Recent literature on the Young Hegelians attests to a renewed appreciation of their philosophical and political significance. Important new studies have linked them to the literary and political currents of their time, traced the changing patterns of their relationships with early French socialism, and demonstrated the affinity of their thought with Hellenistic theories of self-consciousness. The conventional interpretative context, which focuses on the left-Hegelian critique of religion and the problem of the realisation of philosophy, has also been decisively challenged. Ingrid Pepperle emphasizes instead the centrality of practical philosophy, notably Hegel’s dialectic of objectification, arguing that Bruno Bauer in particular derives from this a doctrine of autonomy with politically revolutionary implications. While H.-M. Sass contends that...
Bauer abandons dialectics in favour of a system of antithetics with roots in the apocalyptic tradition. pepperle insists that a rich and fruitful dialectic of history as practical self-production pervades Bauer's work in the critical period from 1840 to 1843. She argues that while idealist, this dialectic is not fundamentally conditioned by ontological concerns. Through an examination of Bauer's relation to Hegel in his major theoretical texts, it is possible both to vindicate the dialectical form of Bauer's argument against the charge of being a mere antithetics, and to show that the derivation of practical principles is sustained by an ontological reformulation of the doctrine of absolute spirit. This explanation will also clarify the interaction of political and philosophical influences in Bauer's work, and demarcate the limitations of his solution. Bauer formulates an ontology of freedom through a critique of the Hegelian notion of substantiality and a consequent re-assessment of the doctrines of absolute and objective spirit. While repudiating all transcendence over the creative power of individual self-consciousness, he retains a concept of universality in order to distinguish this transformative energy from immediate, particular consciousness. Particularity is shaped by the impress of the existing order and the narrow and egoistic material interests which correspond to it, and is therefore heteronomous. To attain to genuine self-consciousness, in contrast, individuals must discipline themselves to universality by purging themselves of alienated, merely given forms of life. The pure productive self-activity thus revealed behind all concrete and limited forms of embodiment is for Bauer the true element of freedom and the essence of history.

Among Bauer's numerous texts of 1841, Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel, den Atheisten und Antichristen is undoubtedly the most significant in its explicit statement of the relation of substance and subject, and in its unequivocal revolutionary conclusions. In the doctrine of universal self-consciousness, the text reformulates the ontological relation of subjectivity to the world as an affirmation of human freedom against all transcendent powers. It asserts the claim to the conscious reshaping of the self, society and history. It contains in essence a political programme, the critique of church, state, and conciliatory liberalism, in the interests of a radical democratic transformation, with constant reference to the Jacobin example. It outlines the ethics of the revolutionary process, the principled and ruthless critique of all existing relations, the refusal to compromise, the need to provoke escalation of conflict in order to generate a clean and decisive break between opposed principles, culminating in revolutionary overthrow of

---

7 H. and I. Pepperle, Die Hegelsche Linke, 19, 35-36.  
8 B. Bauer (anon.), Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel, den Atheisten und Antichristen. Ein Ultimatum (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1841). (All references to the Posaune are to this edition; all translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.)
the old order.\textsuperscript{9} The antithetical character of this ethical programme is rooted in the dialectics of self-consciousness.

The text, published anonymously in October 1841, is redolent of Luther's polemical style. In it, Bauer assumes the guise of an arch-conservative, pietist opponent of Hegel. He reveals the essence of the Hegelian system to be atheism and Jacobinism, thus apparently substantiating the criticisms of Hegel's conservative opponents.\textsuperscript{10} He shows how these conclusions are rooted in a conception of consciousness which elevates human subjectivity to the status of the demiurge of history. The form of the work is conditioned by the exigencies of censorship. The proclamation of the revolutionary principle could only occur under the pretext of its denunciation. Bauer sets about his task with great relish, exuberantly displaying his biblical erudition alongside his Hegelian scholarship. He directs his ironical fire primarily against Hegel's \textit{Philosophy of Religion}, whose second edition he himself had just prepared.\textsuperscript{11} The irony is often transparent, and Bauer manipulates Hegel's dialectical categories with a virtuosity which bespeaks the lengthy and painstaking apprenticeship of a disciple. It is no great testimony to the acuity of the conservative forces in Germany that they


\textsuperscript{10} Notable among these critics were Ernst Hengstenberg, editor of the \textit{Evangelische Kirchenzeitung} and a proponent of the Restoration bond of Church and State, and Heinrich Leo, member of the Historical School of Law. See K. Marx, "The Philosophical Manifesto of the Historical School of Law", in L. Easton and K. Guddat, eds., \textit{Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society} (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 96-105; E. Rambaldi, \textit{Le origini della sinistra hegeliana} (Florence: Nuova Italia, 1966), 6-14; and E. Jordan, \textit{Die Entstehung der konservativen Partei} (Munich: Duncker und Humboldt, 1914), 144.

In "Der Verfall der Hegelschen Schule", \textit{Literarische Anzeiger} August-October 1838, Hengstenberg had argued that Hegel's teachings were atheistic and disruptive of social tranquility. Bauer, whose attack on Hengstenberg (see below, note 60) had already occasioned his transfer from Berlin to Bonn, now ironically assumes this very posture.

\textsuperscript{11} G. W. F. Hegel, \textit{Werke}, Bd. 11: \textit{Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion}, Bd. 1 (Berlin, 1840). Bauer mentions in his correspondence of March 15, 1840, that the volume "can scarcely have appeared" (Briefwechsel zwischen Bruno Bauer und Edgar Bauer während der Jahre 1839-1842 aus Bonn und Berlin [Charlottenburg: Verlag von Egbert Bauer, 1844], letter 12, 48-49). He indicates that he resumed work on the text in October 1839, as he was preparing his \textit{Johanneskritik} (Briefwechsel, letter 1 [October 21, 1839]) and experiencing his transition to atheism. These letters are also cited in E. Barnikol, \textit{Bruno Bauer: Studien und Materialien}, ed. P. Reimer and H. M. Sass (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1972), 193. Bauer edited this text in collaboration with Philip Marheineke, who had published the first edition of Hegel's \textit{Philosophy of Religion} in 1832 (Barnikol, \textit{Bruno Bauer, 193n}). Barnikol suggests (ibid., 195) that discrepancies between Bauer's citations of Hegel's \textit{Philosophy of Religion} and the text of the second edition might be attributable to Marheineke's editorial revision. Marheineke is described as a leader of university protest against the theoretical reaction after 1840 (K. Obermann, \textit{Deutschland von 1815 bis 1849} [Berlin: DVW, 1967], 131f.). He defended Bauer during the latter's dismissal from the University of Bonn in 1842. Bauer however attacks Marheineke's tendency to vacillation and compromise in \textit{Die gute Sache der Freiheit und meine eigene Angelegenheit} (Zurich and Winterthur: Verlag des literarischen Comptoirs 1842), 92.
Dialogue

initially welcomed the work, though Bauer’s intent was to expose them to public execration. Among left-Hegelian circles Arnold Ruge, editor of the Deutsche Jahrbücher, participated willingly in the charade, as his correspondence with Bauer demonstrates. In any case, both the authorship and genuine intent of the work were soon known. The book was banned and confiscated in Prussia in December 1841. Bauer publicly acknowledged his authorship in Die gute Sache der Freiheit und meine eigene Angelegenheit, June-August, 1842.

12 Z. Rosen, Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1978), 63, cites some of this literature. There appears to be an error in his footnote 7 on the same page. The text refers to an article appearing in “Hengstenberg’s Church Journal”, which would be the Evangelische Kirchenzeitung, while in the note in question Rosen cites instead an article from the Young Hegelian journal Deutsche Jahrbücher 136-138 (1842), 543, edited by Arnold Ruge. Note that Bauer’s first mention of the text occurs in a letter to his brother Edgar on August 16, 1841 (Briefwechsel, letter 44, 155), where he states, “Until my departure [end of August] I am preparing a great denunciation of Hegel; it is something of a trumpet blast [posaunenmäßig] and should bring him only advantage”.

13 Rosen, Bauer and Marx, 63, thinks that Ruge too was deceived by the “pietist” veneer of the text. The first mention of the Posaune in the Bauer/Ruge correspondence occurs in Bauer’s letter of December 12, 1841 (E. Barnikol, Bruno Bauer, Manuscript, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam, “Brief an Arnold Ruge”, #14, 11; also reproduced in Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe 1, 1/2, 265); both of these are some two months subsequent to the publication of the text. However, in a letter of August 17, 1841 to Ruge (Barnikol, Ms., #14, 9), Bauer informs Ruge of his plan to visit him in Dresden in the second half of September, where he has much to relate to him. That the plans for the Posaune were discussed at that time or at least prior to the publication of the text, is suggested by Ruge’s enthusiastic correspondence with Stahr, Prutz, Michelet, Werner, and Ludwig Feuerbach (Barnikol, Ms., Quellenteil, 13 2 9 [f] [g] [h] [i] [j], November 1841), where no doubt is expressed over the political tendency of the Posaune. On December 17, 1841, Ruge wrote to Fleischer in Cleves, “You will read the Posaune with pleasure and guess the author easily, since you have him very close by [Bauer was still resident in Bonn]. For it is totally impossible to mystify anyone at all with this form. A real pietist could never in his life get so much out of Hegel” (Barnikol, Ms., Quellenteil, 23 2 9 [k], also in P. Nerrlich, Arnold Ruges Briefwechsel und Tagebuchblätter aus den Jahren 1825-1880, Bd. 1 [Berlin, 1886], 154-155). Rosen cites 247 of Nerrlich’s text (63, note #8), but seems to miss these crucial references and their implications. There is no explicit mention of the text in Ruge’s correspondence in the month of October, but a letter to Fleischer dated October 16, 1841 explains the central doctrine of the Posaune, the derivation of religious consciousness from self-consciousness (Barnikol, Ms., Quellenteil, 13 2 9 [d]), implying close familiarity with Bauer’s theoretical development. It is noteworthy that Ludwig Feuerbach, on the other hand, seems unaware of the identity of the author of the Posaune, but not of its political and theoretical tendency, in a letter to the Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung, December 1841, where he insists on a difference between his own approach and that of the anonymous author: the latter is not directed against Hegel (therefore Feuerbach is not of the opinion that the text is pietistic), whereas his own method is directly opposed because it is based on the “simple truth of nature” against idealism and subjectivism (Barnikol, Ms., Quellenteil 23 2 23 [a]; also reproduced in Karl Grün, Ludwig Feuerbachs Philosophische Charakterentwicklung. Sein Briefwechsel und Nachlass 1820-1850 [Berlin, 1874], 340). Note too that Otto Wigand, publisher of the Posaune, had just issued the first two volumes of Bauer’s Critique of the Synoptics, and was active in Young Hegelian circles. Finally, Barnikol’s remarks on postal censorship (Bruno Bauer, 48, 63) help to explain why references to Bauer’s authorship of the Posaune are not more explicit.

14 B. Bauer, Die Gute Sache, 92. The Posaune was banned and confiscated in Prussia on December 15, 1841 (Barnikol, Ms., Bd. 1, #47).
The sustaining irony of the text not only lies in the author's assumption of a pietist identity, but operates at a deeper philosophical level. Bauer attributes to Hegel himself the theoretical and political position which he has developed against Hegel. *Die Posaune* tendentiously modifies the Hegelian problematic in order to develop a theory of free subjectivity as a basis for revolutionary transformation. Contrary to some interpretations, Bauer is not attempting to be consistent with Hegel's own intentions, nor merely to liberate unchanged a supposedly esoteric doctrine concealed in an exoteric husk. Nor are differences due to errors or misreadings of the Hegelian text, as has also been proposed. The *Briefwechsel* confirms that in 1840 Bauer did not in fact consider Hegel an atheist, and that so much of his earlier enthusiasm for Hegel had cooled that he was "scarcely still able to read the book [the Philosophy of Religion] through again", characterized as it was by the "crude juxtaposition of the most complete critical developments with the most orthodox manner of speech". In the text Bauer consciously and unilaterally develops these subjective and critical elements. The result is vastly different from the Hegelian system, both theoretically and practically. But the text denies this difference, and makes Hegel himself a Jacobin.

*Die Posaune* is designed as an appeal to all Christian governments, so that they might finally acknowledge what a deadly danger threatens everything existing and particularly religion, the *only basis of the state*, if they do not immediately extirpate the root of the evil. There will be nothing fixed, certain and lasting any longer, if the cunning error of that philosophy continues to be tolerated in the Christian state ... All divine and human authority is denied by [the Hegelians]. Once they have destroyed religion and the Church, so will they certainly also want to destroy the throne.


16 Rosen, *Bauer and Marx*, 74-75, 83, 170, 216, suggests misinterpretation through error or negligence, although he also mentions certain "pragmatic considerations" (76: elimination of religion, development of freedom, etc.), which condition the Bauerian approach. He sees Bauer deviating from his atheistic interpretation of Hegel in 1845 (101).


18 *Ibid.*, citing *Briefwechsel*, 50. It is important to note that Bauer's revolutionary Hegel is not an entirely fictional creation. For Bauer Hegel lends himself to such an interpretation, once his central concepts are critically appropriated and transformed. It is not simply a matter of liberating the esoteric from the exoteric, as the hidden essence is itself contradictory and must be purged of its positivity. Bauer gives a clear account of his critical procedure in *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: O. Wigand, 1841), xxi; and in "Rezension: Bremisches Magazin für evangelische Wahrheit gegenüber dem modernen Pietismus", in A. Ruge, ed., *Anekdoten zur neuesten deutschen Philosophie und Publizistik*, vol. 2 (Zurich and Winterthur: Verlag des literarischen Comptoirs, 1843), 131.

In freeing the Hegelian system of its inner positivity, Bauer formulates the classic "left" reading of Hegel. This critical confrontation can perhaps be taken as a paradigm of the liberation of the new principle from its entanglements with the old, and can thus throw light on the difficult problem of determinate negation in Bauer (see below, notes 65-67).

Our "pietist" author, claiming to write anonymously because he seeks only a heavenly reward, develops an absolute opposition between faith and reason as the basis for his supposed indictment of Hegel. "The Christian well knows that it is the pride of the flesh for man to attempt to justify God and to prove his revelation to be true."20 Ironically deriding pietistic fideism,21 Bauer asserts that the claim of reason, even if it begins to stir innocuously enough in the defense of religion,22 leads inevitably to atheism and republicanism. Faith, church and state form an indissoluble bond based on the rejection of reason, the repudiation of human autonomy, and the humble acceptance of tutelage and domination. Hegel's system, says Bauer, drives the contradiction of faith and reason to an extreme where it necessarily collapses. Bauer sees Hegel as the authentic heir of the "devilish" work of the French Revolution. He depicts Hegel's struggle for self-consciousness as a direct continuation of the revolutionary strivings of the French and a deeper interiorization of their principles, so that Church and State in Germany are now staggering under the assault.23

The hour has struck, in which the evilest, the proudest—the final enemy of the Lord will be hurled to the ground. But this enemy is also the most dangerous. The French [Wälschen]24 that people of the Antichrist—with shameless flagrancy, in broad daylight, in public, in the face of the sun which never before had seen such an outrage, and before the eyes of Christian Europe, reduce to nothingness the Lord of Ages, just as they had murdered the consecrated of God; they committed blasphemous adultery with the whore, Reason; but Europe full of holy zeal, choked the horror and united into a holy Alliance to fetter the Antichrist in irons and to set up again the eternal altars of the true Lord.

"Then came—no! then was summoned, cherished, protected, honored, and endowed the enemy, who had been externally defeated, in a man who was stronger than the French people, a man who elevated again the decrees of that hellish Convention to the force of law, a man who gave them a new, more solid basis and who made them available under the flattering title, particularly beguiling for German youth, of Philosophy. Hegel was summoned and made the centre of the University of Berlin! This man—if he can still be called by a human name—this man of corruption filled with hate for everything divine and sacred, now began under the shield of philosophy an attack on everything which should be elevated and sublime for man. A flock of young people attached themselves to him and never—in all history—was seen such obedience, dependency, blind trust, as his young followers displayed toward him. They followed him where he led, they followed him in the struggle against the One.25

20 Ibid., 74.
23 Bauer, Die Posaune, 44.
24 This passage is also translated in L. S. Stepelevich, ed., The Young Hegelians, An Anthology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 177. Stepelevich translates "Wälschen" as "Wild Men", rather than as French, foreigners, or indeed Gauls, all of which are lexically more correct. Luther's usage of Wälschen as the French, with derogatory connotation, is established in Grimm's Deutsches Wörterbuch, vol. 13 (Leipzig, 1922), 1332, 1338. Compare Bauer's use of the term in "Dei deutschen Nationalen" (1842), reproduced in Pepperle, Die Hegelsche Linke, 411.
25 Bauer, Die Posaune, 43.
Bauer's claim that Hegel is an atheist, striving to abolish religion in the interests of political revolution on the French model, depends upon the attribution to Hegel of a theory of absolutely free and universal self-consciousness in which the invocation of substance and of a transcendent absolute is merely a necessary but self-annulling illusion. Substance is both assimilated and opposed to subjectivity, and in absolute spirit all religious pretensions dissipate while the absolute itself dissolves into the critical activities of conscious individual subjects. Bauer asserts that Hegel situates the dialectic of particular and universal exclusively within the individual self-consciousness, which now alone bears the weight which Kant and Fichte had placed on the relation of transcendental and empirical ego.

Bauer's exposition of Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion* begins with the critique of immediate consciousness, the subjectivism of Schleiermacher and Jacobi. Against this, Hegel stresses the objectivity of substance, the domain transcending the immediate individual self. A theory which fails to do this remains trapped in the circle of particular feelings and conceptions, which cannot possess truth-value but only subjective certainty, as the *Phenomenology* demonstrates. In contrast, the Hegelian position, the synthesis of particular and universal moments, endows the concept with being and raises the individual from the plane of certainty to that of truth. Immediate individuality cannot be the criterion of theoretical validity nor worldly order; rather the individual must, in the first instance, "sacrifice himself to the substance", internalize it as the substance of his own life. In contrast to Schleiermacher, here the individual renounces immediacy in order to gain back as a new content the contents of the absolute, to become the organ through which the absolute comes to consciousness.  

In this dialectical movement, the universal or substance exists as "absolute content" in which all particularity, including the particular ego, is subsumed. This creates in Hegel an appearance of pantheism, which misleads some critics and interpreters such as D. F. Strauss, who never gets beyond this standpoint. According to Bauer, however, Hegel proceeds to dissolve substantiality itself: consciousness, including religious consciousness as its alienated expression, is now grasped as an inner relation of self-consciousness to itself, not to any external hypostasis, even that of substance. Self-consciousness thus conceived is the motive force of history, encompassing and generating all content. Bauer contends that Hegel merely invokes the moment of the absolute at the earlier stage of the argument in order to elevate the immediate consciousness to universality, to purge it of its particularities, and to

26 Ibid., 52-54, 57.  
27 Ibid., 42.  
28 Ibid., 47, 48.
reveal to it the identity of self-knowledge and knowledge of the world. Now the equation of substance and universality can no longer be sustained. Subject has subsumed its other to itself, and, assimilating the principle of universality, has rendered substance an evanescent moment of its own becoming. This Hegelian idealism is revolutionary: the rights of free self-consciousness are absolutely affirmed against any positivity, against state, religion, hierarchy, or subordination.29

The movement from absolute subsumption to absolute freedom of self-consciousness in Hegel, as Bauer interprets him, follows a complex course. The Absolute appears at first as the "Unterscheidungslos", the pure universal including the self. As such: "The Universal is nothing other than thought, no object external to thinking, but rather the activity of thinking as the undifferentiated, self-subsistent [bei sich selbst Bleibende] act and essence of self-consciousness."30 This pure unity, "is precisely the universal in this, that it is identity with itself, in all things",31 actively encompassing all distinction.

The absolute now attains expression in and through the individual consciousness; the universality of the Absolute is transmuted into the property and object of a particular consciousness. A new struggle between the universal and particular moments now ensues. The universal here appears in the form of feeling—not the purely subjective feelings and intentions of Schleiermacher's immediate consciousness, the first moment of the process, but a higher and contradictory feeling, the contradiction, within the self, of particular and universal moments, "between myself in my pure fluidity and in my determinateness".32

Bauer characterizes this contradictory feeling as alienation, in that the universal, thought in and for itself, appears as the negation of the particular empirical being, a nothingness whose truth lies only in the universal. "In feeling the moment of empirical existence, I feel that side of the universal, negation, as a property falling outside of myself, or if I am this property, I feel myself alienated in my empirical existence, denying myself and negating my empirical existence."33

The passive experience of alienation is transformed but not yet transcended by the activity of the self, positing its determination outside itself and thus externalizing itself. This externalization first appears in art, as the sensuous Anschauung of unity-in-diversity, but the artistic object is itself an inadequate vehicle for the contents of this new consciousness.

30 Bauer, Die Posaune, 137.
32 Ibid., 139.
33 Ibid.
Consciousness does not yet grasp its own essence in the material object of art; truth and objectivity are not yet synthesized in the raw materiality of the thing. The object must be re-integrated into consciousness: essence must appear in the object of consciousness. The next stage consists in positing the objectivity of truth in-and-for itself, with the form of subjectivity cancelling the externality of the object. This is the basis of the religious consciousness as Vorstellung, the divine world of sentiment perfected on the basis of subjectivity. Here all determinateness—all products of the struggle of individual and universal moments of consciousness—are inextricably entwined with sensuous Anschauung or perception. Thus the unity of certainty and truth, particular and universal, assumes concrete but inadequate forms: as specific historical episodes or incidents (hence the form of Revelation), or as the separate traits of the divine Being. The historical role and vindication of Enlightenment is metaphysically founded by Bauer, as the critique of these forms, the radical transcendence of Vorstellung and the purification of all positivity from self-consciousness.

Bauer interprets Hegel as grasping and concretizing the truth of the Enlightenment and thereby radically undermining all religious pretensions. The substantial is finally dissolved as independent of consciousness: Bauer’s Hegel stresses the form-giving activity of practice against all objectivity, but only after consciousness has elevated itself above immediacy. In producing itself as universal consciousness, it engenders the historical world, a theme to be elaborated in the Entdeckte Christentum of 1842-1843.

In Bauer’s reading of Hegel, religious consciousness is always alienated, in all its manifold forms of appearance—whether as immediate feeling, as the immediate grasp of the absolute, or as the immediate sensuous depiction of the unity of universal and particular. Though philosophy appears at the summit of a phenomenological process in which “the religious relation is the dialectic and movement of self-consciousness”, philosophy as the self-knowledge of the historical development of consciousness is absolutely opposed to the religious

---


35 Bauer, Die Posaune, 146.

36 Bauer, Das entdeckte Christentum (Zurich und Winterthur: Verlag des literarischen Comptoirs, 1843), 37.

37 Bauer, Die Posaune, 142.
consciousness, which grasps its own deed as the deed of another. Consciousness grows out of the deepening and universalization of alienation, but only as its complete opposite. A dialectical rupture intervenes both theoretically and historically at the moment of extremest alienation. Christianity is the perfect religion, the purest representation of the religious consciousness; Bauer asserts that all human and artistic interests which give life and content to other religions, all human determinateness which persists in the interstices of their doctrinal systems, are completely deficient here. The negation of this purely abstract religion is the practical task which philosophy must now undertake.38 The attack on Christianity is at the same time a direct assault on the ideological bases of the restoration state39 and on all irrational social institutions.40 The philosophy of self-consciousness is the birthplace of the new world and the critique of everything existing. In a strikingly Fichtean formulation, Bauer contends:

Knowledge is free, frees the spirit and its determinations transform the previous content into a new form, therefore also into a new content, into the laws of freedom and self-consciousness. Philosophy is therefore the critique of the existing: through knowledge the spirit posits a distinction between knowledge and that which is. What is and what should be are distinguished. The ought however is alone the True, the Legitimate and must be brought to recognition, mastery, and power.41

The new principle appears at once in theory and practice, in direct relation to reality as act, a practical opposition between interests.42 The practical relation is the genuine form of existence of the theoretical principle: "the opposition must be serious, sharp, penetrating, ruthless, and the overthrow of the existing the principal aim".43 Philosophy is the consciousness and practice of freedom, and its major enemies Bauer identifies as Christianity and the Christian state. Both must be overthrown.

Despite evident similarities, Bauer's theory of self-consciousness, here attributed to Hegel himself, must not be seen as a simple reversion to Fichteanism. It is rather an inner engagement with the principles of the Hegelian system, with the intent of producing a theory of self-determination in history and with the effect of revivifying certain themes of earlier philosophies of self-consciousness. It develops on the terrain of Hegelian philosophy, through an immanent reformulation and critique of Hegel's central categories (Concept and Being, negativity, mediation, the Absolute, self-consciousness, and, more concretely, state and civil society), in response to the rhythm of revolutionary political strug-

38 Ibid., 68.
39 Ibid., 45, 81.
41 Ibid., 82.
43 Ibid., 82.
Hegel’s real limitation for Bauer is the mediating, reconciling function of the dialectic, which sublates contradictions without eliminating them. In principle dialectic dissolves all positivity, calls everything stable into question, but, Bauer really believes, in Hegel’s usage it has become frozen in the configuration of the present; it seems to justify the existing order, to demonstrate its rationality and necessity represented as the totality of objective spirit. For Bauer the dialectic must be re-interpreted in a revolutionary sense to become the theoretical instrument completing and transcending the work of the French Revolution, temporarily arrested by the Restoration. The new theory for a revolutionary age is to be generated through a reformulation of the basic dialectical categories. Concretely, it is to be framed on the one hand by a critique of the state through a redefinition of positivity or substantiality (for Bauer, the theoretical source of Hegel’s ultimate conservatism), and on the other by the critique of atomistic egoism and particularism, the characteristics of bourgeois civil society. Thus both pseudo-objectivity and immediate subjectivity are to be transfigured in a new dialectic of free universal subjectivity or self-consciousness. *Die Posaune* directly initiates the critique both of positivity and of egoism (here, both the clinging to immediate, “positive” individuality and the egoism of the religious conscience) which a number of subsequent texts will elaborate. It justifies the overthrow of the forms of Hegelian objective spirit through a fundamental critique of the doctrine of the Absolute.

Bauer’s notion of self-consciousness in *Die Posaune* is a reworking of Hegel’s concept of Absolute Spirit, the *dynamis*, propulsive force and goal of the historical process. Bauer takes as his guiding motif the central Hegelian doctrine of the return to self from externality or otherness, the very paradigm of the life of spirit. With Bauer, however, this concept expresses the movement of individual self-consciousness, thus stripping the absolute of its transcendent character while elevating individual consciousness above its immediacy and opening the realm of free self-determination. Spirit is not a hypostasis, separate from the intellectual production of individuals, but is the very product constantly renewed of intellectual activity itself. It is not, however, any undifferentiated activity which can be the locus of *Selbstbewusstsein*. Self-consciousness is free creation, free positing and negation of the given. Its content is established with reference to liberal ideology: the development of liberty, the possibility of universal participation in the construction of reality; equality, the ultimate identity of all self-consciousness and the suppression of all irrational privileges; and fraternity, the creation of a

---

44 “To understand Bauer, one must understand our time. What is our time? It is revolutionary”, Edgar Bauer, *Bruno Bauer und seine Gegner* (Berlin: Jonasverlag, 1842), 4, 5.

new community of self-determining rational individuals. While infused with the content of liberal subjectivity, it is designed to overcome the antinomic formulations of Enlightenment materialism, the unsublated difference of substance and subject. From the perspective of the political revolution as an ongoing task, Hegel’s own transcendence of the opposition of substance and subject in the problematic of objective and absolute spirit as realized totality must likewise be submitted to fundamental revision.

The basis of Hegel’s absolute idealism is the anchoring of the Concept in Being, or the doubling of reason as subjective consciousness and as objective reality. Essence must appear, must confront subjective consciousness as embodied and external. Thus in fact for Hegel, Being is never a merely transient moment but an abiding element in the development of reason itself. Here Hegel recapitulates the central doctrine of Aristotle’s teleology, the cancelling of the abstract, Platonic, opposition of essence and existence through the actual growth and development of the real, as synthesis of both terms, the incorporation of the Concept into Being itself. Despite his ironic counter-claims, Bauer believes that Hegel’s notion of absolute spirit depicts the historical process as essentially complete. Reason has realized its dialectical progress and now encloses its products in a totality which imbues each element with true infinitude. In confronting being, it confronts its own self and knows itself in this reflection. It has grasped the stages of its own becoming as a necessary dialectical progression, and the patterns of the present as its own true incarnation. Here determination and determinateness are fused, subject has made itself substantial in the community of rational intersubjectivity, and substance is pervaded by subjective deed, has become the translucent product of subjective activity. Hegel fundamentally contrasts Being at this level of realization, where objective spirit has overcome its contradictions, with transcended historical stages of being grasped as positivity. Where telos has not yet infused matter with its absolute form, being can indeed become positive and fixed in opposition to spirit, thus standing in need of fundamental transformation. Though they are always the product of reason, until their definitive resolution in absolute spirit the forms of Being can nonetheless come to block the further unfolding of reason, to represent fetters and limits which must be overcome in a new movement of spirit. But Hegel cannot leave unresolved this Fichtean opposition of Sein and Sollen, of determinateness and determination, and so propounds the doctrine of Absolute Spirit as the effective solution of the substance-subject problematic, the overcoming of positivity in realized and rational totality.
Bauer finds Hegel's authentic solution theoretically inadequate and practically repugnant. His new formulation of the dialectical categories precludes the possibility of subjectivity coming to rest in a totality of its creations where it finds itself perfectly reflected. The duality of Being and Becoming is thus restored. His real argument against Hegel is that the principle of substantiality is not fully cancelled by that of subjectivity. Hegel's absolute idealism is therefore to be transformed into a subjectivist dialectic where essence realizes itself in and through individual consciousness to the exclusion of all elements of transcendence, as both Absolute Spirit and substance are now taken to be. In Bauer's formulation, essence posits existence only to cancel it again immediately; the constant positing and negating of the given is nothing other than the free activity of self-consciousness. Bauer here rejoins the dialectic of the Stoics which excludes an intermediate term between Logos and individual consciousness, but it is significant that under the impact of liberalism and the development of the productive forces, essence is conceived as dynamic and unfolding, not as unchanging and self-identical. Where the Stoic subject participates in the determinations of being over and against the soulless empirical flux of becoming, the subject for Bauer is active self-consciousness infused with liberal principles. This subject participates in the determination of becoming, the expansion of the realm of freedom, over and against the spiritless fixity of being. Reification is the outcome of a historical developmental process in which Geist creates the forms of substance and then retreats from them, leaving them positive, fixed and rigid. The material world, though the product of spirit, is never its adequate embodiment. Spirit is at home only in negativity. It is itself the sphere of determinateness, of principles and of principled activity or praxis, while the determinateness of nature and society appears as pure positivity, the congealed product of anterior activity which, for Bauer, must constantly be annulled and posited anew. Bauer fuses teleology and freedom and situates them in the rational subject, in opposition to the sphere of material necessity.


50 In his early works Hegel himself had identified externalization, positivity and alienation, but later he creates a historically differentiated vision of positivity in respect to the stages of evolution of spirit. Not all externalization is positivity, but only that which stands opposed to the higher development of freedom. This distinction opens the way to the conceptualization of objective spirit as the (relative) realization of the strivings of spirit. This latter conception is introduced in Frankfurt, in the 1800 introduction to the Berne manuscript The Positivity of the Christian Religion. It is still present in the Lectures in the History of Philosophy, whose final version is given in 1831. See Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, vol. 3 (London: Kegan Paul, 1895), 158, 379-380, 384, 386-391; Lukacs, The Young Hegel, 74-89, 225-233.
Freedom is the inner liberty of the will, attained through the purging away of particularity in favour of universality. But, whereas the Stoic determinate will is cultivated in abstraction from nature, the determinate will in Bauer, as self-consciousness, breaks through into existence in unending transcendence of the given, generating form and also, in the same movement, an opposition between this new form and its own creative power and infinitude. Enriched by its own dialectical process, it can then engender new and more complex forms. Thus the contradiction is driven to a higher and higher pitch. The historical process is precisely the constant reproduction of this opposition. The ideal must be imposed upon phenomena by self-conscious subjects, who submit the given to radical critique, free themselves from the grip of the positive, and dissociate themselves from the social relations which constitute the existing totality.51 Bauer’s modification of Hegel appears most starkly here: he has abandoned Hegel’s insistence on the identity of concept and being, and has sought to realize the concept in and through individual self-consciousness. Being is never an affirmative moment of the concept. Only in constant transformation does individual self-consciousness attain identity with the universal, its own true self. Bauer conceives this reformulation of dialectic under the pressure of an emerging revolutionary struggle against the absolutist state and its ideological supports. Its essence is the repudiation of positivity and the absolute liberation of subjectivity.

The ideological function of this theoretical transformation is evident. Truth never lies in existing structures, but only in the enlightened self-consciousness, in the individual as the autonomous subject of his own world and his own relationships. All positivity, all conditions which militate against this absolute freedom, which seek to perpetuate themselves against the further development of reason, are immediately illegitimate. Consciousness retreats out of the products of its anterior activity back into the pure domain of subjectivity, and then breaks forth afresh as a new principle enriched by its struggles with a higher dialectical content. It opposes the given with unbending resolution, and in this confrontation destroys its opposite, creating a new totality as its own manifestation. But with Bauer the process is endless. The newly created products of spirit themselves become positive and must be annulled in turn. The political consequences drawn from this formulation in the Posaune, the critique of the Christian state and the call for the continuation of the French Revolution, are developed and generalized in the texts of 1842-1844.52

52 Notably in Bauer’s contributions to the Anekdota, vol. 2.
In this transformation of the substance-subject problematic, the repulsion of consciousness from the products of its activity transposes the moments of particularity and universality into the subjective consciousness alone. The relation of finite and infinite is a struggle within the individual subject. As Bauer explains in _I Synoptiker_:

When we employ the category of self-consciousness, we do not mean the empirical ego, as if this had constructed its conceptions _[Anschauungen]_ out of pure accident or arbitrary combinations ... Unlike the immediate ego, ... the developed self-consciousness ... relates to reality with a wholly different consciousness, a critical consciousness.

The bearer of self-consciousness is indeed the concrete empirical subject, but in his universal, not his particular determination. In _Die Posaune_, the anonymous Bauer cites in mock disapproval his own edition of Hegel's _Philosophy of Religion_, where his position finds a certain vindication. The self is there depicted as the mediation of the extremes of universality and particularity, each of which both seeks and repels the other:

In thinking I elevate myself to the Absolute over everything finite and am infinite consciousness, and at the same time I am finite self-consciousness, indeed I am this according to my whole empirical determination. ... I am determined in myself as infinite against myself as finite, and in my finite consciousness against my thought as infinite. I am the feeling, the perception, the image _[Vorstellung]_ of this unity and this mutual struggle, I am that which holds together the competing elements, the effort of this preservation and the labour of mind _[Gemüt]_ to become master of this contradiction. I am not one of those caught up in the struggle, but I am both opponents and the struggle itself.

Whereas Hegel goes on to pacify the opposition in the higher unity of absolute spirit, Bauer's theory seizes and develops precisely this moment, the subjective struggle of finite and infinite. This consciousness must nonetheless be externalized. Like Fichte, Bauer posits the primacy of activity over implicit being. The ever-renewed contradiction between self-consciousness and reality, positing and positivity, reproduces the Fichtean contrast of _Sollen_ and _Sein_. But Bauer criticizes as ahistorical Fichte's radicalization of Kantian practical reason. Accordingly, he modifies this position fundamentally by understanding externalization through the prism of a Hegelian phenomenology of consciousness, now immediately one with the philosophy of history.

In Bauer's subjectivism, however, the notion of substance still plays a vital role. It is invoked directly as a necessary moment in the constitution of self-consciousness, the point at which the subject gains access to

---

53 Bauer, _I Synoptiker_, 81.
55 D. Koigen, _Zur Vorgeschichte des modernen philosophischen Sozialismus in Deutschland_ (Bern, 1901), 48. Rosen, _Bauer and Marx_, 84, correctly argues that Fichte is not decisive for Bauer's reading of Hegel. Cesa, _Sinistra hegeliana_, 306 n., also denies a direct Fichtean influence: it is not Fichte's philosophy, but the Fichtean element in Hegel which Bauer develops. This position is consistent with Bauer's own argumentation in "Charakteristik Ludwig Feuerbachs", 86-88.
the universal by purging his spirit of particularity. It is substance which shatters the atomistic isolation of the particular. This position is required on both theoretical and political grounds. It is necessitated by the Hegelian problematic itself and by the revolutionary use which Bauer wishes to make of it. For his interpretation of Hegel to be plausible, he must confront the crucial position which substance indeed occupies in Hegel’s thought. This he achieves by resuscitating substance as a stage in the development of universality, but in such a way that he can then deny its ultimate validity. Indirectly, moreover, the universality of substance provides the theoretical basis for the very concept of universal self-consciousness. Bauer equates Hegelian substance, absolute spirit, and objective spirit in that each is transcendent with respect to individual subjectivity; while substance is purely objective, lacking the moment of individuality or negativity, absolute and objective spirit each represent a distinct level of fusion of subjectivity with substance. The former generates a closed totality wherein consciousness is finally at rest, history is essentially complete; the latter produces the dialectic of state and civil society. Unlike the position he adopted in the Landeskirche where he simply eliminated religion from an otherwise unmodified absolute spirit and recognized the state as universal determination, the highest form of objective spirit, Bauer now comes to more radical conclusions. Moreover, he does not want to cling to immediate subjectivity, whose forms, religion and possessive individualism, he also repudiates as expressions of the old principle. They are simply substantiality aroused to a rudimentary awareness—alienated, impure forms of consciousness. They represent the heteronomous subordination of consciousness to matter. Against immediacy then, Bauer stresses universality and free determination. But universality is implicitly present in Hegelian substance, though not yet determinate or conscious; and it is the very essence of objective and absolute spirit, themselves syntheses where in the passive universality of substance becomes determinate, and the active but negative universality of the subject becomes concrete. In the notion of universal self-consciousness Bauer preserves the content but not the form of these Hegelian concepts, purged of positivity and transcendence.

His new category contains both a subjective and an objective dimension. In the latter respect, it translates the Hegelian notion of substance mediated by consciousness and therefore infused with dynamism. It is

56 B. Bauer (anon.), Die evangelische Landeskirche Preussens und die Wissenschaft (Leipzig: O. Wigand, 1840). This text was banned at the same time as the Posaune.

57 Private economic interest and religious particularity have an identical theoretical-logical structure but a different systematic place in the historical dialectic, the former being the modern form of particularity. Rosen, Bauer and Marx, proposes a more constrictive interpretation of egoism as primarily the religious consciousness, thereby minimizing Bauer’s critique of possessive individualism, which is central to his conception of revolution and of modern mass society.
the universal as "underscheidungslos", both the first stage in the emergence of universal self-consciousness and the necessary abstract form of all thought-determination. As absolute determination, universal self-consciousness is the pure, abstracted essence of practice, the totality of the operations of consciousness viewed in their implicit structure without regard to their differentiation. Bauer here prescinds from the particular, qualitative characteristics of practice, and stresses instead that the essential determination of all concrete forms is the labour of self-consciousness. The universal self-consciousness is not the substantial, but in its objective aspect it is the abstract form of the production of substance without regard to its qualitative determinateness. It is an idealist version of abstract labour, and history is its product.

In its subjective dimension, universal self-consciousness represents the intersubjectivity of Hegelian objective spirit. Thus freedom as telos and energeia of history is retained at the level of the universal, but a universal shown to be intrinsically subjective, in opposition to Being as positivity. For Hegel it is through substance that the subjective will is mediated with universal telos, engendering a determinate form of community in the domain of objective spirit. So too in Bauer does universal self-consciousness realize the teleological project of the historical liberation of individuality. Bauer depicts this movement also as a dual dialectical progression, again both objective and subjective. At its objective level the first moment is that in which universal self-consciousness appears as the determinate but constricted universality of antiquity, wherein the individual is subordinate to the community and has not yet understood himself as free subjectivity. This is the position which Bauer has described in Herr Dr. Hengstenberg. The next stage is that of the religious consciousness, which grasps the universality of subjectivity in opposition to substance, but then posits this subjectivity outside itself, in a transcendent domain wherein the product of its own deed is estranged from it and appears as the deed of another. In its transcendent character, this moment of self-abasement, where the subject loses himself and worships his own loss, still represents the dominance of substantiality or pseudo-universality over subjectivity, which in turn is constricted into the forms of the unhappy consciousness. Finally the Enlightenment and Revolution regain subjectivity for itself, permitting it to grasp its own universality and to posit it in the world. Here the

58 This is analogous to the universal as Unterscheidungslos discussed by Bauer in Die Posaune, 137.
59 Ibid., 70, 82, 137.
61 Bauer, Die Posaune, 99, 100. See also B. Bauer, "Leiden und Freuden des theologischen Bewusstseins" in Anekdota, vol. 2, 89-112.
liberated consciousness encounters the third moment of substantiality as its mortal foe: possessive individualism, particularity, the immediate consciousness which clings to its own limitation as its essential content. The principle of freedom, enunciated in the French Revolution, now needs to be practically elaborated in order to sweep away the vestiges of positivity and alienation, religion and absolutism.

In its subjective aspect, the phenomenological process of universal self-consciousness is the work of enlightened individual subjects, whose activities form a diachronic nexus. If the community of free self-consciousness is the telos of spirit, it has also been its energeia, the means of historical progress. Here the dynamis is the empirical individual consciousness, which can either attain determinate form and universality through it permeation with energeia, or sink into the positivity and inertia of substance. Unlike the Aristotelian formulation, dynamis is not substance; unlike Hegel, it is not substance as already an externalization of spirit. Rather, it is individual consciousness itself which is the battleground of history.

Bauer's explanation of the process by which the particular consciousness becomes universal self-consciousness is fraught with difficulties. The need to account for the dynamics of the self-determination of consciousness poses acutely the problem of reconciling freedom with the operation of necessity in nature, society, and history. How is it possible to retain an ontological foundation for the historical evolution of freedom without admitting any elements of transcendence outside the formative power of individual self-consciousness? When Bauer abandons the grounding of the consciousness of freedom in the activity of Absolute Spirit, it is not clear that he discovers a new basis on which to demonstrate the teleological process of history.

Bauer does not account adequately for the ethical and ontological characteristics of universal self-consciousness. He accepts the liberal definition of individual self-determination and autonomy as the essence of man, and grasps universal self-consciousness as its genetic process. For Bauer the subject is in essence free in abstraction from his social relations, prior to or outside of society. He possesses freedom as his own innate, inalienable property, a theoretical position which Caudwell describes as the "bourgeois illusion". Thus for all his opposition to possessive individualism, Bauer's own conception shares with it the same fundamental principle, freedom as private property. Bauer will construct his subsequent critique of socialism on this basis.

If in Bauer the process of self-determination always has the same content, the elevation of particularity to universality, it is not evident how the specific forms of its articulation in fact arise. Bauer admits the
presence of objective limits which constrain the patterns of spirit, so that it would appear that substance retains a certain efficacity; on the other hand he denies any possible impact of substance which is not itself mediated through individual consciousness. Thus teleology seems to be limited by necessary immanent causality in nature and society, and yet Bauer repudiates as mythological any notion of causality which is taken to be operative without having first been raised to consciousness. For him the passage from heteronomy and necessity to autonomy can only occur in the full consciousness of freedom. Bauer’s concept of activity is free teleological positing, limited in an ultimately incoherent way by substance. Against this view Marx defines his own notion of labour, in which telos, itself historically conditioned, is realized in fusion with the immanent causality of matter, which is partly mediated already in the form of the instrument of activity.

In the form and content of self-determination, Bauer clearly wishes to avoid an ahistorical conception in which the identity of content generates an identity of form, but his procedure is merely to describe the sequence of historical forms without explaining their necessary concatenation. Again he must confront the consequences of his constriction of substance; though he often does so in ad hoc fashion, he cannot now invoke systematically the material conditions of the genesis, perpetuation, and overthrow of the forms of consciousness. His theory requires that even if liberated consciousness stands over and against the pure positivity of its products, it is still limited by them as a spurious infinite in opposition to the unsublimated finite elements. Even if universal self-consciousness is the opposite of possessive egoism and religion, its form is still indelibly marked by this very opposition. This in itself is certainly not a problem for Bauer. The very stridency of opposition energizes the new principle to overthrow the old world. The difficulty is rather this: how does determinate negation emerge in respect to a specific configuration of Being? On this point there is a marked tension in Bauer’s works.

Sometimes, being is pure particularity whose internal antagonisms bear no determinate negation. Here, there are no particularities of substance which are simultaneously moments of the universal, which lead beyond themselves into essence, presaging the new forms and contents of universality. The universal must then leap over the phenomenal realm, not move through it. In this formulation, becoming is pure negation, which precludes a positive engagement with the articulated

63 Bauer, 1 Synoptiker, VI. Rosen makes a similar point, Bauer and Marx, 73-84, without, however, stressing the complex and subtle dialectical process by which Bauer develops his concept of universal self-consciousness.

64 Cf. B. Bauer, “Der Christliche Staat und unsere Zeit”, Hallische Jahrbücher für deutsche Wissenschaft und Kunst, 135-140 (June 7-12, 1841), 537-558.

65 This appears to be the conclusion of Bauer, Das Entdeckte Christentum.
structure of being or a development of its immanent tendencies. Totality and genesis are bifurcated; one immediacy supplants another. But the new principle is always marked by its opposition to the old. Bauer would certainly not agree with one recent commentator, according to whom self-consciousness can change the world at will, entirely unhindered by real conditions. It is simply not clear how the old principle exerts causality upon the new.

Elsewhere, however, we find evidence of a second model, wherein Bauer is concerned with the delineation of historically specific, contradictory totalities which do appear to bear the seeds of their own immanent negation. Buhr's analysis of the early Fichte points to a similar duality, which he identifies as the struggle of rationalist and historical principle. It may be fruitful to examine Bauer from this point of view. It may be, as well, that this latent tension conditions Bauer's subsequent development to a "pan-criticist" position; he opts for the model of the extrusion of determinate negation into pure consciousness as all social forces seem incapable of the tasks of revolutionary transformation.

The central difficulty rests on the notion of substance in Bauer's work. In its explicit use in Die Posaune, substance is ambiguous; it is both universality and positivity. In the first sense it serves to elevate the particular beyond itself, but only as a necessary illusion which precedes the genuine universality of subjectivity. Here the dialectic progresses from the particularity of consciousness through the implicit universality of substance to the free universality of self-consciousness. Yet the invocation of substance at this level, which seems to accord with the second model of determinate negation, poses interpretative problems of its own. The function attributed to it here appears, but only at first sight, to conflict with the position developed some months previously in I. Synoptiker. There Bauer contends that it is not by reflection on substance as constituted that the immediate awareness rises to self-consciousness. He describes the process of engendering the new as complete interiority and self-reflection, combined with the practical

67 Cf. B. Bauer, "Die Fähigkeit der heutigen Juden und Christen, frei zu werden", in G. Herwegh, ed., Einundzwanzig Bogen aus der Schweiz (Zurich and Winterthur: Verlag des literarischen Comptoirs, 1843), 56-71; B. Bauer, 1 Synoptiker, vii-viii. That Bauer's ontology is limited does not appear to warrant the conclusion that he is not an ontological thinker.
70 Bauer, 1 Synoptiker, 69.
sundering of connections with the existing order. Here it would seem that reflection on the self, not on substance, is the criterion of the universal. This would validate the first model.

Only the subject, the single self-consciousness, can bring substance to form, to pattern \([\textit{zur Gestalt}]\) and therefore also to the determinateness of content \([\textit{Bestimmtheit des Gestalt}\text{es}]\). Nevertheless self-consciousness is not active in this creative endeavour as a pure isolated ego and it does not create and form out of its immediate subjectivity, at least not in the case when its work is taken up, recognized by the people or the community and considered for centuries as the form of its own conception \([\textit{Anschauung}]\). Without always knowing how far it has found itself in connection with its general environment, self-consciousness has stood in opposition with substance, it has been fructified by this contradiction and driven to activity, or rather: the deeper the work is, the greater its success in gaining general recognition, so much more certainly can we assume that the originator, far from all reflection on the universal, has worked in pure impartiality \([\textit{Unbefangenheit}]\) and that the influence of his life-substance on his work has revealed itself in the deep intensity with which he worked.\(^{71}\)

As Bauer has also argued in his critique of Strauss, substance as universal cannot be taken to have an immediate impact, but must be mediated through individual self-consciousness. As with Hegel's absolute, the universal has no immediate organ of cognition—with Bauer indeed no existence—apart from the human spirit. Here, however, Bauer conflates this argument with an argument about substance as positivity. The central Bauerian premise recurs here: the activity of spirit consists in the constant negation of the given, the restless Faustian generation of new form and new content, the primacy of the negative. The passage through substance highlights the ever renewed opposition between consciousness and its product. In retreating into itself out of its creations, self-consciousness creates the possibility of the new. It is thus rather by \textit{opposition} to constituted, determinate substance than by reflection on it that the new appears. Substance is not only an evanescent moment, but its significance as positivity is fundamentally negative.\(^{72}\)

The individual thus grasps his freedom and universality in opposition to existing reality. Lying behind being as its hidden essence and hidden negative, consciousness breaks through into renewed existence as \textit{Prinzip} and as practice at the same time. It is never a question of pure theory: the practical bearing of the principle is precisely its "honour".\(^{73}\) It entails real opposition, the clash of diametrically opposed interests. As Bauer argues in the \textit{Landeskirche}, the new principle is at first accessible to relatively few who have succeeded in opening themselves to the

\(^{71}\) Ibid., 69; cf. Hegel, \textit{Die Phänomenologie des Geistes}, 330. Rosen, \textit{Bauer and Marx}, 57, cites this passage from 1 \textit{Synoptiker} as a simple contradiction with Bauer's general outlook on the universality of self-consciousness; he misses Bauer's conflation of substance and positivity at this point.

\(^{72}\) Cf. Bauer, 1 \textit{Synoptiker}, xxiii n.: "The true positive can only be born when the negation has been serious and universal"; and Bauer, \textit{Herr Dr. Hengstenberg}, 6: "Everything positive is as such posited in opposition, is in itself negative".

\(^{73}\) Bauer, \textit{Die Posaune}, 82.
movement of history. At its nodal points society is divided into the bearers of universal consciousness and those imprisoned in positivity.\textsuperscript{74} Precisely because it is no longer suffused with spirit, the principle of the old order is initially incapable of offering vigorous resistance to the new. It is indolent, cowardly, "massy" \textit{[feig, träge, massenhaft]}.\textsuperscript{75} Its spokesmen seek compromise and conciliation, seek to minimize the difference between the old and the new. The new principle, however, requires the complete overthrow of the old; it develops most rapidly through the exacerbation of contradictions \textit{[Zuspitzung der Gegensätze]}.\textsuperscript{76} Radical critique becomes an arm of practice, practice the vehicle of the new theoretical principle.

Bauer, then, effects the transformation of Hegel's dialectic in the interests of the radical transformation of the present: because of their positivity, religious, political and social institutions have forfeited their right to exist. Reality is to be remade in the light of the new, higher consciousness of freedom, both as idea and as practice. Religion is to disappear, and political power is to be exercised by the community of free and equal citizens. Bauer's dialectic is the theory of the liberation of individuality from all previous historical forms, the theory of the bourgeois revolution in Germany: "Philosophy wants revolution, revolution against everything positive, even against history".\textsuperscript{77} As Bauer has depicted it, Hegel's system is the terrorist regime of the Jacobins.\textsuperscript{78} It teaches "atheism, revolution, and the republic".\textsuperscript{79} For Bauer, revolution and the philosophy of self-consciousness are one.

\textsuperscript{74} Free activity is opposed to subjugation, "staatliche Bevormundung", and atomistic egoism. Besides outright feudalist reactionaries, the partisans of the old order comprise all those who are incapable of rising above immediate individual interests and therefore unable to grasp the principles of universal self-consciousness. This includes liberal constitutionalism. The \textit{Posaune} anticipates the sharp critique of reformism in the texts of 1842-1848. See \textit{Die Posaune}, 56-58, 117-127, where the problem is already clearly posed.

\textsuperscript{75} This characterization persists from \textit{Die gute Sache} (1842), 1 to \textit{Vollständige Geschichte der Parteikämpfe in Deutschland} (1846).

\textsuperscript{76} Bauer's articles of the summer of 1842 are particularly devoted to this problem.

\textsuperscript{77} Bauer, \textit{Die Posaune}, 167.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 164, explicitly the "Verdachtssystem der Jakobiner".

\textsuperscript{79} Bauer, "Bekenntnisse", 86.