Cartesian starting point. Instead he is content to show that idealist and agnostic conclusions are both false, while dismissing with a peremptory appeal to practice the theoretical difficulties from which they spring: »The best refutation of Kantian and Humean agnosticism as well as of other philosophical fancies (*Schrullen*) is

practice, repeats Engels. 'The result of our action proves the conformity (*Uebereinstimmung*) of our perceptions with the objective nature of the things perceived', he says in reply to the agnostics« (Lenin (1), p. 136: compare pp. 105 ff.).

If this were nothing but the impatient dismissal by a practical man of troublesome theoretical difficulties we might simply express our sympathy, and say no more about it: there is indeed – as Hume, for instance, always recognized – something far-fetched and fantastic about such »philosophical fancies«. But this appeal to the criterion of practice is, surely, intended to be much more than this. For it is offered as an essential part of the materialist theory of knowledge: »We have seen that Marx in 1845 and Engels in 1888 and 1892 placed the criterion of practice at the basis of the materialist theory of knowledge« (*Ibid.*, p. 136).

Now there are both true and extremely important things to be said on these lines. Certainly there can be no satisfactory account of scientific knowledge which does not centre upon the idea of practice, of testing by experiment. Again, and more relevantly, it is right to point out that Descartes' claims that he can doubt, and does doubt, various particular propositions about the external world is flatly inconsistent with his behaviour. For it is simply false to say that a man is in doubt whether, for instance, a bridge is safe if he nevertheless entrusts what is dear to him to that bridge without hesitation and without anxiety. It is most significant that Descartes arranged to conduct his meditations in a room with a stove, isolated from all the demands of active and practical life!

So far we are still marching in step with Lenin; although the argument that Descartes' doubt is not really doubt at all, like the earlier contention that people are all things – and, as such, parts of the external world – is typical of the so-called linguistic philosophy. The point there was: not that science teaches us, as Lenin rightly insisted, that consciousness and all formes of mental activity are peculiarly dependent on one particular material organ – the brain; but that in the everyday and pre-scientific meaning of the word *people* people just are creatures of flesh and blood – and, characteristically, capable of consciousness and mental activity generally. Similarly the point here is one which arises directly from the meaning of the word *doubt*.

So far, so good. But Lenin obviously believed that the appeal to practice does more than this, that it refutes idealism. In fact it does not. It does not, because it does not meet what the idealist is saying. The result of our action, says Engels, »proves the conformity of our perceptions with the objective nature of the things perceived«. So, of course, it does: but only on ordinary, everyday, commonsense, materialist, assumptions. Descartes, however, is questioning precisely these assumptions; and wondering whether it might not be »that everything that ever entered into my mind was no more true than the illusions of my dreams«. Certainly, when Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is not sure whether he is seeing a dagger, he is right to want to

apply the test of practice: »Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible to feeling as to sight? Come, let me clutch thee . . .« . But this test can no longer be decisive, or even relevant, when it is the whole external world which is in question. For Descartes is wondering whether the clutching may not be just as much an illusion as the vision; and so, similarly, with any and every other practical test which might be made. In a passage quoted by Lenin the reluctant agnostic Helmholtz confessed: »I do not see how one could refute a system even of the most extreme subjective idealism which chose to regard life as a dream« (Lenin (1), p. 241).

4. A 'LINGUISTIC' APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF REFUTING IDEALISM

Yet, although this despair is understandable, such extreme subjective idealism can be refuted. In the first place we have to insist, with Lenin, that any such idealism must be inconsistent with the enormous mass of known facts – and specially of known scientific facts. (Anyone schooled in the traditions of modern British philosophy will compare Lenin's refutation of idealism that of G. E. Moore; and will contrast Lenin's emphasis on science with Moore's indifference.) Next, in the second place, we have to deal with idealist attempts to interpret, or to misinterpret, these known facts in such a way that they appear to be not inconsistent with idealism. 'Yes, yes', Descartes will say, 'no doubt if I made, or if I seemed to make, some practical tests, as you suggest – or, rather, as what seems to be you seem to suggest – then it would seem as if there were a real external world out there. But dreams can, notoriously, be very vivid. Hallucinations can be compellingly deceptive. So perhaps, after all, everything that ever enters into my mind, is no more true than the illusions of my dreams.'

The problem, and the challenge, is to show that there is some logical inconsistency or some logical absurdity in this the fundamental idealist suggestion. What I want to urge is that the idealist cannot state his position, and know that his statement makes sense, without tacitly presupposing something inconsistent with what he wants to say. I have two arguments, which are, I think, independent of one another: the first more particular; the second quite general. The former consists in arguing that the key words for any statement of idealism presuppose an ostensive definition of *material thing*; and, hence, precisely that knowledge of material things which both idealists and agnostics, for their different reasons, claim to be impossible. The latter consists in arguing that we cannot understand, and know that we understand, any language at all unless we can refer, and unless we know that we can refer, to a public – and hence, in the present sense, material – world.

Take, as a first instance for the first argument, the word *dream*. The idea of dreaming is, surely, essentially secondary and derivative. To dream that you did, or saw, or heard, or smelt something is a special sort of *not* doing, *not* seeing, *not* hearing, or *not* smelling whatever it may be. Similarly too with every sort of seeming: to seem to do or to seem to be is not something primary and elementary; it is, rather, to *fail* actually to do or to *fail* actually to be. The same indeed applies completely generally to any and every contrast between appearance and reality: the idea of the reality is the positive and primary one; that of the appearance is negative and secondary. The relevant consequence is that to understand any of these secondary ideas you must first understand the corresponding primary ones.

Consider now the rather special but quite central case of the idea of a sense-datum. This idea is fundamental to every form of idealism and agnosticism, and has been accepted by almost all the materialist critics of such views. Sense-data are Descartes' »representations«, Berkeley's »sensible ideas«, Hume's (ideas and) »impressions of sense«, as well as the »sensations« of both Mach and Lenin. Agnostics and idealists in their different ways all take this notion to be primary and unperplexing. Sense-data, they believe, there undoubtedly are; and the qualities and relations of sense-data surely can be known. Whatever else there may or may not be, and whatever else may or may not be knowable, these at least there surely are; and at least about these we must be able to have knowledge. How preeminently rational it can then seem for the philosopher to adopt a policy of avoiding all rash claims about how or whether things actually are out there in the big external world. How prudently cautious for him to report only on the sense-data which display themselves with such uninhibited frankness upon the intimate and essentially private stage of his own mind. Even if we can know something else besides, can there be anything else which we can know so immediately and so completely as we can know our own sense-data?

It is, I think, in this sort of way that things present themselves to those who give an idealist or an agnostic response to The Problem of the External World; and it is a fault in Lenin, as a philosopher, that he never allows himself to appreciate the appeal of this picture of the epistemological situation. Nevertheless, notwithstanding its engaging plausibility, it is an utterly wrong picture.

It is utterly wrong, first, because the notion of a sense-datum is secondary to and derivative from the notion of a material thing; and this latter notion is one which can only be explained by ostensive definition. It is utterly wrong, second, because sense-data, as essentially private objects, can only be described in language the meaning of which has to be fixed by reference to the public material world. It is also utterly wrong for a third and different sort

of reason. Since sense-data are essentially private, it is necessarily impossible for anyone to appeal to and to rely upon any independent checks and tests to confirm his reports on his own sense-data. It must therefore be peculiarly difficult, not peculiarly easy, to get any precise knowledge about anyone's sense-data.

To show that the notion of the sense-datum is indeed secondary to that of the material thing we have to ask ourselves how the meaning of the former term is to be explained. Here the best I can do in this paper – and I do not pretend that it is enough – is to cite two passages from the philosophical classics, in both of which sense-data seem to be being picked out by reference to material things. In the first Descartes writes: »Thus, because our senses sometimes deceive us, I wished to suppose that nothing is just as they cause us to imagine it to be... And since all the same thoughts... which we have while awake may also come to us in sleep, without any of them being at that time true, I resolved to assume that everything that ever entered into my mind was no more true than the illusions of my dreams« (Descartes, (1), Part IV). In the second passage Hume writes: »To give a child an idea of scarlet or orange, of sweet or bitter, I present the objects, or, in other words, convey to him these impressions« (Hume (2), I (i) 1). (How Lenin would have scorned and ridiculed that half-hearted, shamefaced, and, of course, wholly illegitimate and inconsistent attempt to identify (subjective) impressions with (objective) material things – »objects«!)

The second stage of the first argument is to contend that this primary notion of a material thing is one which not only always in fact is but also could be explained only ostensively, that is, by in some way pointing to actual material things recognized as such. That this contention is indeed correct is suggested – although, again, it certainly is not proved – simply by asking ourselves how either Descartes or Hume could have explained, even to himself, what it was that he doubted or was agnostic about if he was not acquainted with any independently existing objects, that is, material things. »For«, to quote Lenin once more, »the *sole* property of matter with which philosophical materialism is vitally concerned is that of *being an objective reality*, of existing outside our minds« (Lenin (1), p. 269).

The emphasis on what the idealist or the agnostic can explain, and how, springs from a recognition that they – like everyone else – need to understand, and to know that they understand, what they are saying. But no one can properly be said to understand unless he possesses some capacity to manifest understanding. And what better test of understanding than to explain what has been understood? Also, it is worth saying again in this different context that the very idea of a person doing anything at all – even just silently trying to explain something to himself – is in part the idea of a material thing of a particular sort.

This brings us to my second sort of argument against the inconsistencies which, I believe, must be involved in any statement of idealism. If this second and general argument is sound, then the first and particular one becomes superfluous. It is because I believe that it is sound that I have presented that first argument only in outline. The contention crucial for the second is that the known accessibility of public material objects is an essential condition for the known intelligibility of any language. If this contention is correct, then clearly idealism cannot be consistently stated by anyone who in any way claims to know what he is saying. For the known intelligibility of the statement would presuppose precisely that known accessibility of a public, material, world which it was the whole point of that statement to deny.

To see that the crucial contention is true consider the case of some descriptive word which I might wish to apply to some part of one of my fleeting and momentary sense-data: let us make it, for example, the colour word *blue*. Now, obviously, I cannot know whether you and I both use this word in the same way, with the same meaning, except in so far as I can compare the ways in which you apply it with the ways in which I apply it. Since it is necessarily impossible for me to observe your essentially private experience, I must, in order to make any such comparisons, be in a position to know about the relevant transactions between you as one public, material, thing and various other public, material, things.

So far, so good. But this rather obvious, yet often neglected, fact about the fundamental conditions of communication is not enough to show that I need to have, and to know that I have, access to material things if I am to know that I am using a language correctly in describing my own sense-data to myself: and this is what Descartes is supposing that he is doing in the final phase of his systematic doubt. To see that he does need to have this access, and to know he has, notice that to use any word correctly is to follow the rules for its correct usage. So to know that you are using the word correctly you need to know that you are following these rules. Now, how is this to be done if we are not allowed to refer to material things or to call on the assistance of other people? It would seem that the whole weight of any claim to know would have to rest on the totally unchecked and unsupported memory of one person. 'Yes, it is blue, because it is the same colour as all the other sense-data which I have previously called blue: hence, I am using the word *blue* in the same way when I call this also blue.'

This may, at first sight, seem as if it were sufficient. For sometimes, and rightly, we do say that one man's unsupported memory claim is enough to establish that something did happen, and that he knows that it did. Yet this is deceptive. The two cases are not really parallel. For where we allow that a man's unsupported me-

memory provides sufficient warrant for his claim to know, his memory is not unsupported in the sense in which memory would have to be unsupported in the supposed Cartesian situation. In the former case the unsupported memory is in fact supported, albeit indirectly, by whatever we know about the reliability of memory in general, about the reliability of the memory of the particular man in question, and about the probability of the event which he is reporting; and all this knowledge rests on all manner of tests and checks of and against the facts of the universe around us. In the latter case there could be no such checks or tests; and the memory claim could be backed by nothing more than an unverifiable and unfalsifiable conviction that a consistent usage was in fact being followed. To call this sort of conviction knowledge would surely be excessively flattering; and wrong.

5. LENIN'S MODEL OF PERCEPTION

The upshot of the three previous sections taken together is a total rejection: not only of idealism and agnosticism; but also of the whole framework of the problem to which such doctrines are responses. But this does not mean that we can accept without qualification what Lenin offers as »the materialist theory of knowledge«. This hesitation does not spring from any doubt about the truth of materialism: »Materialism«, as Lenin himself said, »is the son of Great Britain« (Lenin (2), p. 43). It arises because many of Lenin's formulations give purchase to idealism and agnosticism.

Consider, for example, the claim: that »sensation... is regarded by all science which has not been 'purified' by the disciples of Berkeley and Hume, viz., as an *image of the external world*« (Lenin (1), p. 58); or that »Matter is a philosophical category denoting the objective reality which is given to man by his sensations, and which is copied, photographed and reflected by our sensations, while existing independently of them« (*Ibid.*, p. 127). Certainly Lenin is correct in thinking that this is the sort of story which scientists, and especially physiologists, are inclined to tell; and it is in terms of this powerfully seductive model that the classical Problem of the External World is set. It is perhaps significant that Descartes was a practising physiologist and that Locke had had a medical training; and it certainly is that both Berkeley's idealism and Hume's agnosticism developed from a criticism of Locke and Descartes.

If our situation really were as this representation suggests that it is, then God alone could know that it was so. No man in the nature of the case could ever see any of the things of which 'reflections' and 'photographs' appeared on the private screen of his mind's eye. Some way has to be found of rejecting this extraordinarily fascinating model, if it is not to reopen the door to agnosticism and idealism.

We have to remind ourselves – and Lenin! – of Lenin's advice to Petzolt: »you must replace the idealist line of your philosophy (from sensations to the external world) by the materialist line (from the external world to sensations)« (Lenin (1), p. 50). Indeed, the whole of our argument in the previous three sections of the present paper can be seen as an attempt to follow this excellent advice. For we have been trying to show, against the entire Cartesian tradition, that our knowledge of material things must be epistemologically prior to any knowledge of sense-data. In truth the problem is: not one of getting from our sensations to the external world: but rather one of getting from the public and the material to the private and the ideal.

The implication in the present particular context is that we must not allow sense-data to get between us and the things we can see. If once we accept Lenin's model of perception, then we can scarcely avoid the conclusion that we never actually – 'directly' – see material things, only sense-data: and at once the questions arise as to how, if that is indeed so, we ever could know anything about 'things-in-themselves' (Hume and Kant); and as to what, if anything, could even be meant by talk of such in principle inaccessible objects (Berkeley). So the first thing is to insist that we do – very often – actually see things; and that the notions both of things and of perceiving things are epistemologically primary: it is not, that is to say, possible to know anything about sense-data without presupposing some knowledge of material things; and, of course, all knowledge of material things begins in perception.

After this, if the physiologist suggests that the eye is a sort of camera with which we are able to take private and unproducible photographs of things which we can never actually – 'directly' – see; then we have to reply that no discoveries about the physiological machinery which is involved in perception could show that we never really see things: that we can and do is presupposed by all physiological enquiry. Again, if a philosopher wants to talk about sense-data, and to insist that these must occur in all genuine perception; then we must insist in our turn that even if having the appropriate sense-data is part of what is involved in seeing a thing, still it is things which we see – not sense-data. To work all this out is the task, and it is a large task, of the philosophy of perception. But unless the philosophy of perception begins from the fundamental fact that we can see things it is sure to end in the conclusion that we cannot.

(Before proceeding to the next, and final, section of the present paper let us notice in passing a significant remark from the latest book by an English Marxist philosopher. »The ghost of the 'sense-datum' has been haunting philosophy for a long time. Of course it never troubled Marxists. But the others are to be congratulated that, after the linguistic criticism, this particular ghost has been laid« (Cornforth (3), p. 150). Enough has surely been said by now to show that, even if Marxist philosophers were not in fact troubled, they ought to have been.)

6. WIDER AND NARROWER SENSES OF »MATERIALISM«
AND »IDEALISM«

Finally, we return to the questions of how much is covered by the notions of materialism and idealism, and of why a defence of materialism is an attack on religion. It will be remembered that we remarked earlier (in section (1), above): that Lenin's critique concentrates on idealism construed as the doctrine »that objects do not exist 'without the mind'; objects are combinations of sensations'«; and that, in this narrow sense of the words *idealism* and *materialism*, it is not immediately obvious why idealism should be thought necessarily to support religion and materialism to exclude it. One good reason emerged from our consideration of Descartes (in section (2), above): it is that the whole framework of The Problem of the External World takes it for granted that people are essentially incorporeal beings; and, hence, candidates for a future life in another world. (It is one of the many paradoxes of the history of thought that the strongly mortalist Hume should nevertheless have been still so wedded to Cartesian assumptions that he always – while doing philosophy – thought of people as bodiless collections of private experiences.)

Another good reason for assuming an opposition between materialism and religion can be developed from Lenin's insistence that consciousness and mental characteristics generally accompany only highly sophisticated material structures: »Materialism, in full agreement with natural science, takes consciousness, thought, sensation as secondary... associated only with the higher forms of matter (organic matter)... « (Lenin (1), p. 38). Obviously this must count against any suggestions either that people are essentially incorporeal beings or that there might be an incorporeal yet personal God. No wonder that Lenin fumed against Mach: »That means that there are 'immediate experiences' *without* a physical body, *prior* to a physical body'. What a pity that this magnificent philosophy has not yet found acceptance in our theological seminaries! There its merits would have been fully appreciated« (*Ibid.*, p. 234).

All this is very clear. Yet, although these are the aspects and implications upon which Lenin is here concentrating, it seems that the Marxist categories of materialism and idealism both are and need to be richer than this. Thus Lenin refers frequently to Engels, who in *Ludwig Feuerbach* divides philosophers into »two great camps«: »Engels... sees the fundamental distinction between them in the fact that while for the materialists nature is primary and spirit secondary, for the idealists the reverse is the case« (*Ibid.*, p. 24). I propose to end by listing a few of the main fundamental issues which I take to be at stake in this general confrontation, and I wish to say that on all these issues I count myself a materialist.

First, then, materialism asserts that there are, and that we know that there are, objects 'without the mind'. (The phrase *without the mind* has to be interpreted as meaning »independent of any mind at all«; or else we shall have some Berkeleyan claiming to be a materialist on the ground that Berkeley's system provides in its own way for objects independent of all *human minds*). Second, materialism asserts that spirit (»consciousness, thought, sensation«) is a function of certain complicated arrangements of this stuff which exists independently of all minds and mentality. A third fundamental element in materialism is, surely, the claim that the universe – which consists entirely and only of this stuff – is ontologically autonomous and requires no explanation 'outside' itself; there is not call for a sustaining First Cause, nor for an Orderer to impose Order. (Compare and contrast here the neo-Scholasticism of Wetter, pp. 301 ff.) This is not made explicit in Lenin, who was probably familiar only with the cruder ideas of a creation »in the beginning« and of miraculous supernatural interventions 'within' the universe.

Our last two suggested materialist principles are not perhaps necessarily inconsistent with a religious world-system, although the rejection of the fifth has been crucial for many attempts to reconcile science with religion. Of these last two suggestions the fourth is that we should count as materialist any contention that the public is epistemologically prior to the private. If we are prepared to do this then both Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* must be acknowledged as major contributions to materialist philosophy. Finally, and more traditionally, the materialist is one who insists upon a realist view of natural science; that science aims to describe – and to explain – what actually happens in the universe around us. A materialist must as such reject every suggestion that science is concerned only with the appearances. He cannot allow any debilitating 'interpretations' such as those urged by Osiander in his 'Preface' to the *de Revolutionibus* of Copernicus, by Cardinal Bellarmino on Galileo, and by Bishop Berkeley against the Newtonians (Popper).

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