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## Paul Feyerabend and Marxism

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the relationship between Paul Feyerabend and Marxism. Feyerabend mentioned, referenced, quoted, discussed or commented on the following Marxists, communists or leftists in his writings: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, MAO, Fidel Castro, Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky, Bertolt Brecht, Hanns Eisler, Walter Hollitscher, Georg Lukacs, Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Joseph Needham, Jean-Paul Sartre, Walter Benjamin, Louis Althusser, Daniel Cohn-Benit and Robin Blackburn. On numerous occasions he discussed and commented on Dadaism, Marxism, communism, anarchism, liberalism, dialectical materialism, reductive materialism and, especially, eliminative materialism. He originated a Dadaistic philosophy, and in particular a Dadaistic epistemology. He did not convert to dialectical materialism; nevertheless, Dadaism seems highly relevant to Marxism and communism. As a Dadaist in philosophy he could well have been a Marxist, a non-Marxist, or an anti-Marxist.

### Keywords:

dadaism;  
marxists;  
materialism;  
Paul Feyerabend



## 1. Introduction

This article discusses the relationship between Paul Feyerabend (1924–1994) and Marxism. Feyerabend read many Marxist works. He mentioned, referenced, quoted, discussed or commented on the following Marxists, communists or leftists in his writings: Karl Marx (1818–1873), Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), Joseph Stalin (1879–1953), Zedong Mao (1893–1976), Karl Kautsky (1854–1938), Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932), Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919), Leon Trotsky (1879–1940), Fidel Castro (1926–2016), Bertolt Brecht (1878–1956), Hanns Eisler (1898–1962), Walter Hollitscher (1911–1986), Georg Lukacs (1885–1971), Ernst Bloch (1885–1977), Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979), Theodor Adorno (1903–1969), Jürgen Habermas (1929), Joseph Needham (1900–1995), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), Louis Althusser (1918–1990), Daniel Cohn-Benit (1945) and Robin Blackburn (1940). Of course, in class he read some of their writings, such as Lenin’s “What Is to Be Done?” and “Left-wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder”, and Mao’s “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing”.<sup>1</sup> He also invited some people from the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society, the main leftist white student group in the years of protesting against the Vietnam War) and representatives of the Gay Liberation Front to his class.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he had three assistants, all of whom were leaders of the leftist student revolt in the years of the Vietnam War protests.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, he sometimes called himself “the Red Paul”<sup>4</sup> and wrote “Long Live Marx” in a letter to one of his friends.<sup>5</sup> In short, Feyerabend believed that he belonged to the left.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Wilhelm BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert: Briefwechsel Band 1 (1958–1971)**, Kitab, Vienna 2008, p. 268; Lakatos and Feyerabend 1999, p. 210).

<sup>2</sup> See Imre LAKATOS and Paul FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method**, edited and with an Introduction by Matteo Motterlini, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1999, p. 191; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 212.

<sup>3</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 139.

<sup>4</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 160; BAUM Wilhelm and MÜHLMANN Michael (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert: Briefwechsel, Band 2, (1972–1986)**, Kitab, Vienna 2009, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 273.

<sup>6</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 139.

It seems that his most important work, **Against Method** is closely connected to the New Left and to Marxism. In a letter to Feyerabend, his closest friend Imre Lakatos (1922–1974) wrote that “the whole thing (**Against Method**) [was] set against the dramatic background of the student revolt and the New Left uprising”.<sup>7</sup> Feyerabend himself expressed much the same idea, writing that “Anyway, I now see my **Against Method** as a weak and stumbling prologue to what others have done much better: Cohn-Bendit, for example. [...] It is interesting to see, by the way, how many people to whom I have sent my **Against Method** shrink back from it because it contains such names as Lenin etc.”.<sup>8</sup> Cohn-Bendit was the leader of the French student revolt which led to the Paris events of May 1968. Joseph Agassi (1927) claimed that Cohn-Bendit (“Danny the Red”) was Feyerabend’s predecessor in politics,<sup>9</sup> while Lakatos called the students of the left “the Cohn-Bendit/Feyerabend mob”.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Feyerabend admired Lenin and Mao so blindly that his friend Hans Albert (1921) commented as follows: “I have the impression that you have now become very insensitive because of immersion in your favorite left authors”.<sup>11</sup> Feyerabend said that if he could work in New Zealand, he would be closer to “Chairman Mao” than in America.<sup>12</sup> As a result, Agassi made the following comment: “As we shall see, Feyerabend’s ideal is totalitarian China [...]”.<sup>13</sup> Besides, Lakatos considered him “the hero of the New Left” and called him a “darling of the New Left”.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, Feyerabend criticized the New Left, contemporary Marx-

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<sup>7</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method**..., p. 220.

<sup>8</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method**..., p. 153. Moreover, Feyerabend believed that publishing his book **Against Method** with New Left Books had helped the left. He wrote in a letter to his friend Hans Peter Duerr (1942) that “I have also helped the left, that is, the New Left in London, for their whole series would have found no US distributor without my book” (Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Briefe an einen Freund**, Hans Peter DUERR (ed.), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1995, p. 80).

<sup>9</sup> See Joseph AGASSI, “Review Essay of **Against Method** by Paul Feyerabend”, *Philosophia* 1976, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 166 [165–191].

<sup>10</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method**..., p. 157.

<sup>11</sup> Wilhelm BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend — Hans Albert Briefwecihsel**, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt am Main 1997; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert**..., p. 164.

<sup>12</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert**..., p. 256.

<sup>13</sup> AGASSI, “Review Essay of **Against Method**...”, p. 167 [165–191].

<sup>14</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method**..., pp. 220 and 229.

ism, the “revolutionaries” and the students of the left, even while praising Marx, Lenin and Mao. As he put it:

It is now quite clear to me that the “New Left” are a bunch of constipated academics who have hardly anything in common with either Marx, or Lenin, or Mao. I was always surprised by the arid character of most articles in the “New Left Review”. Now I know that this is not an accident. It is intended.<sup>15</sup>

According to Feyerabend, “[i]deologies can deteriorate and become dogmatic religions (example: Marxism)”.<sup>16</sup> Thus, contemporary Marxism had degenerated because contemporary Marxists were no longer learning from their tradition.<sup>17</sup> In his opinion, contemporary Marxism had degenerated into a form of intellectual gossip: “Nowadays, Marxism itself is always only a form of intellectual gossip, in which the followers of Althusser quarrel with the pure Marxists, with the followers of Bakunin, with the followers of Kautsky, and so on and so forth [...] one has mostly forgotten the human function of Marxism ...”.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, in his book **Science in a Free Society** he attacked contemporary Marxism in the following terms:

It is true that Marxism once went a different way and had different aims. But the vision of the founders has now become a doctrine, their insights have been buried in footnotes and the small group of humanitarians has turned into a swarm of intellectuals who criticize other intellectuals and are taken to task by still further intellectuals, a tearful line here and there replacing the humanitarianism that is absent from the whole enterprise.<sup>19</sup>

To a degree, both neo-Marxism and certain of the communists bored Feyerabend.<sup>20</sup> Thus, he strongly criticized the “revolutionaries” (the radical left):

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<sup>15</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 294.

<sup>16</sup> Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free Society**, Verso, London 1982, p. 75.

<sup>17</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, pp. 268 and 274.

<sup>18</sup> Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Thesen zum Anarchismus: Artikel aus der Reihe “Unter den Pflaster liegt der Strand”**, Thorsten HINZ (ed.), Karin Kramer Verlag, Berlin 1996, p. 188. For his similar criticism of contemporary Marxism, see also: Christian AUGUSTIN (ed.), **Aber ein Paul hilft doch dem anderen: Paul Feyerabend — Paul Hoyningen-Huene Briefwechsel 1983–1994**, Passagen Verlag, Vienna 2010, pp. 165–166.

<sup>19</sup> FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free...**, p. 176.

I criticize their ideas, their behaviour, their morality. Their tactics. What I get back is the same aria, again and again, no progress, phrases and more phrases, and a primitive mentality where one talks about slaughter as if it were a picnic. Well, if ever they take over, I shall leave this country at once, for I do not like to be surrounded by barbarians who shout so loudly that one hears them everywhere.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, Feyerabend did not entirely oppose the radical left. As he put it, “I completely accept the aim of the radical student, but I consider their tactics obsolete and uninformed, their general philosophy primitive, and their attitude anti-humanitarian”.<sup>22</sup> That is to say, he was in favor of their aim, but against their tactics, general philosophy and attitude. As a matter of fact, his criticism of the New Left was levelled at the extremists on the left. It was directed “against the »new«, but actually age old, antediluvian, primitive Puritanism of the »new« left which is always based on anger, on frustration, on the urge for revenge, but never on imagination. Restrictions, demands, moral arias, generalized violence everywhere”.<sup>23</sup> Feyerabend criticized the radical left on the grounds that they preferred anger, restrictions, revenge and violence to imagination and humor.

Nonetheless, Marxists and leftists seemed fond of Feyerabend, even though he criticized the New Left, the “revolutionaries” and the students of the left. As his friend Roy Edgley (1925–1999, one of the leading figures of the New Left) put it, “[i]t’s little wonder that the Left took Feyerabend to their hearts”.<sup>24</sup> Students on the left invited Feyerabend to attend their activities.<sup>25</sup> A journal used Feyerabend’s article to produce “propaganda for dialectical materialism”.<sup>26</sup> Maoists in London published the collected works of Feyerabend, which were then translated

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<sup>20</sup> See BAUM Wilhelm and MÜHLMANN Michael (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, pp. 53 and 69.

<sup>21</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 185.

<sup>22</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 166.

<sup>23</sup> FEYERABEND Paul K., **Problems of Empiricism, Philosophical Papers, Volume 2**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1981, p. 70; FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free Society**, p. 133.

<sup>24</sup> Matteo COLLODEL, “Was Feyerabend a Popperian? Methodological Issues in the History of the Philosophy of Science”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 2016, Vol. 57, p. 28 [27–56], <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2015.08.004>.

<sup>25</sup> See BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, pp. 156–157.

<sup>26</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend...**, p. 44; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 112.

into Italian and published by Leninists in Italy.<sup>27</sup> According to Lakatos, Feyerabend had a great influence on “all the Marxist students” at the London School of Economics. Lakatos wrote in a letter to Feyerabend that “[t]he only good news from the departments is that everybody is learning German to read your recent stuff. I also understand that all the Marxist students in the School now learn German to read Marx and Feyerabend”.<sup>28</sup>

It seems obvious that Feyerabend and his writings were preferred and extolled by some of his Marxist and leftist contemporaries. For example, two Australian Marxist philosophers Jean Curthoys (1947) and Walter Suchting (1931–1997) reviewed Feyerabend’s principal work **Against Method** from a Marxist point of view. They observed that “[n]ot only does **Against Method** appear under the imprint of one of the leading publishers of English-language books of a »left« (mostly Marxist) orientation, but his views have found some reception among Marxists and radicals generally”.<sup>29</sup> However, they criticized Feyerabend on the grounds that he represented “an extreme subjectivism and scepticism” (epistemologically), and “an extreme individualism” (ethico-politically), which were deeply hostile to Marxism.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, the relation of Feyerabend to Marxism appears complex and vague. Indeed, Feyerabend was, generally speaking, a figure who was complicated and difficult to pin down in precise terms. He and his relation to Marxism need to be investigated.

More importantly, the relation of Feyerabend to Marxism surely calls for study, as no scholar has so far conducted systematic and detailed research in this area. It is worth noting, for example, that John Watkins and Matteo Collodel have discussed the relationship between Feyerabend and Popperians,<sup>31</sup> while Gonzalo Munevar regards “the work of Plato, Aristotle, Galileo, Machiavelli and Mill” as fur-

<sup>27</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend...**, p. 99; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 159.

<sup>28</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, pp. 310–311.

<sup>29</sup> Jean CURTHOYS and Walter SUCHTING, “Feyerabend’s Discourse against Method: A Marxist Critique”, *Inquiry* 1977, Vol. 20, No. 1–4, pp. pp. 249–250 [243–379], <https://doi.org/10.1080/00201747708601836>.

<sup>30</sup> See CURTHOYS and SUCHTING, “Feyerabend’s Discourse against Method...”, p. 338 [243–379].

<sup>31</sup> See John WATKINS, “Feyerabend Among Popperians, 1948–1978”, in: John PRESTON, Gonzalo MUNEVAR, and David LAMB (eds.), **The Worst Enemy of Science? Essays in Memory of Paul Feyerabend**, Oxford University Press, New York 2000, pp. 47–57; COLLODEL, “Was Feyerabend a Pop-

nishing “valuable historical antecedents to Feyerabend’s philosophy”<sup>32</sup> and Paul Hoyningen-Huene has discussed and analyzed the relation between Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend in his writings.<sup>33</sup> Eric Oberheim’s research, meanwhile, shows that the development of Feyerabend’s ideas occurred under the influence of Einstein, Wittgenstein, Popper and Ehrenhaft,<sup>34</sup> and Yuanlin GUO and Xin ZHENG have analyzed the influence of Wittgenstein on Feyerabend’s philosophical development.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Ian Kidd has commented on the influence of Søren Kierkegaard and Pseudo-Dionysius on Feyerabend in two articles.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, none of the above-mentioned authors have investigated the relationship between Feyerabend and Marxism, even though they have carried out a considerable amount of research into the relation of Feyerabend to other thinkers. To be sure, Rory Kent has engaged briefly, and at a simple level, with “Feyerabend’s Engagements with Marxism” and “Feyerabend’s »Dialectical Materialism and the Quantum Theory«” — though the subject of his article is actually “philosophical Dadaism”.<sup>37</sup> It is for this reason that the present article aims to deal with the relationship of Feyerabend to Marxism in detail.

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perian?...”, p. 28.

<sup>32</sup> Gonzalo MUNÉVAR, “Historical Antecedents to the Philosophy of Paul Feyerabend”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 2016, Vol. 57, pp. 9–16, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2015.11.002>.

<sup>33</sup> See Paul HOYNINGEN-HUENE (ed.), “Two Letters of Paul Feyerabend to Thomas S. Kuhn on a draft of **The Structure of Scientific Revolutions**”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 1995, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 353–387, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0039-3681\(95\)00005-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0039-3681(95)00005-8); Paul HOYNINGEN-HUENE, “Paul Feyerabend and Thomas Kuhn”, in: PRESTON John, MUNÉVAR Gonzalo, and LAMB David (eds.), **The Worst Enemy of Science? Essays in Memory of Paul Feyerabend**, Oxford University Press, New York — Oxford 2000, pp. 102–114; Paul HOYNINGEN-HUENE, “More Letters by Paul Feyerabend to Thomas S. Kuhn on Proto-Structure”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 2006, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 610–632, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2006.09.007>.

<sup>34</sup> See Eric OBERHEIM, **Feyerabend’s Philosophy**, Walter der Gruyter, Berlin 2006; Eric OBERHEIM, “Rediscovering Einstein’s Legacy: How Einstein Anticipated Kuhn and Feyerabend on the Nature of Science”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 2016, Vol. 57, pp. 17–26, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2015.11.005>.

<sup>35</sup> See Yuanlin GUO and Xin ZHENG, “Wittgenstein’s Influence on Feyerabend”, *Jiangxi Shehuikexue (Jiangxi Social Sciences)* 2016, Vol. 36, No. 10, pp. 25–32.

<sup>36</sup> See Ian KIDD, “Objectivity, Abstraction and the Individual: The Influence of Søren Kierkegaard on Paul Feyerabend”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 2011, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 125–134; Ian KIDD, “Feyerabend, Pseudo-Dionysius, and the Ineffability of Reality”, *Philosophia* 2012, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 365–377, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-011-9322-9>.

The article consists of four sections: Section One (“Introduction”); Section Two (“Marxists in Feyerabend’s Writings and Pertinent Comments”), centered on how (or why) Feyerabend referred to or construed Marxists and leftists as he did; Section Three (“Feyerabend on Dadaism and Dialectical Materialism”), centered around his discussions of Dadaism, communism, anarchism, liberalism, dialectical materialism, eliminative materialism and reductive materialism; and, finally, Section Four, (“Conclusion”), in which it is concluded that Feyerabend was a Dadaist in philosophy, and that as a Dadaistic philosopher he might be considered a Marxist, a non-Marxist, or an anti-Marxist.

## 2. Marxists in Feyerabend’s Writings and Pertinent Comments

This section deals with how Marxists figure in Feyerabend’s writings. According to the Communist Party of China (CPC), they can be divided into two different categories: the first one is classical or orthodox Marxists, to which Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and Fidel Castro belong; the second one is other (non-classical) Marxists and leftists, among which are Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky, Bertolt Brecht, Hanns Eisler, Walter Hollitscher, Georg Lukacs, Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Joseph Needham, Jean-Paul Sartre, Walter Benjamin, Louis Althusser, Daniel Cohn-Benit and Robin Blackburn. These two categories of Marxists will therefore be discussed in turn in what follows.

### 2.1 Classical Marxists

In a letter to Feyerabend, Hans Albert, one of his friends, after having read many Marxist works, praised Marx’s **Capital** as “one of the best economic and historical books” and “the crown of classical economics”.<sup>38</sup> Correspondingly, in his

<sup>37</sup> RORY KENT, “Paul Feyerabend and the Dialectical Character of Quantum Mechanics: A Lesson in Philosophical Dadaism”, *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 2022, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 51–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02698595.2022.2075687>.

<sup>38</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 269.



letter to Albert, Feyerabend replied that he had great respect for Marx's early writings, such as the **Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy**, **The Holy Family**, **The German Ideology**, and **Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law**, although in 1971 he himself had not read **Capital**. Nonetheless, he thought that he ought to read **Capital** afterwards, and planned to consult Albert about it.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, Feyerabend pointed out that "Marx's comments on Hegel's **Philosophy of Law**" was an "ancestor" of his own view.<sup>40</sup> When it came to the problem of "alienation", he referred to Marx's "National Economy and Philosophy", his **Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law**, and the **German-French Yearbooks**.<sup>41</sup> As regards the "unevenness" of historical development, he cited both **The Poverty of Philosophy** and **Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy** by Marx, writing that "[a]ccording to Marx, »secondary« parts of the social process, such as demand, artistic production or legal relations, may get ahead of material production and drag it along".<sup>42</sup> In particular, he quotes the following passage from the **Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy**:

The unequal relation between the development of material production and art, for instance. In general, the conception of progress is not to be taken in the sense of the usual abstraction. In the case of art, etc., it is not so important and difficult to understand this disproportion as in that of practical social relations, e.g. the relation between education in the U.S. and Europe. The really difficult point, however, that is to be discussed here is that of the unequal development of relations of production as legal relations.<sup>43</sup>

In general, Feyerabend referenced, quoted and discussed Marx in affirmative terms. That is to say, he was intellectually sympathetic to the latter. It was, according to Lakatos, precisely because Feyerabend admired Marx so enormously that Lakatos himself wrote in his letter to him: "Just imagine a statue of me to the right

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<sup>39</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend...**, p. 227; Wilhelm BAUM (ed.), Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert: Briefwechsel Band 1 (1958–1971), Kitab, Vienna 2008, p. 271.

<sup>40</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free...**, p. 163.

<sup>41</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**, p. 160.

<sup>42</sup> Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge**, Verso, London 1979, p. 146. For a similar citation, see also: Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Knowledge, Science and Relativism, Philosophical Papers, Volume 3**, John PRESTON (ed.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999, p. 168.

<sup>43</sup> FEYERABEND, **Against Method**, pp. 146–147.

of Marx and a statue of you to his left in Highgate Cemetery”.<sup>44</sup> However, while praising Marx, Feyerabend criticized the followers of Marx of his own time in the following terms: “His followers of today are uneducated barbarians [...] As far as style is concerned, although somewhat unrefined, Papa Marx almost surpasses all of them. Marx’s style is substantial, rich in content, interesting, not an insipid sauce...”.<sup>45</sup> In a word, Feyerabend frequently extolled Marx while criticizing the Marxists and leftists that were his own actual contemporaries.

Feyerabend offered high praise to Engels. In a letter to Lakatos, he professed to be “the Engels of the twentieth century”. “In 2300”, he wrote, “when Popper will be known as the Kant, you as the Hegel and I as the Engels of the twentieth century, one will have to go to the darkest corners of libraries to find out about Cohen, Hesse, etc. etc.”.<sup>46</sup> Arguing in support of dialectics, Feyerabend quoted four passages from the **Anti-Düring** by Engels. With these quotations, Feyerabend sought to express the following key ideas: Negation, accordingly, “does not mean simply saying No, or declaring a thing to be non-existent, or destroying it in any way one may choose”. The “negation of the negation” is “extremely universal and just on that account extremely far-reaching and important law of development in nature, history and thought. [...] Dialectics, however, is nothing else than the science of the general laws of motion and development in nature, human society and thought”.<sup>47</sup>

Feyerabend clearly attached great importance to dialectical materialism and dialectics — the philosophy of Marx and Engels, including the notions of contradiction, “negation” and “the negation of the negation”. Marx and Engels and their followers, as friends of science, believed in science, were for science, and based their theory and practice on science. As Feyerabend put it, “Marx and Engels were convinced that science would aid the workers in their quest for mental and social liberation”.<sup>48</sup> Nonetheless, Feyerabend, as “the worst enemy of science,” was against modern science. Thus, contemporary Marxists and leftists seemed dissat-

<sup>44</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 259.

<sup>45</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend...**, p. 227; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 271.

<sup>46</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 231.

<sup>47</sup> FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**, pp. 77–78.

<sup>48</sup> FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free...**, p. 75; FEYERABEND, **Thesen zum Anarchismus...**, p. 115; FEYERABEND, **Knowledge, Science and Relativism**, p. 181.

isified with Feyerabend. In this connection, Feyerabend wrote, “Marxists have been especially incensed at my mocking disregard for their two favorite play-things, Western science and humanitarianism”.<sup>49</sup> It is obvious that Feyerabend’s attitude to modern science ran contrary to that of Marx and Engels, even though he thought highly of them.

Feyerabend read a great deal of Lenin’s writings, such as **Imperialism, Materialism and Empirico-criticism**, and **Notes on Philosophy**, and bought his **Collected Works** (45 volumes in all).<sup>50</sup> What is more, he read Lenin’s letter (in his **Collected Works**) to his friend Inessa Armand (1874–1920), a female revolutionary, in class.<sup>51</sup> He praised Lenin as “a clever man” in his letter to Albert<sup>52</sup> and repeatedly quoted the following sentence from Lenin’s “»Left-Wing« Communism, An Infantile Disorder”: “History as a whole, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties, the most conscious vanguards of the most advanced class”.<sup>53</sup> Quoting this sentence, he aimed to transform Lenin’s viewpoint on parties and revolutionary vanguards into that of himself on scientists and methodologists. Feyerabend also cited “**Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder** and “Backward Europe and Advanced Asia”, in order to address issues of “uneven historical development” and “liberty”.<sup>54</sup>

In his article “Two Models of Epistemic Change” Feyerabend referenced and quoted Lenin, Mao and Hegel many times while discussing dialectical epistemology. The theme of this epistemology is presented in the following passage, this being a clear reference to Lenin’s **Notes on Philosophy**:

Knowledge is the eternal infinite approach of thought and object. The mirroring of nature in human thought is not “dead”, it is not “abstract”, it is not without motion, not

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<sup>49</sup> Paul K. FEYERABEND., **Farewell to Reason**, Verso, London 1988, p. 305.

<sup>50</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 242.

<sup>51</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 268.

<sup>52</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 172.

<sup>53</sup> FEYERABEND, **Against Method...**, p. 17; FEYERABEND, **Knowledge, Science and Relativism**, p. 179; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 199.

<sup>54</sup> FEYERABEND, **Against Method...**, p. 147; FEYERABEND, **Knowledge, Science and Relativism**, p. 68; FEYERABEND, **Philosophical Papers...**, p. 168.

without its contradictions, but is to be conceived as an eternally moving process that gives rise to contradictions and removes them.<sup>55</sup>

The above-quoted passage is at the core of dialectical epistemology. Feyerabend glorified Lenin, especially in the fields of science and philosophy, asserting as he did that “[t]here are not many writers in the field today who are as well acquainted with contemporary science as was Lenin with the science of his time, and no one can match the philosophical intuition of that astounding author”.<sup>56</sup> Thus, when it came to classifying various philosophers of science, Feyerabend thought that Lenin, Lakatos and he himself belonged to the same class.<sup>57</sup> Lenin had strongly attacked Ernst Mach (1838–1916) in **Materialism and Empiricocriticism**. In this connection, it is a nice irony that Feyerabend praised Mach highly, despite citing that book.<sup>58</sup>

Feyerabend dreamed about Stalin, though they never met. In his autobiography **Killing Time**, he wrote: “Years later I dreamt that I met Bohr again, that he recognized me and consulted me on important matters [...] On the other hand, I also dreamt that I advised Stalin, but I never met him”.<sup>59</sup> Clearly, he was an admirer of Stalin. He read Stalin’s little pamphlet on dialectical and historical materialism<sup>60</sup> and wrote: “Today Stalin’s rules seem to me preferable by far to the complicated and epicycle-ridden standards of our modern friends of reason”.<sup>61</sup> In other words, he much preferred Stalin’s rules to the standards of critical rationalism — wondering, as he put it, “if (I), when back, still shall turn Marxist, and chop

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<sup>55</sup> FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**, p. 79. Quoting the sentence from **Philosophical Notebooks** where Lenin writes that “[i]t is the crude, metaphysical, simplistic materialist who regards philosophical idealism as being merely nonsense,” Feyerabend emphasized that the latter recognized “that idealism can have a positive function at certain periods of the history of our thought” (Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Physics and Philosophy, Philosophical Papers, Volume 4**, Stefano GATTEI and Joseph AGASSI (eds.), Cambridge University Press, New York 2016, pp. 222–223).

<sup>56</sup> FEYERABEND, **Physics and Philosophy...**, p. 219.

<sup>57</sup> See LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 216.

<sup>58</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Physics and Philosophy...**, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Killing Time: The Autobiography of Paul Feyerabend**, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1995, p. 78.

<sup>60</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free...**, p. 112.

<sup>61</sup> FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free...**, p. 113. For a similar idea, also see AUGUSTIN (ed.), **Aber ein Paul hilft doch dem anderen...**, p. 92.

all Popperian heads off from a Stalinist point of view”.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, he outlined “epistemological Stalinism” in rough terms as follows:

Another school, called epistemological Stalinism by Lakatos (in some of his talks, not in any one of his publications) assumes that the evaluation of theories depends on the judgment of some Great Man or of some Great Group: good theories are those theories which great scientists, or groups of great scientists say are good.<sup>63</sup>

According to Feyerabend, “epistemological Stalinism” is the same as or similar to political Stalinism: the evaluation of everything depends on the judgment of a great leader or group of great leaders. This means that “epistemological Stalinism” can be regarded as “epistemological totalitarianism”, and shows that Feyerabend praised Stalin and Stalinism even though he did not accept dialectics and historical materialism.

Feyerabend adored Mao, and took a keen interest in Maoism and communist China. He had read a number of Mao’s writings. He also read Edgar Snow’s (1905–1972) **Red Star Over China**, and praised it as “a marvelously interesting book”.<sup>64</sup> He wrote in a letter to his friend Albert: “Thus, I am a thousand times fonder of Mao than Popper, too”.<sup>65</sup> He cited, quoted and discussed Mao and Maoism in **Against Method**,<sup>66</sup> **Problems of Empiricism (Philosophical Papers, volume 2)**,<sup>67</sup> **Science in a Free Society**,<sup>68</sup> **Three Dialogues on Knowledge**,<sup>69</sup> **Paul Feyerabend — Hans Albert Briefweichsel**,<sup>70</sup> and **For and Against Method**.<sup>71</sup> His

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<sup>62</sup> BAUM Wilhelm and MÜHLMANN Michael (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 17.

<sup>63</sup> Paul K. FEYERABEND, “Imre Lakatos”, *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 1975, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 16 [1–18].

<sup>64</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 277.

<sup>65</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend...**, p. 100; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 160.

<sup>66</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Against Method...**

<sup>67</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**

<sup>68</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free...**

<sup>69</sup> See Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Three Dialogues on Knowledge**, Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford 1991.

<sup>70</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend...**; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**; BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend...**

<sup>71</sup> See LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...** For more details, see: FEYERABEND, **Against Method...**, p. 147; FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**, pp. 67–68; FEYERABEND, **Science in**

citations and quotations were from Mao's articles "Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing", "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People", "On Practice", and "On Contradiction". Generally speaking, Feyerabend was enlightened by Mao and Maoism in respect of two of his viewpoints: firstly, that pertaining to "state interference with science", in which he invoked the revival of traditional medicine in Mao's China as an example, and secondly, his thought that "citizens can and must supervise the expert and science", for which he took inspiration from Mao's writings.

In particular, he quoted the following passages from "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People" in order to demonstrate that Mao was similar to the liberal thinker Mill:

"Ideological struggle" [...] "is not like other forms of struggle. The only method to be used in this struggle is that of painstaking reasoning and not crude coercion". [...] "It is therefore necessary to be careful about questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences, to encourage free discussion and avoid hasty conclusions". [...] "People may ask, since Marxism is accepted as the guiding ideology by the majority of the people in our country, can it be criticized? Certainly it can. [...] Marxists should not be afraid of criticism from any quarter. [...] What should our policy be towards non-Marxist ideas? [...] Will it do to ban such ideas and deny them any opportunity for expression? Certainly not. [...] Therefore, it is only by employing the method of discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas and overcome wrong ones, and that we can really settle issues". [...] The similarity to Mill, whom Mao read in his youth, is remarkable.<sup>72</sup>

However, it is also evident that he misunderstood Mao and Maoism. Mao wrote an article entitled "Combat Liberalism" in which he strongly opposed liberalism.<sup>73</sup> In his text "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship: In Commemoration of the Twenty-Eighth Anniversary of the Communist Party" he announced that

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a **Free Society**, pp. 128 and 161–162; FEYERABEND, **Three Dialogues on Knowledge...**, p. 88; LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, pp. 210, 218–219 and 330; BAUM, **Paul Feyerabend...**, pp. 100–101, 104, 108 and 120; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, pp. 160–161, 167, 250 and 201.

<sup>72</sup> FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**, pp. 67–68; MAO Zedong, **Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Volume V**, Foreign Language Press, Peking 1977, pp. 384–421)

<sup>73</sup> See Zedong MAO, **Selected Works of Mao Tsetung, Volume II**, Foreign Language Press, Peking 1975, pp. 31–33.

“we are dictatorial”.<sup>74</sup> Of course, if we take into consideration the Anti-Rightist Struggle (1957), the Great Leap (the Great Famine, 1958–1961) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), then it has to be said that Mao’s deeds were very different from his words. As a result, Feyerabend was mistaken about Mao and Maoism.

Finally, Feyerabend also praised Fidel Castro. For his lecture in Yale, he bought a set of clothes (a US-army-jacket and a pair of stormtrooper trousers) of the kind worn by all anarchists — like Castro — at that time.<sup>75</sup> In addition, he watched a detailed report about Castro on TV,<sup>76</sup> and never criticized or sought to blame the latter.

## 2.2 Other Marxists and Leftists

Feyerabend quoted the following sentence from Trotsky’s **The Revolution Betrayed**: “A political struggle is in its essence a struggle of interests and of forces, *not of arguments*”.<sup>77</sup> In this respect, he fully endorsed that thinker, endorsing the slogan “Back to Marx!” and seeking to further extend “the struggle of interests and of forces” to astronomy, while implying that there were not only arguments, but also a struggle of interests and forces, at work in science. Moreover, he addressed the “unevenness” of historical development with the following quotation from Trotsky’s “The School of Revolutionary Strategy” speech: “The gist of the matter lies in this, that the different aspects of the historical process — economics, politics, the state, the growth of the working class — do not develop simultaneously along parallel lines”.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, he adduced both Bernstein and Luxemburg (“Luxemburg’s reply to Bernstein’s criticism of Marx or Trotsky’s ac-

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<sup>74</sup> See Zedong MAO, **Selected Works of Mao Tsetung, Volume IV**, Foreign Language Press, Peking 1975, p. 417.

<sup>75</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 188.

<sup>76</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Briefe an einen Freund**, p. 118.

<sup>77</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 151 [italics in the original].

<sup>78</sup> FEYERABEND, **Against Method...**, p. 147; FEYERABEND, **Knowledge, Science and Relativism**, p. 168; FEYERABEND, **Physics and Philosophy...**, p. 245.

count of why the Russian Revolution took place in a backward country...”), as well as Benjamin, in his written works.<sup>79</sup>

It is also worth noting that in the course of his writings Feyerabend referred to a rat in his house as “Kautsky”:<sup>80</sup> “Remembering that Lenin had called Kautsky (the Austrian socialist) a rat, Robin called my rat Kautsky”.<sup>81</sup> Given that Kautsky had opposed Lenin, the Bolshevik putsch in Russia of October 1917, and revolutionary violence more generally, it is fair to conclude that Feyerabend was employing the nickname “Kautsky” for the “rat” as a way of singing Lenin’s praises and showing disrespect for Kautsky.

Feyerabend regarded Brecht, who was a Marxist and an important artist, as “his hero”. The following quotation from the latter is placed on page one of **Against Method**: “Ordnung ist heutzutage meistens dort, wo nichts ist. Es ist eine Mangelercheinung”.<sup>82</sup> According to Feyerabend himself, he came to know Brecht through Hollitscher. Concerning his relation to Brecht, he wrote in his autobiography **Killing Time** as follows:

We met Brecht at a rehearsal of **Die Mutter** with Helene Weigel in the title role. [...] Brecht, Walter told me, was prepared to take me on as an assistant (in Berlin). I said no and stayed in Vienna. I once thought (and said so in print) that this was the biggest mistake of my life. Today I am not so sure. I would have liked to learn more about the theatre, and from such an extraordinary man. I would also have liked to get some training in forms of communication different from the scientific essay. But I suspect I would have detested the collective pressure of the partly fearful, partly dedicated, and certainly pushy and closely knit group that surrounded Brecht.<sup>83</sup>

There can be no doubt that Brecht exercised a great influence on Feyerabend. As he put it, “I have become very interested in problems of aesthetics, theoretical and applied. At some time I would like to publish something in this fascinating

<sup>79</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**, p. 207; FEYERABEND, **Briefe an einen Freund**, p. 184; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 262.

<sup>80</sup> See LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 201; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 246.

<sup>81</sup> FEYERABEND, **Killing Time...**, p. 113.

<sup>82</sup> FEYERABEND, **Against Method...**, p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> FEYERABEND, **Killing Time...**, p. 73. For “one of the biggest mistakes of his life,” see FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free Society**, p. 114. For “the tensions inside the Brecht Circle,” see also Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Against Method**, with an introduction by Ian HACKING, Verso, London 2010, p. 273.



field. I have been very much impressed by the ideas of Bertolt Brecht. Certainly, he is a Marxist”.<sup>84</sup> Under the influence of latter, and especially of his **Über Lyrik**, he introduced methods from Brecht’s theatre into his own theory of knowledge, stating that “[i]n my lectures on the theory of knowledge I usually present and discuss the thesis that finding a new theory for given facts is like finding a new production for a well-known play”.<sup>85</sup> He published a review of Brecht’s **Life of Galileo**, “Let’s Make More Movies”, in which he concluded that “there are better ways of dealing with philosophical problems than verbal exchange, written discourse, and, a fortiori, scholarly research”.<sup>86</sup> That is to say, one should employ the entire spectrum of theories, books, images, emotions, sounds, institutions, etc., to address philosophical problems. In Feyerabend’s view, Brecht’s theatre was an attempt to do just that, although he did not completely succeed. Consequently, Feyerabend suggested that “we try movies instead”.<sup>87</sup> Besides, he quoted a passage from Brecht’s **Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst** in his letter to Lakatos,<sup>88</sup> and also mentioned Brecht in other places.<sup>89</sup> More particularly, he actually presented lectures on Brecht.<sup>90</sup>

Hollitscher was a Marxist, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Austria, a philosopher, a publicist, and a psychoanalyst. He was one of Feyerabend’s closest friends. In this connection, Feyerabend wrote in his letter to an editor a few months before his death that “Walter Hollitscher was one of my best friends from 1950 till his death, and we have discussed basic philosophical problems year in year out”.<sup>91</sup> Of course, their discussions were centered around dialectical and historical materialism. As Feyerabend put it,

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<sup>84</sup> Matteo COLLODEL and Eric OBERHEIM (eds.), **Feyerabend’s Formative Years (Vol. 1. Feyerabend and Popper, Correspondence and Unpublished Papers)**, Springer Nature Switzerland AG, Cham 2020, p. 368.

<sup>85</sup> FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**, p. 161.

<sup>86</sup> FEYERABEND, **Knowledge, Science and Relativism**, p. 195.

<sup>87</sup> FEYERABEND, **Knowledge, Science and Relativism**, p. 199.

<sup>88</sup> See LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 212.

<sup>89</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, pp. 258 and 271–272; LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 233.

<sup>90</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 160.

<sup>91</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 19.

From the very beginning of our discussion, Hollitscher made it clear that he was a communist, and that he would try to convince me of the intellectual and social advantages of dialectical and historical materialism. [...] Nor did Hollitscher use unfair emotional or intellectual pressures. Of course, he criticized my attitude and he still does, but our personal relations have not suffered from my reluctance to follow him in every respect. This is why Walter Hollitscher is a teacher while Popper whom I also came to know quite well is a mere propagandist.<sup>92</sup>

In the above quotation, we can see that Feyerabend valued Hollitscher very highly as a teacher, but decried Popper as a mere propagandist. Nevertheless, in fact Popper had been his teacher, not Hollitscher. This shows that Hollitscher exerted an important and positive influence on Feyerabend. For example, his conversion from positivism to realism was partly attributed to “discussions he had with Hollitscher about philosophy and scientific practice”.<sup>93</sup> Hollitscher retained a firm belief in Marxism and communism, while committed liberals thought that he “was beyond the pale: an intellectual who had become a slave of totalitarianism”.<sup>94</sup> For Feyerabend, however, he remained a wonderful, gentle, humane friend.

Through Hollitscher, Feyerabend came to know Hanns Eisler. He said of the latter that he “accompanied me singing Schumann and some of his marching songs...”.<sup>95</sup> Eisler was a German-Austrian-American composer, music theoretician, and lyricist, and also a co-worker of Brecht. As a communist, he was expelled from America in 1948. Feyerabend mentions him in other places, too.<sup>96</sup>

Feyerabend read **Die Zerstörung der Vernunft** by Georg Lukacs during the period when he was engaged in translating Popper’s **The Open Society and Its Enemies** from English into German. He talks about the book in his letter to Popper in the following terms:

I happened to get hold of a very interesting and highly challenging book [...] namely, **Die Zerstörung der Vernunft** by Georg Lukacs, the Marxist. Perhaps you have al-

<sup>92</sup> FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free...**, p. 114.

<sup>93</sup> KENT, “Paul Feyerabend and the Dialectical Character of Quantum Mechanics...”, p. 53 [51–57]. For Feyerabend’s account, see FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free Society**, pp. 113–114.

<sup>94</sup> FEYERABEND, **Killing Time...**, p. 73.

<sup>95</sup> FEYERABEND, **Killing Time...**, p. 73.

<sup>96</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free...**, p. 112; FEYERABEND, **Killing Time...**, p. 60.

ready seen it (subtitle: **Der Weg des Irrationalismus von Schelling zu Hitler**). There are some (or even many) similarities to some of your ideas in the **Open Society** [...] I think it would be a very good thing if some footnote containing your ideas about this book would be added somewhere in this translation.<sup>97</sup>

For Feyerabend, Lukacs' work was so interesting and challenging that he was driven to suggest that Popper add some footnotes about it to the translation of **The Open Society and Its Enemies**. It is thus obvious that Feyerabend valued **Die Zerstörung der Vernunft**, a work by someone who was one of the founders of Western Marxism.<sup>98</sup> In addition, Feyerabend cited Lukacs' **Der Junge Hegel**.<sup>99</sup>

Feyerabend also admired the Western Marxist Ernst Bloch, writing that "I admire Ernst Bloch because he speaks with the tongue of the common people and enhances the colorful accounts they and their poets have given of life".<sup>100</sup> Feyerabend respected Bloch because he was "a philosopher of the common people". For this reason, he experienced real grief over Bloch's death. As he put it, "Bloch's death made me very grievous. I have much liked him and his philosophy. He is a lot better than Althusser, the insipid joke".<sup>101</sup> Here he praises Bloch while taking a critical stand against Althusser. Nonetheless, he blamed Bloch for having "sucked the blood of the youth".<sup>102</sup>

Marcuse was an important Western Marxist. His theory seemed so similar to Maoism that, in a kind of fusion with Mao, he was referred to as "Mao-ku-sung or Maokuse" by Albert.<sup>103</sup> Feyerabend found Marcuse's **Vernunft und Revolution** to be the only good book among Marcuse's works, and an excellent introduction to Hegel's writings at a time when he was studying more and more of the latter's philosophy.<sup>104</sup> At one point he was preparing to write a chapter on "anti-Marcuse" (or the poverty of Marcuse, entitled "The Testament of Dr. Marcuse") in his book

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<sup>97</sup> COLLODEL and OBERHEIM (eds.), **Feyerabend's Formative Years...**, p. 175.

<sup>98</sup> See For another citation, see FEYERABEND, **Physics and Philosophy...**, p. 219.

<sup>99</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 129.

<sup>100</sup> FEYERABEND, **Three Dialogues on Knowledge...**, p. 122.

<sup>101</sup> BAUM Wilhelm and MÜHLMANN Michael (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 172.

<sup>102</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 130.

<sup>103</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 110.

<sup>104</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 156.

**Against Method.**<sup>105</sup> Even so, it can seem from that same book that Feyerabend valued Marcuse. His friend Agassi commented on Feyerabend that “[h]e sounds super-revolutionary, in politics as well as in methodology; he also practically equates the two and makes Lenin the greatest methodologist of them all (p. 17n and elsewhere). He means Herbert Marcuse, but he says Lenin”.<sup>106</sup> That is to say, Agassi thought that Feyerabend attached the same importance to Marcuse and Lenin.

In fact, though, there is no such chapter in **Against Method**, where instead we only find Feyerabend quoting a sentence from Marcuse’s **Reason and Revolution**.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, Feyerabend frequently criticized Marcuse.<sup>108</sup> He said: “For me, the New Left is simply too stupid, and Marcuse is an old obscurant”.<sup>109</sup> In particular, he offered a serious criticism of the following statement from Marcuse’s “Repressive Tolerance”: “Marcuse’s case is quite interesting. [...] One wonders why he prefers to use an imaginary power which he does not yet possess but which he (or his wife) would certainly like to have, for suppressing opponents rather than for education and a more balanced discussion of views”.<sup>110</sup> So, Feyerabend was definitely not willing to stand by Marcuse. As he put it,

In a pamphlet with the title “*Stalinismus und Anarchismus in der Spanischen Revolution*”, I am referred to as “*der Amerikanische Oberdada Paul Feyerabend*,” and there is a long discussion of “*das negative Element in Feyerabend und Marcuse*”. If things continue like that I shall be Marcuse’s successor with the New Left of 1980 — not an attractive prospect.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> See LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, pp. 183–185; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, pp. 227–228.

<sup>106</sup> AGASSI, “Review Essay of **Against Method...**”, p. 166 [165–191].

<sup>107</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Against Method...**, p. 27.

<sup>108</sup> See, e.g., BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 278.

<sup>109</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 247.

<sup>110</sup> FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**, p. 68. Similarly, Mao said: “suppress them (the enemy), allow them only to behave themselves and not to be unruly in word or deed. If they speak or act in an unruly way, they will be promptly stopped and punished. Democracy is practiced within the ranks of the people” (MAO, **Selected Works of Mao Tsetung...**, p. 418). So quite to the contrary, Feyerabend praised Mao as a liberal similar to Mill.

<sup>111</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 336 [italics and quotation marks in the original].

To a degree, Feyerabend opposed Marcuse. He was not happy to “be Marcuse’s successor with the New Left of 1980”. For him, the “prospect” did not seem attractive. He wanted to argue against Marcuse rather than on his behalf.

Feyerabend believed that Adorno had no sense of humor.<sup>112</sup> What is more, he made the following comment about the latter:

Adorno — I have read him. In my opinion, his writings are bad. They are German? Where do the sentences begin? And where do they end? He should sing them in an opera if he has a voice. They are very melodic, but there is little content in them (as in all opera texts). The man is probably smart, and some of his comments are very good, just not so good, that it is worth any trouble, to select them from the pile of nonsense (pardon!).<sup>113</sup>

In general, Feyerabend offered criticisms rather than praise where Adorno was concerned. For instance, in his letter to Albert, one of his friends, he told him that “Adorno was interrupted in his lecture by a bare-breasted female student”.<sup>114</sup> This shows that he did not respect Adorno. Similarly, Albert strongly criticized Adorno, and thought that his writings were extremely unclear, unnatural and affected.<sup>115</sup>

In 1982 Feyerabend was invited to a dinner with Habermas,<sup>116</sup> even though he was unwilling either to meet him or attend his lecture.<sup>117</sup> He showed disrespect for the latter, referring to him as “livestock”, “that seemingly schizophrenic German philosopher”, and “Habermasochismus”.<sup>118</sup> As he put it, “I do not like Habermas. I can read nothing of his writings. His style doesn’t suit me”.<sup>119</sup> He even

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<sup>112</sup> See BAUM (ed.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 40.

<sup>113</sup> BAUM (ed.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 37.

<sup>114</sup> BAUM (ed.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 176.

<sup>115</sup> See BAUM (ed.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 38.

<sup>116</sup> See FEYERABEND, *Briefe an einen Freund...*, p. 212.

<sup>117</sup> See FEYERABEND, *Briefe an einen Freund...*, pp. 85 and 205; BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 251.

<sup>118</sup> See FEYERABEND, *Briefe an einen Freund...*, p. 205; BAUM (ed.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 136; BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 27.

<sup>119</sup> BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 27.

asserted that “neither Popper nor Habermas could write in German”.<sup>120</sup> To some extent, his criticisms of Habermas were relevant to his friends Hans Albert and Hans Duerr (1942–). For instance, Duerr dubbed Habermas “an armchair-fart”,<sup>121</sup> while Albert considered the Frankfurt School “paranoid”.<sup>122</sup> In his letter to Albert, Feyerabend wrote the following satirical poem, mocking Habermas:

Heintel and Gabriel  
 Who feel very weak  
 They shout at Habermas  
 And plead “help us!”  
 Habermas with his last ounce of strength  
 Groans only “I am beaten  
 I have Albert in my neck  
 And Spinnerich in my stomach”.<sup>123</sup>

In the above quotation, it is notable that Feyerabend is criticizing Habermas through satire. Nonetheless, he did occasionally put in a good word for him. In his letters to his friends, he emphasized that Habermas was not “stupid”<sup>124</sup> and, where **Against Method** was concerned, would “even invite Habermas to write the introduction to the Suhrkamp edition”.<sup>125</sup> He also read Habermas’ **Erkenntnis und Interesse** and remarked that it was “not bad”.<sup>126</sup> Besides, in Berlin Feyerabend and Hübner held a Popper seminar, which Habermas regularly showed up at.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>120</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 247.

<sup>121</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Briefe an einen Freund...**, p. 207.

<sup>122</sup> See BAUM Wilhelm and MÜHLMANN Michael (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 46.

<sup>123</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 64.

<sup>124</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, pp. 114 and 149.

<sup>125</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 257.

<sup>126</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 149.

<sup>127</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 149.

Feyerabend held that Althusser, among “progressive” leftists, was one of the best followers of Marx of his time. He mentioned or cited him, and his work **For Marx**, in his books.<sup>128</sup> Generally speaking, though, he criticized rather than praised Althusser. As he put it, “Althusser, one of the best contemporary followers of Marx, whom I have read a little, produces more intellectual gossip, but represents the high point in the general literary misery today”.<sup>129</sup> The two Australian Marxist philosophers Curthoys and Suchting, reviewing the **Against Method** from a Marxist point of view, were Althusser’s students. For them, the Marxist point of view in fact stemmed from Althusser. In their words: “Our argument will be undertaken from the perspective of a Marxist theory of knowledge, one which stems in fact from the same Louis Althusser whom Feyerabend has described as intellectually medieval”.<sup>130</sup> In the quoted passage they make it clear that they think Feyerabend had criticized Althusser as “intellectually medieval”. Accordingly, they put forward a number of severe counter-criticisms of Feyerabend’s critical points. On the other hand, Althusser himself was dissatisfied with their criticisms of Feyerabend’s **Against Method**, telling Suchting “Was it necessary, to disgrace me so?”.<sup>131</sup>

Needham was a British biochemist and sinologist affiliated with the left, and more particularly, a historian of science and technology as these pertained to traditional China. Feyerabend mentioned, referenced or quoted him in his writings.<sup>132</sup> His knowledge of Chinese science and technology was acquired mainly through reading Needham’s works, such as **Science and Civilization in China, Science in Traditional China, and Celestial Lances**. As he put it, “I don’t know Chinese. I haven’t seen the relevant evidence. I only read a few books, some volumes of Needham’s monstrous work on Chinese science included, and this is what they say”.<sup>133</sup> It could be that he derived the following ideas from Needham:

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<sup>128</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Against Method...**, p. 147; FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free Society**, pp. 166–167.

<sup>129</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 271.

<sup>130</sup> CURTHOYS and SUCHTING, “Feyerabend’s Discourse against Method...”, p. 266.

<sup>131</sup> BAUM Wilhelm and MÜHLMANN Michael (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 186.

<sup>132</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Farewell to Reason...**, pp. 24, 38 and 88; Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Conquest of Abundance: A Tale of Abstraction versus The Richness of Being**, Bert Terpstra (ed.), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1999, p. 131; Paul K. FEYERABEND, **The Tyranny of Science**, edited, and with an introduction, by Eric Oberheim, Polity Press, Cambridge 2011, p. 76.

<sup>133</sup> FEYERABEND, **The Tyranny of Science...**, p. 76.

... [I]ndeed, Chinese technology, medicine included, was for a long time far ahead of the West. [...] When the “scientific revolutions” of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries started in the West, Western technology was rather primitive compared with Chinese technology.<sup>134</sup>

Although such notions were and still are highly debatable, Feyerabend criticized modern science and Western civilization on the basis of them, praising traditional China and its science, medicine and technology.

Sartre had a very firm belief in communism. In 1952 he remarked, crudely, that “any anti-communist is a dog!”.<sup>135</sup> Feyerabend read his autobiography (*Le mots*) and liked it.<sup>136</sup>

Cohn-Bendit was the leader of the French student revolt of May 1968. It is very clear that the title of his book **Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative**, bears a resemblance to that of Lenin’s “**Left-Wing**” **Communism, an Infantile Disorder**. Cohn-Bendit had such a significant impact on Feyerabend that the latter studied the book in depth and began his lecture on the philosophy of science at Yale by reading aloud a page from the book.<sup>137</sup> Feyerabend vividly described his impact as follows:

I have finished Cohn-Bendit, and am *wholly* on his side. He is against theories; so am I. He is against organizations; so am I. He is against “leaders”, be they professors who “know”, or generals who command; so am I. He is *for joy* and *against* sacrifice; so am I: “The real meaning in revolution is not a change in management, but a change in man. This change we must make in our own lifetime and not for our children’s sake, for the revolution must be born of joy and not of sacrifice”.<sup>138</sup>

Hence, as Agassi claimed, “He (Feyerabend) has predecessors [...] in politics (i.e. Danny the Red)...”.<sup>139</sup> Feyerabend used many viewpoints of Cohn-Bendit in

<sup>134</sup> FEYERABEND, *The Tyranny of Science...*, p. 76.

<sup>135</sup> Stéphane COURTOIS, Nicholas WERTH, Jean-Luis PANNE, Andrzej PACZKOWSKI, Karel BARTOŠEK, and Jean-Luis MARGOLIN, *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*, Mark Kramer (ed.), trans. Jonathan Murphy and Mark Kramer, Harvard University Press, Cambridge — London 1999, p. 750.

<sup>136</sup> See BAUM Wilhelm and MÜHLMANN Michael (eds.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 186.

<sup>137</sup> See BAUM (ed.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, pp. 149 and 190.

<sup>138</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, *For and Against Method...*, p. 152 [italics in the original].

<sup>139</sup> AGASSI, “Review Essay of *Against Method...*”, p. 166 [165–191].



his writings: for instance, the link between theory and politics, the emphasis on action within a libertarian framework, the demand for flexibility and a democratic basis for all institutions, the opposition to specialists and specialization, and the struggle against any kind of hierarchy and bureaucracy, including that in educational institutions, schools and universities.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, he claimed to combine the ideas of Mill and Cohn-Bendit: “It seems to me that the best starting point in our attempt to remove the still existing fetters to thought and action is a combination of Mill’s general ideas and of a practical anarchism such as that of Cohn-Bendit”.<sup>141</sup> Here, he considered Cohn-Bendit to be an anarchist. Nevertheless, elsewhere he held that Cohn-Bendit was a Dadaist, not an anarchist — insofar as Dadaism was better than anarchism.<sup>142</sup> In short, Feyerabend was against law and order, not only in society, but also in the philosophy of science. He concluded that “I will do for the philosophy of science what Cohn-Bendit (a good example) will do for society”.<sup>143</sup>

Blackburn, as a leftist, sided with the students during the protests of 1968 and 1969, was expelled from the London School of Economics in 1969, and visited China in 1972. Feyerabend published his **Against Method** and **Science in a Free Society** with New Left Books (now Verso) while Blackburn was editor of the *New Left Review* and director of New Left Books itself. Feyerabend “preferred the New Left Books, but did not like the idea of having anything published with an academic publisher”.<sup>144</sup> In his opinion, “the New Left Books, whatever else the disadvantages may be, are a nice group”, and “they (Robin and Branka) seem to be nice people”.<sup>145</sup> However, Feyerabend was angered that the New Left Books had changed the manuscript of **Against Method**. He wrote in his letters to Lakatos that “[t]hese bastards from the New Left have changed my style”, and that “I am seriously considering taking the MS (AM) away from them (New Left Books) and

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<sup>140</sup> See LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 154; FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**, p. 66.

<sup>141</sup> FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism...**, p. 66.

<sup>142</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 279.

<sup>143</sup> FEYERABEND, **Briefe an einen Freund**, p. 11.

<sup>144</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, pp. 222 and 225.

<sup>145</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, pp. 222 and 225.

giving it to CUP [Cambridge University Press]”.<sup>146</sup> He complained in a letter to Albert that “[t]he left are as bad as the right”.<sup>147</sup>

### 2.3 Concluding Comments: Feyerabend as a Dadaist in Philosophy

To sum up, Feyerabend sided with the classical Marxists, Trotsky, Hollitscher and Cohn-Bendit, but argued against most of the other Marxists and leftists. This then poses a critically important question: was he himself a Marxist? Of course it was, and still is, an extremely controversial matter. Feyerabend was variously regarded as a fascist, Marxist, anarchist and anarcho-fascist.<sup>148</sup> In particular, Agassi held that Feyerabend had converted to Trotskyism, a form of Marxism: “Nevertheless, somehow he got converted to Trotskyism, from which he was never freed though he managed to put it aside and, while a disciple of Popper, even expounded rather anti-Trotskyite views”.<sup>149</sup> In striking contrast to this, the two Australian Marxists Curthoys and Suchting considered Feyerabend an anti-Marxist — one who belonged to a peripheral (in class-struggle terms) grouping of parasitic intellectuals, while being committed epistemologically to extreme empiricism, subjectivism and skepticism, and ethico-politically to extreme individualism and liberalism, of a kind profoundly hostile to socialism.<sup>150</sup>

We may, moreover, add to this the fact that in his letters Feyerabend made such declarations to his friends as that “I have been an atheist for a long time”,<sup>151</sup>

<sup>146</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, *For and Against Method...*, pp. 292 and 294.

<sup>147</sup> Wilhelm BAUM and Michael MÜHLMANN (eds.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 29.

<sup>148</sup> See LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, *For and Against Method...*, p. 229; FEYERABEND, *Briefe an einen Freund*, pp. 22, 182, 229, 230 and 231. Concerning neo-fascism, Feyerabend said, in his letter to Durr: „lange lebe der Neofaschismus der Traumzeit long live the neo-fascism of dream time” (FEYERABEND, *Briefe an einen Freund*, p. 144).

<sup>149</sup> Joseph AGASSI, “As You Like”, in: Gonzalo MUNÉVAR (ed), *Beyond Reason: Essays on the Philosophy of Paul Feyerabend*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht 1991, p. 383 [379–387].

<sup>150</sup> See CURTHOYS and SUCHTING, “Feyerabend’s Discourse against Method...”, pp. 337–338.

<sup>151</sup> FEYERABEND, *Briefe an einen Freund...*, p. 102.

that “I am also a Catholic”,<sup>152</sup> and that “the Jesuits will award me an honorary doctorate”.<sup>153</sup> Feyerabend also seemed to be a conservative,<sup>154</sup> and it is noteworthy that he sometimes supported the Roman Catholic Church. As he put it, “[t]oday, in my lecture, I defended the Church’s stand for law and order against the anarchist Galileo, and convinced everyone that Galileo was a bastard while Bellarmino was wise, scientific, humanitarian, etc. etc.”.<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless, in **Against Method** he supported Galileo against the Church. This suffices to show in a full and rich way that Feyerabend was a very complex and vague figure, not only in respect of his philosophy, but also in terms of his lifestyle. It is for this reason that Lakatos saw fit to write in his letter to Feyerabend that “[i]f you do so, I shall distinguish Feyerabend<sub>0</sub>, Feyerabend<sub>1</sub>, Feyerabend<sub>2</sub>, Feyerabend<sub>3</sub>...”.<sup>156</sup> Did Feyerabend adhere to any belief in Marxism, anarchism, fascism, individualism, liberalism, empiricism, subjectivism, skepticism, atheism, conservatism or Catholicism? No, he never allied himself enduringly to any one belief, with the exception of Dadaism. Consequently, Feyerabend not only took an interest in Marxism, applying it at the level of both theory and practice, but also embraced Dadaism — at least in philosophy, and to the extent that Dadaism itself has close links with Marxism and communism. This conclusion will be explored in greater detail in the next section.

### 3. Feyerabend on Dadaism and Dialectical Materialism

Feyerabend preferred to use the term “Dadaism” instead of “anarchism” to characterize his approach — especially where his epistemology (theory of knowledge) was concerned. His epistemology was transformed from an anarchistic one into a Dadaistic one. Thus, he proffered and pursued many comments and discussions on issues connected with Dadaism, Marxism, communism, anarchism and liberalism. What is more, he devoted some time and energy to materialism, dialectical materialism, reductive materialism and, especially, eliminative materialism.

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<sup>152</sup> BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 238.

<sup>153</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend...**, p. 99; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 159.

<sup>154</sup> See BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 202.

<sup>155</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 333.

<sup>156</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 296.

As a Dadaistic philosopher, he never converted to dialectical materialism, even though Dadaism seems highly relevant to Marxism and communism. He might, conceivably, have been either for or against dialectical materialism. In conclusion, and taking into consideration his firm belief in Dadaism, we may say that he could quite possibly have been a Marxist, a non-Marxist, or an anti-Marxist. And, of course, as a Dadaist in philosophy he would also have had to be an anti-Dadaist in that very same regard.

### 3.1 Anarchism, Dadaism, Communism and Liberalism

In his book **Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge**, Feyerabend set a high value on anarchism, as the following quotations make clear:

Science is an essentially anarchistic enterprise: theoretical anarchism is more humanitarian and more likely to encourage progress than its law-and-order alternatives.<sup>157</sup>

The following essay is written in the conviction that anarchism, while perhaps not the most attractive political philosophy, is certainly excellent medicine for epistemology, and for the philosophy of science.<sup>158</sup>

Equally, though, he conveyed a dislike for anarchism in that very same work. As he put it, "...[h]owever, anarchism [...] has features I am not prepared to support. It cares little for human lives and human happiness [...] contains precisely the kind of Puritanical dedication and seriousness which I detest. [...] I now prefer to use the term *Dadaism*".<sup>159</sup> Feyerabend gave up anarchism because it bored him.<sup>160</sup> It was said of him that, for Feyerabend himself, "anarchism is just another passing stage in his life".<sup>161</sup> He would have liked to become a flippant Dadaist:

<sup>157</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Against Method. Outline...**, p. 17.

<sup>158</sup> FEYERABEND, **Against Method. Outline...**, p. 17.

<sup>159</sup> FEYERABEND, **Against Method...**, p.21; LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, pp. 294–295.

<sup>160</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Thesen zum Anarchismus...**, p. 20; LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, pp. 311 and 362; BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...**, p. 53.

<sup>161</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 323.

“I hope that having read the pamphlet the reader will remember me as a flippant Dadaist and not as a serious anarchist”.<sup>162</sup> Accordingly, he chose the term “Dadaism” rather than “anarchism” for his enterprise, especially for his epistemology.

“In a pamphlet with the title «*Stalinismus und Anarchismus in der Spanischen Revolution*» [Stalinism and Anarchism in the Spanish Revolution], [...] [Feyerabend was] referred to as «*der Amerikanische Oberdada Paul Feyerabend*» [the American Chief of Dada]”.<sup>163</sup> Agassi emphasized that Feyerabend had a predecessor in aesthetics in the form of John Cage (1912–1992),<sup>164</sup> who as an American composer belonged to the avant-garde, including Dadaism. Feyerabend studied Dadaism and was keen on it. In this respect, he wrote: “I had studied Dadaism after the Second World War. What attracted me to this movement was the style its inventors used when not engaged in Dadaistic activities. It was clear, luminous, simple without being banal, precise without being narrow; it was a style adapted to the expression of thought as well as of emotion. I connected this style with the Dadaistic exercises themselves”.<sup>165</sup> Feyerabend was such a highly original thinker that he could apply Dadaism to his philosophy, and especially his theory of knowledge, to create his very own Dadaistic philosophy or epistemology.

Feyerabend looked to achieve in philosophy, and especially in epistemology, what Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), a leading figure of the Dada movement, had accomplished in art.<sup>166</sup> He quoted the following two slogans from the excellent textbook for Dadaistic science **Dada: Art and Anti-Art**, by Hans Richter (1888–1976), a Dadaist and German artist: “Dada not only had no programme, it was

<sup>162</sup> FEYERABEND, **Against Method. Outline...**, p.21; LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 295) For Feyerabend, perhaps, “a flippant anarchist” was the same as or similar to “a flippant Dadaist.” He pointed out that “[i]ncidentally — a flippant anarchist, a really flippant anarchist is of course also prepared to engage in a rational debate and to defend Spiro Agnew. It is only the mechanical anarchist who is either too shortsighted, or too cowardly to do such things” (LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 210. Generally, in his writings he did not distinguish “a flippant anarchist” from “a flippant Dadaist”, but rather from “a mechanical anarchist” or “a serious anarchist”.

<sup>163</sup> See LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, **For and Against Method...**, p. 336 [italics and quotation marks in the original].

<sup>164</sup> See AGASSI, “Review essay of **Against Method...**”, p. 166 [165–191].

<sup>165</sup> FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free...**, p. 120; FEYERABEND, **Against Method...**, p. 279.

<sup>166</sup> See FEYERABEND, **Thesen zum Anarchismus...**, p. 12.

against all programmes”, and “To be a true Dadaist, one must also be an anti-Dadaist”.<sup>167</sup> Feyerabend offered the following general reflections on his Dadaistic epistemology and/or epistemological Dadaism:

There is no view, however “absurd” or “immoral”, he (the epistemological Dadaist) refuses to consider or to act upon, and no method is regarded as indispensable. The one thing he opposes positively and absolutely are universal standards, universal laws, universal ideas such as “Truth”, “Reason”, “Justice”, “Love”, and the behavior they bring along, though he does not deny that it is often good policy to act as if such laws (such standards, such ideas) existed, as if he believed in them. He may approach the religious anarchist in his opposition to science and the material world, he may outdo any Nobel Prize winner in his vigorous defence of scientific purity.<sup>168</sup>

The above quotation shows that his Dadaistic epistemology actually signifies having no epistemology at all.<sup>169</sup> To be a true Dadaistic epistemology, it must also be an anti-Dadaistic epistemology: on the one hand, “No prohibition!” or “Anything goes!”; on the other hand, “No permission!” or “Nothing goes!”. The aims and objectives of this epistemology are to challenge and overturn the dominant orthodoxy of Western philosophy or (especially) epistemology, in that the core of Dadaism is to repudiate, mock and overturn artistic and social conventions in the West.

Dadaism has clear links with Marxism and communism, as all of them aim to protest or struggle against or to overthrow Western capitalism. As Jack Flam (1940) put it, “the core of Dadaism was based on what might be called an absurdist spirit, which was itself based upon a wholehearted and unremitting attack on all the norms of industrial-age bourgeois culture: social, ethical, political, artistic, and philosophical – a kind of guerilla warfare against the Establishment”.<sup>170</sup> Dadaists enjoyed some level of association with Lenin when he was in exile in Zurich,<sup>171</sup> and the movement was closely connected to the Soviet Union. Tristan

<sup>167</sup> FEYERABEND, *Against Method...*, pp. 33 and 189; FEYERABEND, *Thesen zum Anarchismus...*, pp. 22–23; LAKATOS and FEYERABEND Paul, *For and Against Method*, pp. 114–115.

<sup>168</sup> FEYERABEND, *Against Method...*, p. 189; FEYERABEND, *Thesen zum Anarchismus...*, p. 23; LAKATOS and FEYERABEND Paul, *For and Against Method*, p. 115.

<sup>169</sup> See FEYERABEND, *Briefe an einen Freund*, p. 12.

<sup>170</sup> Robert MOTHERWELL, *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology*, Second Edition, Belknap Press, Cambridge 1981, p. xii.

<sup>171</sup> See MOTHERWELL, *The Dada Painters and Poets...*, p. xxiv.

Tzara (1896–1963, a Romanian artist and founder of Dada) said: “The Russian Revolution was saluted by some among us as a window opened upon the future, a breach in the fortifications of an outmoded civilization”.<sup>172</sup> Meanwhile, Robert Motherwell (1915–1991) stated that “Indeed, I believe that present view of Dada as a historical movement held by each of the dadas is in every case somewhat colored by his present sympathy for or antagonism to the U.S.S.R.”.<sup>173</sup> In particular, Dadaism abandoned art completely, and was turned into a political movement in Germany. As Richard Huelsenbeck (1892–1974) put it, “Dada is German Bolshevism. The bourgeois must be deprived of the opportunity to »buy up art for his justification«”.<sup>174</sup> In the program of German Dada drawn up by Richard Huelsenbeck and Raoul Hausmann (1886–1971) entitled “What Is Dadaism and What Does It Want in Germany”, from which the following key sentences are excerpted, Dadaism comes across as practically identical to communism and Marxism:

#### **What is Dadaism and what does it want in Germany?**

##### 1. Dadaism demands:

1) The international revolutionary union of all creative and intellectual men and women on the basis of radical Communism; [...]

3) The immediate expropriation of property (socialization) and the communal feeding of all; [...]

##### 2. The Central Council demands: [...]

b) Compulsory adherence of all clergymen and teachers to the Dadaist articles of faith;

c) The most brutal struggle against all directions of so-called “workers of the spirit” (Hiller, Adler), against their concealed bourgeoisism [...];

d) [...] the concept of property is entirely excluded from the super-individual movement of Dadaism which liberates all mankind;

e) Introduction of the simultaneist poem as a Communist state prayer; [...]

h) Immediate organization of a large scale Dadaist propaganda campaign with 150 circuses for the enlightenment of the proletariat [...].<sup>175</sup>

<sup>172</sup> MOTHERWELL, *The Dada Painters and Poets...* 1981, p. 403.

<sup>173</sup> MOTHERWELL, *The Dada Painters and Poets...*, p. xviii.

<sup>174</sup> MOTHERWELL, *The Dada Painters and Poets...*, p. 44.

<sup>175</sup> MOTHERWELL, *The Dada Painters and Poets...*, pp. 41–42.

From the first German Dadaist manifesto it is very evident that the Dadaistic movement in that country amounted to a form of radical communism — one that was directed against the bourgeoisie, supported the proletariat, and was aimed at destroying capitalist society in order to liberate all mankind and ultimately establish communism all over the world. Nevertheless, the fact that communism and Marxism exercised this level of influence upon Dadaists has been largely overlooked. It is surprising, and noteworthy, that Feyerabend himself did not mention it. However, it is very clear that Dadaism, Marxism and communism all had a great impact on Feyerabend himself. Dadaism, and with this communism, was in favor of evil or badness, and against the good, inasmuch as it held that these were really the same. As Huelsenbeck put it:

Consequently, the good is for the Dadaist no “better” than the bad — there is only a simultaneity, in values as in everything else. This simultaneity applied to the economy of facts is communism, a communism, to be sure, which has abandoned the principle of “making things better” and above all sees its goal in the destruction of everything that has gone bourgeois. [...] “Evil” has a profound meaning, the polarity of events finds in it a limit, and though the real political thinker (such as Lenin seems to be) creates a movement, i.e., he dissolves individualities with the help of a theory, he changes nothing. And that, as paradoxical as it may seem, is the import of the Communist movement.<sup>176</sup>

According to the quotation, for the Dadaists there was only a simultaneity; this simultaneity was communism, which had abandoned the principle of “making things better” and would completely destroy the capitalist system. From the perspective of the Dadaists or the communists, there were neither universal standards, nor any distinction between good and evil, nor “improvement”. Likewise, Feyerabend defended Lenin, Stalin, Mao and Hitler (1889–1945), but attacked Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008), the dissident writer and Nobel laureate in literature exiled from the Soviet Union, as well as Lizhi Fang (1936–2012), a leading astrophysicist and political dissident from China, and Claus von Stauffenberg (1907–1944). “Stauffenberg”, he said, “who tried to kill Hitler, was a terrorist, though unfortunately an unsuccessful one”.<sup>177</sup> By contrast, he emphasized that his

<sup>176</sup> MOTHERWELL, *The Dada Painters and Poets...*, p. 42.

<sup>177</sup> Paul K. FEYERABEND, “Concluding Unphilosophical Conversation”, in: Gonzalo MUNÉVAR (ed), *Beyond Reason: Essays on the Philosophy of Paul Feyerabend*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht 1991, p. 520 [487–527]. For a similar idea, see also BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 197.



love would be capable of including Hitler.<sup>178</sup> Feyerabend exalted Mao, but criticized Fang for his viewpoints and argumentation in his own writings.<sup>179</sup> Similarly, Feyerabend praised and admired Lenin and Stalin, but was disgusted with Solzhenitsyn, even though he had only seen him on television.<sup>180</sup> Given the simultaneity or communism of the Dadaists, the above viewpoints of Feyerabend are perfectly understandable, although they can certainly seem absurd, immoral and astonishing.

What is more, believing in the simultaneity or communism of the Dadaists, Feyerabend tried to justify the Nazis' wickedness. He wrote that "»[o]f course« many Nazis were puny and despicable men [...] But puny and despicable men are human, they have been created in the image of God and that alone requires of us to treat them with greater circumspection than on the basis of a mere »of course«".<sup>181</sup> On the other hand, he strongly attacked "teachers", "intellectual leaders", and "leaders of mankind": "Should not the same or an even greater punishment be extended to our »teachers« and our »intellectual leaders« than is now extended to individual and collective murders? Should not guilty teachers be found out with the same vigor one applies to the hunting of Nazi octogenarians? Are not the so-called »leaders of mankind« — men such as Christ, Buddha, St Augustine, Luther, Marx, some of our greatest criminals [...]".<sup>182</sup> For Feyerabend, a Dadaist in philosophy, the Nazis were the same as or even better than the "teachers", "intellectual leaders", and "leaders of mankind". Generally, Feyerabend assailed Western civilization and held that this civilization was similar to the "spirit of Auschwitz": "Western civilization as a whole now values efficiency to an extent that occasionally makes ethical objections seem »naïve« and »unscientific«. There are many similarities between this civilization and the »spirit of Auschwitz«".<sup>183</sup> In short, his ideas, however absurd, astonishing or immoral, are wholly under-

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<sup>178</sup> See FEYERABEND, "Concluding Unphilosophical Conversation, p. 251 [487–527].

<sup>179</sup> See FEYERABEND, *Conquest of Abundance...*, pp. 242–251; FEYERABEND, *Three Dialogues on Knowledge...*, pp. 166–167.

<sup>180</sup> See BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 140; John WATKINS, "Feyerabend Among Popperians...", p. 51 [47–57].

<sup>181</sup> FEYERABEND, *Science in a Free...*, p. 139.

<sup>182</sup> FEYERABEND, *Science in a Free...*, pp. 139–140.

<sup>183</sup> FEYERABEND, *Farewell to Reason...*, p. 23.

standable on condition that one understands their relationship to Dadaism and its commitment to simultaneity and communism.

As a Dadaistic philosopher, and especially as a Dadaistic epistemologist or an epistemological Dadaist, Feyerabend could have been a liberal, a non-liberal, or an anti-liberal. Nonetheless, Curthoys and Suchting, the two Marxists from Australia, held that Feyerabend was an extreme liberal or individualist, profoundly hostile to socialism.<sup>184</sup> Obviously, they misunderstood Feyerabend — even though he did argue for liberalism or a free society.<sup>185</sup> His “liberalism or free society” aimed not to make an individual free, but to grant all traditions equal rights and equal access to the centres of power. Feyerabend defined his conception of this as follows:

A free society is a society in which all traditions have equal rights and equal access to the centres of power (this differs from the customary definition where individuals have equal rights of access to positions defined by a special tradition — the tradition of Western Science and Rationalism).<sup>186</sup>

A free society is a society in which all traditions are given equal rights, equal access to education and other positions of power.<sup>187</sup>

Feyerabend’s free society could conceivably lead to individuals living under a dictatorship or some form of totalitarianism. For Feyerabend, these were also traditions to be given equal rights and equal access to education and other positions of power. For this reason, his “liberalism or free society” was so different from the customary one (in which individuals had equal rights of access to positions defined by a special tradition) that his notion actually referred neither to individualism nor to liberalism (let alone extreme individualism or liberalism), but rather to despotism or absolutism. In general, Feyerabend was neither an individualist nor a liberal, but instead a Dadaist in philosophy. Furthermore, he also seemed to be a materialist — one who engaged in many discussions concerning

<sup>184</sup> See CURTHOYS and SUCHTING, “Feyerabend’s Discourse against Method...”, p. 338 [243–379].

<sup>185</sup> Feyerabend detested the tensions inside the Brecht Circle, and criticized and opposed the collective pressure of the certainly pushy and closely knit group that surrounded Popper in his later life. This should be explained from the perspective of their personal relationships, not from that of Feyerabend’s belief in liberalism.

<sup>186</sup> FEYERABEND, *Science in a Free...*, p. 9.

<sup>187</sup> FEYERABEND, *Science in a Free...*, p. 30.

dialectical materialism, eliminative materialism and reductive materialism. The subject of his materialism will be dealt with in the next subsection.

## 3.2 Dialectical Materialism, Eliminative Materialism and Reductive Materialism

Feyerabend claimed of himself that he was “an unrepentant materialist”.<sup>188</sup> He was very keen on dialectical materialism, and even converted to it.<sup>189</sup> As he put it, “Imre Lakatos has convinced me that I am not a Popperian, but a dialectical materialist. [...] My last article has defended Bohr against Popper. The next article will defend Marx (whom I am studying) against Popper”.<sup>190</sup> Furthermore, he said in a letter to Hans Albert that “I have converted to dialectical materialism”.<sup>191</sup> However, Albert was not surprised at his conversion to dialectical materialism, and thought that an entirely new form of dialectical materialism would appear.<sup>192</sup> In addition, he convinced his closest friend Lakatos of his own dialectical materialism. He emphasized that Mill and Engels were predecessors of Lakatos in philosophy,<sup>193</sup> writing that “[t]he catalyst that leads from Mill to Lakatos is the philosophy of dialectical materialism”.<sup>194</sup> To a degree, Feyerabend’s dialectical materialism was accepted, and so his article was employed to propagandize for that stance.<sup>195</sup>

In particular, his paper “Dialectical Materialism and the Quantum Theory” (1966), which includes both a review of Gustav Wetter’s book **Dialectical Materialism: A Historical and Systematic Survey of Philosophy in the Soviet Union**

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<sup>188</sup> FEYERABEND, **Physics and Philosophy**..., p. 256.

<sup>189</sup> See LAKATOS and FEYERABEND Paul, **For and Against Method**..., p. 151; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert**..., p. 147.

<sup>190</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend**..., p. 83; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert**..., p. 145.

<sup>191</sup> BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend**..., p. 85; BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert**..., p. 147.

<sup>192</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert**..., pp. 147–148.

<sup>193</sup> See BAUM and MÜHLMANN (eds.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert**..., pp. 106–107.

<sup>194</sup> FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism**..., p. 197.

<sup>195</sup> See BAUM (ed.), **Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert**..., p. 112.

and some comments on an article entitled “Quantum Mechanics and Dialectical Materialism” by Loren Graham, was centered on dialectical principles. Amongst the latter, in Feyerabend’s view, were the following:

(1) the emphasis on the fact that in nature there are no isolated elements, but that everything is related to everything else; (2) the emphasis on the existence of discontinuities, indicating essential limitations of our knowledge; (3) connected with this, the emphasis on the approximate character of knowledge; (4) the demand to unite practice with theory, so that there is neither unreflected practice nor empty theory; (5) the change (motion) of concepts in the course of the development of our knowledge.<sup>196</sup>

Among the above-mentioned items, the first of which belongs to dialectical ontology, items (2), (3), (4) and (5) belong to dialectical epistemology, similar to his Dadaistic or anarchistic epistemology. One scholar has interpreted the above-mentioned article (“Dialectical Materialism and the Quantum Theory”) as an attempt by Feyerabend to deploy his Dadaistic philosophy:

The SR [*Slavic Review*] article is an attempt by Feyerabend to deploy his emergent Dadaist philosophical methodology. Against a perceived background of Western intellectuals’ failure to take seriously dialectical materialist ideology, [...] Feyerabend offers a charitable interpretation of how dialectical materialism could be expected to motivate and guide research [...] the 1960s saw Feyerabend’s early attempt to exercise his Dadaist approach to philosophy.<sup>197</sup>

From the perspective of that commentator, Feyerabend’s Dadaistic philosophy emerged out of dialectical materialism. This shows that his Dadaistic or anarchist epistemology was closely connected with dialectical materialism. As a Dadaist in philosophy, and especially in epistemology, Feyerabend attached a great importance to dialectical materialism. He held that “most of the dialectical principles enunciated above have been also accepted by Niels Bohr (1885–1962)”.<sup>198</sup> He praised Bohr, and regarded his way of presenting what claims to be the truth as “a dialectical presentation which enlarges faults and lets different and incommensurable jargons run side by side”.<sup>199</sup> According to Feyerabend, dialectical materi-

<sup>196</sup> FEYERABEND, *Physics and Philosophy...*, pp. 220–221.

<sup>197</sup> KENT, “Paul Feyerabend and the Dialectical Character of Quantum Mechanics...”, p. 46 [51–57].

<sup>198</sup> FEYERABEND, *Physics and Philosophy...*, p. 221.

<sup>199</sup> FEYERABEND, *Three Dialogues on Knowledge...*, p. 95.

alism has two marked characteristics: its “need for tenacity” and its “synthesis”: “The need for tenacity was emphasized by those dialectical materialists who objected to extreme »idealistic« flights of fancy. And the synthesis, finally, is the very essence of dialectical materialism in the form in which it appears in the writings of Engels, Lenin and Trotsky”.<sup>200</sup> For Feyerabend, it was clear that Aristotle, Descartes, Newton, Kant, Russell, Popper and Lakatos were all examples of naïve rationalism. By contrast, he considered dialectical materialism a sophisticated form of rationalism: “Sophisticated rationalism is quite rare. It may be found [...] in dialectical materialism”.<sup>201</sup> More importantly, he optimistically believed that “philosophy can advance our knowledge”.<sup>202</sup> Of course, it follows from his belief that “dialectical materialism, as an important part of philosophy, can also advance our state of knowledge”. It is very clear that Feyerabend greatly valued dialectical materialism. However, he wrote, “I did not accept dialectics and historical materialism”.<sup>203</sup> In other words, Feyerabend did not accept dialectical materialism — all the while valuing it and even converting to it. Given his Dadaistic philosophy, “to be a dialectical materialist, Feyerabend must also be a non-dialectical materialist or an anti-dialectical materialist”.

Feyerabend also addressed eliminative materialism or reductive materialism, in addition to dialectical materialism.<sup>204</sup> In “Materialism and the Mind-Body Problem” he defined materialism as follows: “Materialism, as it will be discussed here, assumes that the only entities existing in the world are atoms, aggregates of atoms, and that the only properties and relations are the properties of, and the relations between, such aggregates”.<sup>205</sup> In our view, the materialism defined by Feyerabend was an eliminative materialism, for it eliminated “mental events” so that there were only “atoms” in the world. In his comment “Mental Events and the Brain”, Feyerabend also explicitly denied mental events. He came to the following

<sup>200</sup> FEYERABEND, **Problems of Empiricism**..., p. 144.

<sup>201</sup> FEYERABEND, **Philosophical Papers**..., p. 202.

<sup>202</sup> FEYERABEND, **Physics and Philosophy**..., pp. 223–224.

<sup>203</sup> FEYERABEND, **Science in a Free**..., p. 113.

<sup>204</sup> See As regards Feyerabend on anti-reductionism and eliminative materialism, see also Yuanlin GUO, “Feyerabend’s Confusion: Anti-Reductionism and Eliminative Materialism”, *Shijie Zhixue (World Philosophy)* 2014, Vol. 5, pp. 83–93.

<sup>205</sup> Paul K. FEYERABEND, **Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method, Philosophical Papers, Volume 1**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1981, p. 161.

conclusion: “There is no reason why physiology should not by itself be capable of forming such a background. We have to conclude, then, that the reasonableness — and the success — of a purely physiological approach to human beings is not at all dependent on the outcome of an analysis of H”.<sup>206</sup> For this reason, some philosophers thought that Feyerabend had sought to justify eliminative materialism.<sup>207</sup>

However, some other philosophers have claimed that Feyerabend was not an eliminative materialist.<sup>208</sup> On the basis of the following quotation from Feyerabend’s “Explanation, Reduction and Empiricism”, John Preston sees him as a reductive materialist:

All these difficulties disappear if we are prepared to admit that, in the course of the progress of knowledge, we may have to abandon a certain point of view and the meanings connected with it — for example if we are prepared to admit that the mental connotation of mental terms may be spurious and in need of replacement by a physical connotation according to which mental events, such as pains, states of awareness, and thoughts are complex physical states of either the brain or the central nervous system, or perhaps the whole organism.<sup>209</sup>

In the quotation, Feyerabend points out that the mental connotation of mental terms might need to be “replaced by” rather than “reduced to” a physical connotation, and that mental events “were” rather than “were reduced to” complex physical states of the brain, the nervous system or the whole organism. Therefore, this vague quotation is not evidence that Feyerabend defended reductive materialism. In “Materialism and the Mind-body Problem” he did not develop in detail eliminative materialism (as a position in which there is only matter and no mind), all the while refuting three arguments against materialism. More importantly, his follow-

<sup>206</sup> Paul K. FEYERABEND, “Mental Events and the Brain”, *The Journal of Philosophy* 1963, Vol. 60, No. 11, p. 296 [295–296], <https://doi.org/10.2307/2023030>.

<sup>207</sup> See Richard RORTY, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1979, p. 117; Grover MAXWELL, “Feyerabend’s Materialism”, in: Gonzalo MUNÉVAR (ed), *Beyond Reason: Essays on the Philosophy of Paul Feyerabend*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht 1991, pp. 453–463.

<sup>208</sup> See John PRESTON, *Feyerabend: Philosophy, Science and Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1997, pp. 151, 155 and 162; Jamie SHAW, “Feyerabend Never Was an Eliminative Materialist: Feyerabend’s Meta-Philosophy and the Mind-Body Problem”, in: Karim BSCHIR and Jamie SHAW (eds.), *Interpreting Feyerabend: Critical Essays*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2021, pp. 114–131.

<sup>209</sup> FEYERABEND, *Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method...*, p. 90; PRESTON, *Feyerabend...*, p. 151.

ers so far have failed to do that, too. In such a situation, Preston's view seems reasonable. If he was engaged in seeking to justify reductive materialism rather than eliminative materialism, then it seems reasonable to conclude that Feyerabend was inclined to become a Marxist or a dialectical materialist, as reductive materialism is more similar to dialectical materialism than eliminative materialism is. Both reductive materialism and dialectical materialism subscribe to dualism, in claiming that matter and mind exist, whereas eliminative materialism subscribes to monism, claiming as it does that only matter exists.

### 3.3 Concluding Comments: Was Feyerabend a Marxist?

It astonished Lakatos that Feyerabend had converted to Marxism. Lakatos wrote in a letter to Feyerabend: "I was stunned by your conversion to Marxism".<sup>210</sup> But did Feyerabend really convert to Marxism, communism or dialectical materialism? He chose the term "Dadaism" for his epistemology, his philosophy, and his overall intellectual enterprise. Dadaism had clear links with Marxism and communism, and was turned into Bolshevism in Germany. The Dadaist movement in that country was a radical communist movement that was against the bourgeoisie and in favor of the proletariat, while being aimed at destroying capitalist society, liberating all of mankind, and ultimately establishing communism all over the world. Did Feyerabend use "Dadaism" to signify Marxism and communism? No answer can be found, because he himself never provided any. Nevertheless, Marxism, communism and dialectical materialism all indisputably had a great influence on him.

In a letter to a friend, Feyerabend declared that "I have never become a communist, and I have not joined any party".<sup>211</sup> Indeed, he was neither a communist nor a member of any party. As a Dadaistic philosopher he did not adhere to Marxism, communism or dialectical materialism, but rather made "»opportunistic« use of the classics of Marxism (quotations, references)".<sup>212</sup> In this connection, one scholar has written that "[u]pon scanning Feyerabend's references to Marxism

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<sup>210</sup> LAKATOS and FEYERABEND, *For and Against Method...*, p. 150.

<sup>211</sup> BAUM (ed.), *Paul Feyerabend...*, p. 161; BAUM (ed.), *Paul Feyerabend, Hans Albert...*, p. 213.

<sup>212</sup> CURTHOYS and SUCHTING, "Feyerabend's Discourse against Method...", p. 338.

across his writings, one finds that he is prepared to both criticize and praise the tradition and its practitioners”.<sup>213</sup> That is to say, Feyerabend was both for and against Marxism. Hence, as a Dadaist in philosophy he was someone to whom the question of whether or not one is a Marxist was not really applicable.

As a Dadaistic philosopher, and especially as a Dadaistic epistemologist or epistemological Dadaist, Feyerabend may have been a Marxist and a communist, or a non-Marxist and a non-communist, or an anti-Marxist and an anti-communist. Given that he researched and praised dialectical materialism, it seems fair to assert that he was a dialectical materialist. However, taking his Dadaist philosophy as a basis, it appears he might well have been either a non-dialectical materialist or an anti-dialectical one. On the one hand, then, Feyerabend was either an eliminative or a reductive materialist, in that he was either arguing for eliminative materialism or advocating reductive materialism. On the other hand, meanwhile, as an epistemological Dadaist, it is possible that he was either a non-eliminative materialist (or a non-reductive one) or an anti-eliminative materialist (or an anti-reductive one).

## 4. Conclusion

Marxism thus had an important influence on Feyerabend, even though he said he had never accepted either dialectics or historical materialism. Feyerabend mentioned, referenced, quoted, commented or discussed the following Marxists, communists, or leftists in his writings: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Fidel Castro, Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky, Bertolt Brecht, Hanns Eisler, Walter Hollitscher, Georg Lukacs, Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Joseph Needham, Jean-Paul Sartre, Walter Benjamin, Louis Althusser, Daniel Cohn-Benit and Robin Blackburn. On numerous occasions he discussed and commented on Dadaism, Marxism, communism, anarchism, liberalism, dialectical materialism, reductive materialism and, especially, eliminative materialism. Equally, though, Feyerabend himself influenced the Marxism of his own time. Feyerabend and his writings were certainly favored and extolled by some of his Marxist and leftist contemporaries, even though he

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<sup>213</sup> KENT, “Paul Feyerabend and the Dialectical Character of Quantum Mechanics...”, p. 53 [51–57].



criticized contemporary Marxism, neo-Marxists, the New Left, “revolutionaries”, and students of the left.

Feyerabend produced an original Dadaist philosophy and, especially, a Dadaistic epistemology, in circumstances where this was conditioned by the fact that Dadaism seemed highly relevant to Marxism and communism. The Dadaist movement in Germany was a radical communist movement opposed to the bourgeoisie, on the side of the proletariat, and seeking to upend capitalist society, emancipate all of mankind and, ultimately, establish communism across the world. As a Dadaist in philosophy, he could well have been a Marxist, non-Marxist, or anti-Marxist, in that he also had to be an anti-Dadaist in philosophy. The relationship of Feyerabend to Marxism should be understood and explained from the perspective of his Dadaistic philosophy, and especially his Dadaistic epistemology or epistemological Dadaism. In short, his ideas, however absurd, astonishing, or immoral, are wholly understandable if he is regarded as a Dadaist philosopher, or a Dadaist in philosophy. Consequently, Feyerabend’s philosophy really ought to be studied and researched from the viewpoint of Dadaism in philosophy.

Feyerabend made opportunistic use of Marxism to criticize and oppose modern Western civilization, including capitalism, science and rationality. Marxists and leftists, of course, attack capitalism forcefully with a view to establishing communism, but favour science and rationality. Basing their theories on modern natural science and rationality, and especially on the theory of evolution of Charles Darwin (1809–1882), Marx and Engels imagined certain general laws of motion and development operative in human society and thought, and tried to change mankind and society according to those laws. By contrast, Feyerabend assailed Western capitalism, and especially science and rationality, making him an enemy of science, rationality and Western civilization. In this connection, as a Dadaist philosopher, he could well have been either a Marxist or an anti-Marxist.

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