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# “The True Practice is Theory”: Edgar Bauer, Republicanism, and the Young Hegelians

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**ABSTRACT**

The recent past has witnessed a significant amount of new interest in the intellectual history of the *Vormärz*, or the period in German history immediately prior to the 1848 Revolutions, and especially in the theories of republicanism developed among those who are variously known as the Young, Left, or New Hegelians. At the same time, scholars have reopened the question of Marx’s relationship with republicanism and the republican conception of freedom. But one figure who has been conspicuously overlooked in this context was arguably the most radical and revolutionary republican of the period: Edgar Bauer. This paper fills a gap in the extant literature by providing a survey of Edgar Bauer’s work during the crucial years of 1841–1843. It shows that his position differed in important ways from that of his brother Bruno and explains the political stakes of his equally vehement attacks on the Christian state, on the one side, and its liberal opposition, on the other. It proposes that his position developed rapidly over the course of the three years in question, until he was finally arrested, put on trial, and imprisoned for insulting religious society, mocking the law, arousing dissatisfaction with the state, and offending the majesty of the king.

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*Wer raset neben ihm, bemuskelt wie ein Brauer?*
*Das ist der Blutburst selbst, es ist der Edgar Bauer.*
*Sein braunes Antlig ist von Bartgesproß umwallt,*
*An Jahren ist er jung, an Listen ist er alt.*
*Von außen blaubefrackt, von innen schwarz und zottig,*
*Von außen Modemann, von innen sanscüllotig.*
(Who races next to him, muscled like a brewer?
Why that’s bloodlust himself, that is Edgar Bauer.
A stubbled beard does his brown face enfold,
In years he is young, in cunning he is old.
On the outside tails of blue, on the inside black and chaotic,
On the outside a man of fashion, on the inside sans-cullotic.)
(Engels and Bauer 1842, 27; translated from German[1])

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## Introduction: Bloodlust Himself

Throughout much of the twentieth century, scholars interested in Marx's relationship with the so-called Young Hegelians placed much of the emphasis on Ludwig Feuerbach, from whom it was said Marx derived his initial commitments to materialism and his early concept of alienation (Avineri 1968; Hook 1962; Löwith 1965; Marcuse 1968; McLellan 1969). The other figures associated with Young Hegelianism, and especially those who, in "The Holy Family" and "The German Ideology," Marx and Engels called the "Critical Critics," or the literary circle congregated around Marx's erstwhile mentor Bruno Bauer (including Edgar Bauer, Ludwig Buhl, Eduard Meyen, Max Stirner, and Carl Nauwerck), were generally characterised the same way Marx and Engels characterised them —utopian, idealist, conceited, excessively theoretical, overly concerned with theology, incapable of engaging in practical politics, and possessed of an Olympian disdain for "the masses" (Marx and Engels 1975, 1976). More recent scholarship, however, has widened the historical aperture considerably, and sought to examine the intellectual struggles of the *Vormärz* independent of the question of Marx's and Engels's early development (Breckman 1999; Moggach 2006, 2011; Stedman Jones 2011; Lambrecht 2013; Quante and Mohseni 2015). As a result, at least two things have come into much sharper focus: first, and despite what Marx and Engels suggested in their polemics against them, that the Young Hegelians and Critical Critics were not perceived by their contemporaries as purely theoretical, ineffective, or abstract, but as a direct threat to the established social and political order; and second, that they were not exclusively concerned with theological debates or exposing the anthropological foundations of religious concepts, but made significant contributions to the history of social and political theory, and especially to the history of republicanism.[2]

This paper is primarily concerned with the second point, and particularly the republican political thought of Edgar Bauer. While significant studies of Edgar's older brother Bruno have appeared in recent years (notably in the work of Douglas Moggach) (Moggach 2003; Sørensen and Moggach 2019; Tomba 2005), Edgar has attracted appreciably less attention. It is true that much of his published work consisted of defences of Bruno (who in 1842 was accused of espousing atheism and stripped of his licence to teach at Prussian universities). But Edgar's approach was distinct and is worthy of separate consideration. Indeed, as I will argue in what follows, Edgar was undoubtedly the most radical republican of all the Young Hegelians and the one most willing to affirm the tradition of the Jacobins and revolutionary terror.[3] He attacked both the defenders of the conservative Christian state (who he claimed had persecuted his brother, and stalled the advance of science and reason), and the proponents of liberal constitutionalism (who he saw as conciliatory to the point of impotence and incapable of effecting real change). Instead, he insisted on a politics of absolute principles, which he associated with pure theory as opposed to compromised practice. When, in 1843, he sought to publish his *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat* (The Struggle of Criticism with Church and State) (Bauer 1843a) without the approval of the Prussian censor, all copies were confiscated and he was submitted to a lengthy legal investigation, at the end of which he was found guilty of insulting religious society, mocking the law, arousing dissatisfaction with the state, and offending the majesty of the king, and sentenced to eight and a half years in prison (later commuted to three). Along with being of intrinsic interest, I propose, a

more comprehensive account of Edgar's republicanism might also shed new light on the (recently revitalised) question of Marx's relationship with republicanism (Leipold 2017, 2020; Roberts 2018).

What follows is broken down into four sections. The first provides a sketch of Young Hegelian republicanism, and suggests they developed two analytically distinguishable types: ethico-juridical republicanism, which sought to enshrine universal ethical ideals in the institutions of the state, and radical political republicanism, which was more concerned with grounding legitimacy in the will of the people. The chief representative of the former, I propose, was Bruno Bauer, while Edgar was the most vehement proponent of the latter. The next two sections trace the development of Edgar's political thought during the crucial years of 1841–1843. They show how he began as a radical critic of the Christian state and its liberal opposition, and how, while he initially called for the creation of a free revolutionary state that would be immediately responsive to the emerging demands of the people, he became disillusioned with this approach, and by 1843 had renounced the concept of the people and adopted a discernibly antinomian position. Whether this position remains "republican," or whether it can be called "anarchist" without anachronism, I will not attempt to determine. But I do claim that it is a potential built into the radical republican approach, in as much as that approach is committed less to institutions and the *res publica* than to a metaphysics of the people. The final, concluding section brings this discussion of Edgar's intellectual development to bear on the still very much incomplete history of Marx scholarship, and points in the direction of future research.

## Republicanism and the Young Hegelians

To get a sense of how dangerous the Young Hegelians were considered in their own time, it is helpful to sample the rhetoric of some of their critics. The term "Young Hegelian" was in fact coined by the conservative historian Heinrich Leo, whose 1838 pamphlet *Die Hegelingen* (The Hegelings) took aim at "the Young Hegelian party" that was emerging around Arnold Ruge's *Hallische Jahrbücher* and accused them of reducing the personal god of Christianity to human self-consciousness, characterising the gospels as myths, denying the immortality of the soul, and seeking to conceal this "godless and wicked doctrine" behind "repulsive and incomprehensible phraseology" (Leo 1838, 4–5). For Leo, such theological positions thinly concealed a commitment to political revolution as well. As, in the years the followed, the Young Hegelians became more open about this commitment, so too did the conservative attacks become more apoplectic. A particularly Illuminating example is provided by the powerful pietist theologian Ernst Hengstenberg's "Die Vollbrachte Revolution" (The Completed Revolution) (1842) which appeared as an editorial in his influential *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung* on July 16, 1842. The piece begins as a critical review of two of Bruno Bauer's recently published works: his satirical *Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel den Atheisten und Antichristen* (The Trumpet of the Last Judgement of Hegel, Atheist and Antichrist) (B. Bauer 1841) and its sequel *Hegel's Lehre von der Religion und Kunst von dem Standpuncte des Glaubens aus beurtheilt* (Hegel's Teaching on Religion and Art Judged from the Standpoint of Faith) (B. Bauer 1842). But its larger theme concerns how the Young Hegelians had radicalised since the time of Leo's initial attack. Then, Hengstenberg recalls,

they "denied not only all articles of faith in Christianity but also all belief in God and eternal life and proclaimed the unconditional autonomy of man in opposition to every master outside or above him." Now, however, they "proclaim that the destructive revolutionary French philosophy of the last century was only a beginning" and that it is "their duty and task to bring its practical results into the life of the people and to transfer them through a philosophy of the act into the realm of actual reality" (Hengstenberg 1842, 449). Hengstenberg (1842, 450) concludes:

> This is the self-imposed goal of these most modern Jacobins who seek to outdo the old-fashioned ones of the French Revolution (who were merely its forerunners) and who, if they had their way, would immediately abolish all worship, demolish all churches, melt the bells into canons, and bring a far more gruesome devastation to Germany than was ever brought to France.

The image of melting church bells into canons is a striking one, and the implication is that, while Christian piety breeds peace and security, atheist revolution generates expansionist militarism. But it is worth noting that, while Bruno Bauer's *Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel den Atheisten und Antichristen* did identify Hegelians with Jacobins, it was composed as a parody of precisely the kind of inflated, fear-mongering rhetoric found in Hengstenberg's editorial. To understand Bruno's actual position, and those of the figures in his circle, a subtler analysis is required.

There can be little question that most if not all the figures associated with the Young Hegelian movement promulgated some version of republicanism and sought to generate a republican interpretation of Hegel's philosophy in general and his *Philosophy of Right* in particular (Moggach 2006; Stedman Jones 2011). But republicanism was not then, as it is not now, a unified and agreed upon theory but a cluster of ongoing arguments and debates. During the *Vormärz*, at least two concepts of republicanism circulated among the Young Hegelians, and particularly among the group associated with Bruno Bauer—what I will call ethico-juridical republicanism, on the one hand, and radical political republicanism, on the other. These concepts, it is important to note, frequently overlapped, and the same individual thinker could draw on elements of both or switch back and forth between them depending on what audience they were hoping to address and what issue they were intending to discuss. But they are at least analytically distinguishable and can be presented as ideal types in the Weberian sense.[4]

The first, ethico-juridical republicanism can be traced back to Kant, and to the German Idealist conception of moral perfectionism. It sought to bridge the gap between morality and right in a manner that would promote modern ethical universalism and subjective freedom over and against the entrenched privileges, hierarchies, and social divisions of the *ancien regime*. While liberal Kantians understood such ethical universalism as a regulative ideal, or a transcendental principle that might guide action and law without ever being fully realised in those things, the more radical groups that took shape around Bruno Bauer and Arnold Ruge took Hegel's critical elaborations of Kant's philosophy as their point of departure, and held that the universal ethical idea was not merely regulative and transcendental, but could be actualised in the norms and institutions of the modern state. But in either case, for the ethico-juridical republicans, the state and the rule of law were understood, not as constraints on some pre-political or natural freedom (as in social contract theory), but as the necessary and animating

conditions of political freedom. Life as a free subject was indistinguishable from, and unimaginable without, life in a free state. Or, in Hegelian terms, the modern state was the actualisation of the Idea of freedom.

As Moggach has shown, this was roughly the position espoused by Bruno Bauer between 1839 and 1842, or the period when he worked closely with Marx (Moggach 2003, 80–136). And it is captured well in one of Marx's earliest articles for the *Rheinische Zeitung* on freedom of the press (first published on May 12, 1842), in which he argued, not for the suspension of all laws regulating public discourse, or a kind of press anarchy, but for the replacement of the current censorship laws, which sought to regulate public discourse in secret, with a publicly recognised and administered "press law." While the former had only what Marx called the "form of law," the latter, if enacted, would constitute "real law." Marx continued:

> Laws are in no way oppressive measures against freedom, any more than the law of gravity is a repressive measure against motion, because while, as the law of gravitation, it governs the eternal motions of the celestial bodies, as the law of falling it kills me if I violate it and want to dance on air. Laws rather are the positive, clear, universal norms in which freedom has acquired an impersonal, theoretical existence independent of the arbitrariness of the individual. A statute book is a people's Bible of freedom. (Marx 1975a, 162)

On such an account, republican freedom would not eliminate domination as such. Rather, it would replace the arbitrary, personal domination of individuals with the rational, impersonal domination of the law. For the ethico-juridical republicans, it thus implied an expansion of the powers of the state, and especially state control of the terrain heretofore occupied by religion and the church, including morality, aesthetics, and education.

Along with his explicitly political writings, this context sheds considerable light on the prodigious studies of the Bible and interventions into church politics that Bruno Bauer produced during this period, including the critiques of the Old Testament, the synoptic gospels, and the gospel of John that he published between 1838 and 1842 (all of which were designed to subsume divine revelation within a larger history and philosophy of what Bauer called "self-consciousness") and his 1840 *Die evangelische Landeskirche Preussens und die Wissenschaft* (The Evangelical Prussian State Church and Science) (in which Bauer defended the Prussian state's unification of Lutheran and Calvinist churches as a necessary stage in the historical process of subordinating religion to reason and science) (Bauer 1840). While, as noted above, commentators interested primarily in Marx often dismissed such works as abstract an apolitical, at the time, and as Moggach explores in some detail, they were understood to be revolutionary. However, revolution in this instance meant first and foremost the subordination of all particular identities and interests—especially sectarian religious identities and narrow economic interests—to the universal reason of the state, and the use of the state to defend and advance the cause of science or *Wissenschaft*, which for Bauer involved the secular elaboration of the Hegelian system. Once all forms of particularism were expunged from public life, Bauer contended, individuals would be free to become active, self-conscious citizens capable of participating in the state, and in the ongoing process of formulating the laws that govern them.

The second, radical political concept of republicanism mentioned above was related but distinct. Its inspiration was less ethical universalism and moral perfectionism than

it was popular sovereignty. Accordingly, it had its roots, less in Kant, than in Rousseau, and particularly in the interpretation of Rousseau advanced by the Jacobins during the French Revolution.[5] Here the aim of republican politics was not merely to replace the personal domination of individuals with the impersonal domination of the law. Nor was it aimed primarily at moral perfection or overcoming the divide between morality and right. It sought, instead, to give force and form to the constituent power or general will of the people. On this account, the state was legitimate insofar as it was an expression of that power or will; it was illegitimate insofar as it sought to constrain or restrict it. Thus, while the ethico-political republicanism of the period was favourable towards the state, which it saw as both a means for securing subjective freedom and a vehicle for fostering political community and the public virtue of the citizens, radical political republicanism could mutate quickly into a suspicion of all state forms, of institutions, and of constitutionalism of any kind. Because it founded legitimacy on concepts like the will of the people, which ostensibly existed prior to and independent of any specific institutions, it could demand the creation of a free state in one breath and renounce the very concept of the state in the next.

Intriguingly, among the Young Hegelians, if Bruno Bauer was the principal theorist of ethico-juridical republicanism, his younger brother Edgar was the most vehement proponent of the radical political variant. While Edgar was nowhere near as prolific as Bruno, he produced a substantial body of work, including dozens of articles for journals like the *Hallische* and *Deutsche Jahrbücher* and the *Rheinische Zeitung*, pamphlets, poetry, at least one novella, and longer monographs aimed at both popular and specialist audiences. A comprehensive study of his thought independent of his relationship to others is certainly in order, particularly in the English-speaking world, where he has often been overlooked, or folded into discussions of those around him. In lieu of such a project, here we can trace the development of his position during the crucial years of 1841–1843 across the axis of one minor text and three major ones: his "Vörlaufiges über 'Bruno Bauer, Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker'" (Overview of Bruno Bauer, Critique of the Evangelical History of the Synoptics) (E. Bauer 1841) a short review of one volume of Bruno's criticisms of the synoptic gospels that was published under the name "Ein Berliner" in the *Deutsche Jahrbücher* on November 1, 1841; his *Bruno Bauer und Seine Gegner* (Bruno Bauer and His Opponents) (E. Bauer 1842), in which he contrasted the corrupt "Christian state" that had persecuted his brother to a genuinely republican "free state"; his *Die liberalen Bestrebungen in Deutschland* (The Liberal Aspirations in Germany) (Bauer 1843b, 1843c), in which he attacked what he took to be the inevitable failures of liberal reformism and constitutionalism, and insisted that a free state could not be granted by existing authorities but only won through struggle and confrontation; and his *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat* (Bauer 1843a), a proto-anarchist tract that, as mentioned, he sought to publish without the approval of the censor, and that consequently led to his trial, conviction, and imprisonment.[6]

## Revolution, Theory and the Free State

Edgar's "Vörlaufiges" develops an analogy between the theological and biblical criticism of David Strauss, Feuerbach, and Bruno Bauer, on the one hand, and the events of the French Revolution, specifically the Reign of Terror, on the other. It is significant for

how brazenly it announces its revolutionary convictions—a highly provocative position that, in a brief editorial "Nachschrift" that follows the piece, Ruge seeks to mitigate by noting that his *Deutsche Jahrbücher* does not endorse the view of the anonymous author, and that, in all such debates, it aspires to be a "battlefield (*Kampfplaßen*)" rather than a "referee (*Kampfrichters*)" (E. Bauer 1841, 419). "No one can deny what the latest acts of criticism are aiming at," Edgar declares. It is not a "revolt" or a "riot," as had been attempted in the past: "it is revolution." Moreover, "in revolution, if we focus on the leaders, the only thing that is certain is victory and supremacy for those who go the furthest and develop the negative principle most sharply and consistently" (417). On this account, Strauss and Feuerbach are insufficiently destructive and too willing to compromise. They are thus destined to be swallowed up in the forward march of events. They are akin to the Girondins, while Bruno is the contemporary Robespierre. "It will not be long," Edgar ominously concludes, "before the Girondin and the Mountain stand in open struggle for life and death . . . Truth can only win through struggle" (418).

This desire to "develop the negative principle most sharply and consistently" is pursued further in *Bruno Bauer und Seine Gegner*, which addresses the details of Bruno's dismissal from his teaching position at the University of Bonn and seeks to raise that event to the level of world historical significance. "You cannot understand Bauer if you do not understand the nature of our time" (E. Bauer 1842, 4), Edgar maintains. "What is the nature of our time?" he asks: "it is revolutionary" (5). Within this framework, Edgar pursues two basic lines of thought. First, he seeks to justify revolution, and to develop what we might call an ethics of the extreme. "You are scared," he tells his reader. "You have been conditioned since childhood to associate the word revolution with a bogeyman, or something accompanied by a guillotine and atrocities of all kinds" (5). But all political "forms" are expressions of the "human spirit," which perpetually grows and changes, meaning that old forms must necessarily be destroyed, and new ones created. The revolution is nothing more frightening than "the right of the present" (7). It "annihilates everything that wants to turn man, this spirit-filled creature, into a mindless, timid machine" (8). Moreover, its excesses are justified and necessary because "truth" can only be found in "the extreme." "Only the extreme can take up a principle purely and carry it through. Only the extreme and its principle have generative power" (37). Second, and more importantly, Edgar develops a sharp opposition between the "Christian state," on one side, and the "free state," on the other. In the former, the institutions of the state become mere instruments of an external, non-state force, namely theology and the church. And this is what made it possible for theology and the church to use the state to persecute Bruno Bauer. In the latter, the state is free in the sense that it is autonomous, or free from external determination. Its power is not limited and partial, but universal and absolute.

One question that contemporary liberal critics of Young Hegelians posed was whether their concept of state amounted to a defence of a centralised administrative authority, and whether subordinating all aspects of society to the state would crush rather than foster individual freedom. Was this not a recipe for state paternalism, a way of reaching back to the absolutist state of the eighteenth century, and thus the opposite of the individual, subjective freedom introduced by Kant (Barbour 2021)? In *Bruno Bauer und Seine Gegner*, Edgar is keen to forestall such a challenge, which he deflects onto the Christian state he wants to attack:

> If we believed that the state had to take care of everything we could not go beyond the Christian state. Because the perfect Christian state is one where not a hair falls from the head of the subject without the knowledge and the will of the regent. Rather we believe that the state, proudly aware of its rationality, must find in freedom that element which educates its citizens to become confident, independent personalities. We believe that, by liberating every power of the individual, the state strengthens the power of the general. (E. Bauer 1842, 104)

What the free state "demands" of its citizens, then, is not subservience but "free self-determination." Indeed, the free state cannot be understood as a centralised administration. For it is nothing more than "the power of common reason that holds its citizens together." It calls on citizens, not to obey, but "to act and speak freely in common awareness of being a free people" (E. Bauer 1842, 105). It is, in other words, a republican state, or one in which all citizens realise their positive freedom by actively and directly participating in public life.

In *Die liberalen Bestrebungen in Deutschland*, arguably his most sophisticated contribution to the political debates of the *Vormärz*, Edgar goes beyond his attack on the established Christian state to pursue an, in his words, "ruthless critique" of the liberal opposition. He does so by way of both an empirical analysis of contemporary events and a unique set of theoretical reflections. If *Bruno Bauer und Seine Gegner* was largely a defence of the older Bauer, here Edgar reveals himself to be markedly more radical, and openly avows a "revolutionary republican" (Bauer 1843b, 40) agenda. The work appeared in two volumes, both published in 1843. The first focused on the constitutional struggles in East Prussia, and especially the case of the East Prussian politician and liberal cause célèbre Johann Jacoby, whose widely read 1841 pamphlet *Vier Fragen, beantwortet von einem Ostpreussen* agitated in favour of constitutional reform and resulted in a protracted legal struggle between Jacoby and the regime of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, including a somewhat exaggerated charge of lèse-majesté, which potentially carried the penalty of death (Clark 2006, 442–443). The second volume considered the situation of the liberal opposition in Baden, which was thought at the time to be Germany's most progressive state, having acquired a written constitution in 1818. More specifically, it examined a complex series of events known as the "vacation dispute" or Urlaubstreit, in which the Grand Duke of Baden's conservative minister Friedrich von Blittersdorf sought to forestall the appointment of two liberal judges who had been elected to the parliament's Second Chamber by refusing to grant them leave or "vacation" from their positions in the state bureaucracy (Gall 1989, 249).

In both instances, Edgar's judgment of liberal politics is scathing. Jacoby based his demand for a constitution on a notoriously unkept promise that Friedrich Wilhelm III made in 1815, following the Wars of Liberation, to grant Prussian citizens political representation. But in doing so, Edgar claimed, he not only ignored twenty-five years of historical development. He also forfeited his claim from the outset. For he grounded it in precisely that which a republic or free state would have to extinguish, namely the arbitrary power of the king. That which is offered by the will of a king can just as easily be retracted by the same will. And thus, Edgar concludes, insofar as he appealed to the king's promise at all, Jacoby was a "revolutionary legitimist," not a "legitimate revolutionary" (Bauer 1843b, 10). If the legal struggles of Jacoby and the East Prussian liberals exposed the tragedy of constitutionalism, the procedural complexity of the Urlaubstreit in Baden, which bordered on the absurd, exposed its comedy or farce. In fact, on Edgar's

account, both revealed the extent to which liberalism was "capable of provoking struggles but incapable of completing them" (Bauer 1843b, 9). "Constitutionalism does not provide solutions to the riddles that modern times pose," Edgar insists (Bauer 1843c, 17). Those who want to meet the times must be willing to take "decisive action"—not operate within the established norms and institutions, but "go beyond their nature and become revolutionary republicans" (Bauer 1843c, 41).

It is here that Edgar elaborates on the crucial distinction between "practice" and "theory" and insists on the priority of the latter. The liberal, he notes, will always claim that their approach, while not ideal, is nevertheless "practical." But pursuing incremental change through established mechanisms ignores the extent to which those mechanisms are designed to prevent change. "To be practical is to be dependent on the system that punishes you," Edgar insists. It "binds you to the enemy." For the same reason, under current conditions, "the true practice is theory (*Die wahre Praxis ist die Theorie*)" (Bauer 1843b, 27). While liberal practicality entails perpetual compromise and indecision, "theory is proud and independent." It articulates absolute "principles" and refuses "every mediating contract." It teaches, not conciliatory respect for one's enemies, but "real decisive hatred" (28).

This same privileging of principles and theory over compromise and practice draws Edgar in the direction of a reductive approach to law—one that borders on, but stops short of spilling over into, antinomialism. Liberal constitutionalism can never accomplish the "progress" it promises or generate new rights, Edgar argues. Rather, as the worsening plight of the "lower classes" and "proletariat" in constitutional states makes abundantly clear, a constitution is only ever "the organisation of existing rights" (Bauer 1843b, 55). Especially when it comes to economic inequality, it does not challenge privilege but solidifies it. And this is so because "laws are nothing more than an expression of the conditions in which they are created." By the same token, reforming the law can do nothing to reform those underlying conditions. Indeed, on Edgar's account, "a legal reform is a contradictio in abjecto; it is a guillotine without the falling blade (*Guillotine ohne Fallbeil*)" (31). The juxtaposition of the French and German words for guillotine in this last phrase is somewhat opaque. But Edgar's point seems to be that Germany's liberal constitutionalists and legal reformers mistakenly believe they can replicate the governmental and administrative achievements of the French Revolution without having to suffer through the bloodshed and terror of an actual revolution. For Edgar, then, "practice" signifies impotent gradualism, while "theory" is the weapon of unflinching revolutionaries.

But despite its attack on liberal constitutionalism and flirtation with antinomialism, it is important to emphasise that *Die liberalen Bestrebungen in Deutschland* does not quite repudiate the state as such. This is not an anarchist document. On the contrary, much of it is devoted to articulating a revolutionary republican theory of the state—one that is adequate to what Edgar calls "modern" freedom, or a freedom that refuses all hierarchy and privilege, including any opposition between rulers and the ruled, and that demands absolute egalitarianism. At the core of this theory of state is what we might call a metaphysics of the people, or a conception of the people as a unified substance irreducible to the individuals who compose it. The figure of the people was, of course, hardly the exclusive property of radical political republicans like Edgar. Liberal constitutionalists also claimed to desire the representation or, at times, participation of the people in the

institutions of government. "But," Edgar declares, "it is not enough for the people to take part in the state; the people should be the whole state" (Bauer 1843b, 54). The liberal constitutional state prides itself on achieving a delicate balance of powers—legislative and executive branches, upper and lower assemblies, special provisions for estates and corporations, a clear assignment of provincial and federal jurisdictions, and so on. A republican free state would do away with all such divisions and separations, and ground legitimacy directly in the unified will of the people. The people would rule itself, and the positive institutions of government would become an executive organ charged with the task of enacting the people's will. All right would rest with the people, and all competing interests would have to submit to its singular authority.

"Where the people are not everything," Edgar writes, "one cannot really speak of a people. Either the people is the only force that unites all power in itself or it is nothing." For the same reason:

> In the republic there is no government at all, but only an executive power. A power (*Gewalt*) that arises purely from the people does not have independent officials or independent principles vis-à-vis the people. Rather, the only supreme authority is based on the people, which is the source of its power and its principles. The term government (*Regierung*) does not fit into a people's state (*Volkstaat*). (Bauer 1843c, 69)

Edgar makes a similar point in his discussion of the Urlaubstreit, at the core of which was a power struggle between elected representatives, on the one side, and appointed government officials or bureaucrats, on the other. The republican free state would eliminate all such struggles:

> Since the people must be the exclusive source of all power and all right, there is no longer any talk of two opposing powers, no more subjugation of one power to another, because the government resulting from the unity (*Einen*) of the people will never be in opposition to the officials, who owe their origin to the same power. . . . Then the people's representation no longer has the false sense of a guarantee against the comprehensive will of an independent governmental power but will be the representative of state reason (*Staatsvernunft*), the embodiment of the people's intelligence. (Bauer 1843c, 50)

Inasmuch as they sought a balance of powers, the liberal constitutionalists continued to understand right as the claim of particular interests. Liberal right therefore implied contestation, and ultimately "the subjugation of one power to another." Republican right, alternatively, was universal, thus precluding contestation and subjugation.

What this approach to the state would mean institutionally is difficult to ascertain in advance. Edgar contends that political forms emerge spontaneously out of revolutionary process, rather than being their predetermined goal. That said, he does use the language of "representation," and implies a republic rooted in the unified will of the people would entail the election, not only of delegates to a legislative assembly, but of all governmental offices and posts. Under such a system, "officials" would "act in the name and according to the will of the people." They would not be "servants," nor would they be mere "tools" of any higher authority. Rather, in carrying out their own will, they would "freely carry out the people's free, sensible will" (Bauer 1843c, 73). The notion that, in a republic, any given individual acting in accordance with their own will would also be acting in accordance with the general will is one interpretation of Rousseau's approach to the issue. And while Edgar does not mention Rousseau by name, something like his argument for the

fusion of the particular individual with the universal general will runs through *Die liberalen Bestrebungen in Deutschland*. It comes into sharp focus in Edgar's discussion of press freedom.

During the *Vormärz*, one standard liberal justification for press freedom, including the one presented by Young Hegelians like Marx and Ludwig Buhl, involved championing political pluralism. On this account, while falsehoods and errors would undoubtedly find their way into print on occasion, a free press would provide a stage on which different interests, factions, and parties could compete with one another discursively and symbolically, thus mitigating the potential for violence and providing the government with a clear indication of the vicissitudes of public opinion (Marx 1975a; Buhl 1842). Edgar's republican defence of the free press is pointedly distinct. In an "absolutist state," Edgar writes, there is no press freedom whatsoever. In a "constitutional state," however, things are not much different, as the writer has some freedom, but only as a "private individual," who can always be singled out and condemned if they publish anything that challenges the public order. Only in a republican "free state" is there true press freedom. And this is so because, in a republic, the press would not rely on the good will of the government or wealthy patrons but would be "a public institution." "Here the writer is no longer a private individual and there can no longer be any question of a harmful press influence because there are no preventative measures and no patronage at all," Edgar explains. Here "the individual" is "no longer an individual, but a member of a true and reasonable general public," and on that basis "has the right to speak for himself." Here, finally, "even the apparently wrong opinion finds its antidote in the reason of society, and the people have the right to hear everyone" (Bauer 1843c, 95).

Two final elements of *Die liberalen Bestrebungen in Deutschland* are worth mentioning here: first, its presentation of an almost wistful ontology of becoming; and second, its direct appeal to "the masses" as the agent of historical change. The first provides a philosophical basis for Edgar's commitment to revolutionary process independent of any specified end or goal. Not only revolution, but history and being as such can only be understood as process and becoming. Thus, on Edgar's account:

> Everything in the world is only because it becomes, and the only guarantee of its existence is its development. From the beginning, nothing was absolute, and this will always remain eternal. So too reason is not something fixed. It is not a fixed thing but eternal development and constantly different. (Bauer 1843b, 34)

The same logic justifies Edgar's commitment to "ruthless criticism" of every established and practical political position, including the most progressive ones, in the name of absolute theoretical principles, and ultimately leads to his appeal to the masses. Edgar writes:

> One must be ruthless about the problems and dissect everything with the scalpel of criticism. It is impossible for the person of a regent, even if he were filled with the most sacred zeal, to solve the questions of our time or to bring its struggles to completion. The masses (*Die Massen*) must work; the whole of humanity must lend a hand. It must be drawn into the development of history. No one is so arrogant as to believe he can do everything alone or that he knows what history has in store. (Bauer 1843b, 58)

Revolution, then, was not to be understood as an instrumental means to a determined political end but as an open-ended process in which both intellectuals and the masses entered the movement of history.

## From Radical Republican to Proto-Anarchist

The fact that Edgar's call was not immediately answered seems to have had a significant bearing on Edgar's next major work, *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat*. Thus, if the target of *Bruno Bauer und Seine Gegner* was the conservative Christian state, and that of *Die liberalen Bestrebungen in Deutschland* was the liberal constitutional opposition to that state, *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat* begins by taking aim at a new enemy of "critique," namely "the mass" or the people themselves. In Edgar's estimation, the Prussian government's persecution of the radical Hegelians in the early part of 1843 represented an opportunity for "spirit" finally to confront "Cross" and "Throne." But that opportunity was squandered by "the tremendous force of inertia" that held sway over "an uneducated and selfish mass" (Bauer 1843a, 4). Feigning to speak directly to this inert mass, Edgar insists that the problem is not so much with church and state as it is with them, and their infuriating unwillingness to act. He declares:

> You yourself have a police-sentiment (*Polizeigesinnung*), so you are not treated like a free people. You do not allow your thoughts to be expressed within yourself, which is why government is permitted to supress the free expression of ideas. You yourself are comfortably busy with your individual and philistine affairs; you know nothing of the higher human question of freedom. And that is why the government treats you as individuals, supervised and lovingly attached to a police guard. (Bauer 1843a, 5)

The masses, in other words, had contented themselves with a negative, private, narrowly bourgeois freedom that is fostered and protected by the state and its police. They had refused the higher, positive, public freedom associated with political action—a freedom that consists, not in avoiding all external interference, but in collective self-determination.

As in Edgar's earlier works, *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat* emphasises "ruthless critique" and the priority of theory over practice. Those who are practical seek only the paltry freedom that is granted by an existing order. Genuine freedom, since it opposes all authority, cannot be granted by, or even demanded of, any authority. It can only be enacted. It is less a goal than it is an axiom or presupposition of revolutionary action. Thus, Edgar counsels his reader: "Do not censor yourself and you will not be censored. Be free yourself, and you can fight for freedom. Abandon the bourgeois spirit and you will gain recognition of your human rights" (Bauer 1843a, 5–6). In as much as Edgar published it without seeking the permission of the censor, *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat* constitutes an example or performance of the freedom it recommends. Indeed, its positive agenda is less to challenge church, state, or any other authority than it is to expose the inadequacies of progressive movements that remain unwilling to risk the same freedom. "Criticism . . . exists specifically to demonstrate the inconsistency of striving for freedom in half-measure," Edgar writes. This includes the "Nationalist, the Constitutionalist, and the Republican," all of whom limit freedom to something that can only emerge within the horizon of a state. It may even include "the Communist"—although, Edgar allows, insofar as Communists are willing to challenge the state form, they "stick consistently to universal freedom and reason" (10).

The vast majority of *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat*, which includes over three hundred pages, rehearses the issue of Bruno Bauer's dismissal, examining it in relation to the state, the university, and public opinion. But buried towards the end (perhaps in hopes of concealing it from authorities) is an incendiary section called "The

Political Revolution." The section begins by refuting both the Jacobins and the 1830 Revolution for attempting to achieve freedom through the mechanisms of politics and state power. As Edgar sees it, the same error plagues emancipatory projects in contemporary Germany. "We consider the new experiment that the people are making with political freedom and the vaunted constitutionalism and republican state constitution (*Staatsverfassungsen*) as nothing," Edgar asserts. "The state efforts, for which various peoples now work, will finally lead them beyond the state. The very word freedom is repugnant to the state. That is what history will teach us" (Bauer 1843a, 297). The French state which, in the wake of the 1830 Revolution, had become an instrument of monied interests, provides the evidence. "There is where a constitution leads, and where it must lead," Edgar maintains. "Given time it will become just as oppressive and tyrannical as any other form of state" (298). Thus, it is necessary to abandon the republican goal of a free state in favour of what Edgar now calls a "free society," which he sums up in the following terms: "'No private property, no privilege, no difference in status or estate, no usurpatory government': that is our pronuncimento; it is negative, but history will write its affirmation" (300). For Edgar, those who request a positive agenda are requiring the prediction of something that cannot be known in advance. The current time is "only critical and destructive," and all discussion of a "rational state" or "good government" should be dismissed as "sentimental chatter." Edgar continues: "Only with the revolution, which brings the destruction of the forms of the state, does true history begin" for only then does "mankind" become "self-conscious" of "the principles that move it forward," and only then does it have its "goal—freedom—in sight" (304).

The same line of argumentation sees Edgar disavow the concept of "the people" that had been so integral to his previous work, and to present it as inextricably bound up with politics and the state. "The people is a political concept, a word of the heart," Edgar writes. Nothing "prevents a tyrant from acting in the name of the people" and nothing "prevents a people from shedding blood for a royal family" (Bauer 1843a, 314). Far from being inherently revolutionary, the people are easily transformed into "trusting sheep" who "allow themselves to be led." Consequently, we must admit that "the concept of freedom is not included in the concept of the people." While previously Edgar had understood freedom in terms of participation in politics, public life, and the state, now he wants to draw attention to the necessary social conditions for freedom, and especially social equality. Society organised under the auspices of a state, or what Edgar calls "state society," offers a hollow and false version of equality to prop up its hollow and false version of freedom. Or, as Edgar puts it:

> State society also boasts a kind of equality. But at most it amounts to the equality of a selfish race for private advantages. It cannot break away from the caste-spirit (*Kastengeist*) because it is based on an addiction to taking advantage of one another. (Bauer 1843a, 314)

It can offer legal equality, to be sure. But

> what does abstract equality before the law mean if the law itself is unfair, if it ascribes the advantages of inherited property (*Besißes*) and cultural education (*Bildung*) to a few, but forces the great majority to tolerate frightening work for a meagre existence and to abstain from thinking altogether? (Bauer 1843a, 314)

Edgar predicts that those impoverished by this social order will revolt against it, not only because of their material destitution, but also because "every man has a need to think."

But his main concern is to distinguish between an ineffective "political opposition," which seeks negotiation and compromise, or privilege within a tyrannical order, and genuine "critical opposition," which, here as in Edgar's earlier works, is characterised first and foremost by its unwavering commitment to "principles" (Bauer 1843a, 321).

In August of 1843, all copies of *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat* were seized by Prussian police. On October 23, 1843, the Ober-Censur-Gericht (a special court formed earlier that year to execute new censorship orders) brought criminal charges against Edgar and his brother Egbert, who had served as publisher of the uncensored book. The legal investigation that followed lasted until May 1844. After Edgar's conviction, the proceedings of this investigation, including transcripts of the court's numerous examinations of Edgar, were quickly published by his supporters in Switzerland in a volume called *Preßproceß Edgar Bauers, über das von ihm verfaßte Werk: Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat* (Bauer 1844). Edgar used the court as a platform to reinforce the views that the Prussian state was seeking to censor, and his responses to his inquisitors provide a summary of his position and a record of his defiance. "I do not compose my work with regard to the state laws but from science (*Wissenschaft*) and its results," Edgar declares, "if criticism collides with the law, that is precisely the fault of the law" (Bauer 1844, 46). Accused by the state of inciting violence, Edgar argues that his work is purely literary, and that it is the state's punitive reaction to his literary work that must be characterised as violent:

> If I prove that the state owes its origin to the constitution solely to egoism, if I prove from this the limitations of state existence, if I justify that state law and state right were set up for the exclusive purpose of that egoism, the main product of which is private property, if I further show that egoism and its institutions will never be made to give themselves up, if I draw from all of this that respect for the law and private property will be destroyed, that anarchy must necessarily break in as the beginning of a new human life, all of these assertions still fall within the limits of literary argument, and can be recognised only as a literary opposition . . . And if I draw the indisputable conclusion from this that violence and egoism can only be conquered with violence, then . . . one may blame this conclusion on egoism itself or blame history for demanding bloodshed in order to advance. (Bauer 1844, 79–80)

"I," Edgar continues a little later, "want nothing but freedom and real progress." You, the court, "say freedom lies within the law." "But I believe I have the right to define freedom and progress in my own, scientific and critical way" (Bauer 1844, 94–95). And such a "critical and open definition" of freedom "requires an equally open refutation before the public, not an investigation within the four walls of a court room" (101). "All of the crimes I am accused of come down to a single one," Edgar concludes his final statement: "I am a writer and respect only the laws of literature. The higher court must now decide whether it wants to condemn literature" (137).

## The Death of Solid Principles

On the topic of "literature," and by way of conclusion, it is worth considering one last text that Edgar produced during the period in question, namely a philosophical novella that he published in 1843 under the title "Es leben feste Grundsätze" (A Life of Solid Principles) (Bauer 1843d). Hardly a masterpiece, yet not without its sophomoric charm, it employs a variety of narrative devices (personal letters, theatrical scenes, third person

description) to tell the story of an idealistic young man named, significantly enough, Karl. Karl's father is an aging upper middle class Prussian bureaucrat who has focused the final years of his life on securing for his son a respectable position for in the civil service. On principle, however, Karl rejects his father's offer in favour of pursuing a career in journalism, where he vows to fight for freedom, equality, and the people. For this, Karl's father curses him from his deathbed. Initially, Karl seems to elude the curse. He becomes engaged to the socially superior, much-admired daughter of a local noble family—Marie—and writes for radical journals including the *Rheinische Zeitung*. But in a moment of arrogance, he insults an aristocrat—Baron Arthur—who subsequently steals Marie from him and marries her himself. From this moment, the father's curse comes to fruition. Following the censorship order of January 31, 1843 (the same one that led to the ban on the *Rheinische Zeitung* and collapse of all the Young Hegelian journals in real life), Karl is forced to become a lowly clerk and to care for of his chronically ill sister, Clare. Despite the grinding conditions, he continues to possess a certain conviction. Out of resentment, though, Baron Arthur designs to have him tempted away from his life of solid principles (to "bind him in the shackles of appointment and daily bread," as he puts it) with another offer of a lucrative civil service position, this time as a censor who specialises in monitoring the very radical press to which he once contributed (Bauer 1843d, 306). Karl accepts the position on the pretext that he must care for his sister. But Clare is disgusted by this betrayal of his principles and abandons him.

The novella's final chapter is composed as a play in which the now thoroughly corrupted Karl discusses politics with a government Counsellor and his wife. The Counsellor complains about the impudence of journalists "who will never know anything about administration but take it upon themselves to complicate and obstruct our activities with ridiculous judgments." Karl agrees that they promulgate "impractical daydreams of popular sovereignty, freedom and equality," but notes that they "are not really all that dangerous" for their work amounts to "empty shouting" that "in the end, has no effect at all" (Bauer 1843d, 318). And yet, the Counsellor maintains: "It is not really the danger of these articles that bothers us." Rather, "it offends us that one dares to have an opinion next to the well-considered opinion of the government, and that by dint of this opinion, which one foolishly calls public, one even claims to possess a kind of power" (319). Karl, the former radical journalist, now slavishly concurs. But the Counsellor's wife is not fully convinced by his apparent change of heart, and she launches into a diatribe on the impossibility of the change Karl once sought to achieve. She says:

> We are too content with our situation for such exaggerated fantasies to arouse us from our calm. And, believe me, our entire class thinks the same way. And now the middle class, the burghers, the artisans, they're also too busy with their business, or with building houses, or with family affairs, to have time to read or think. And I mean, they wouldn't have understood you in any case. So, who do you have left? The rabble? The mob? The proletarians? Now, thank God, they are also too engrossed in worrying about their daily bread to be able to think of anything. The mob can't think! It belongs where it is! So, who were your people? A chimera, nothing! At most it was you and a few of your fellow true believers. (Bauer 1843d, 321)

To which Karl resignedly confesses:

> Yes, I admit it, our thoughts were foolish fantasies, empty illusions in which we imagined ourselves who knows how big. We did not believe other than that, by bringing such general

> ideas as state and freedom and justice and equality—ideas which live in the heart of every human being—into a people's consciousness, we could create a people. (Bauer 1843d, 321–322)

And on this matter, the Counsellor has the final word. He declares:

> I want to tell you something, there is no people, there are only estates . . . Every class, every man has his own constitution, his own concerns, his own views; everyone works for his own welfare, and I say almost everyone feels satisfied with the position, and with the lot that the Lord has assigned him. (Bauer 1843d, 322)

In a path-breaking recent paper, Herbert de Vriese has convincingly demonstrated that the similarities between the fictional Karl of "Es Leben Feste Grundsätze" and the real-life Marx are too numerous and detailed for Edgar not to have had the latter in mind when constructing the former. On this basis, de Vriese interprets the novella as a kind of literary revenge. For, as de Vriese notes, while Marx was initially understood to have been an acolyte of Bruno Bauer and part of his inner circle, once he became editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in the Autumn of 1842, he both publicly and privately renounced other members of that circle, and especially the group of bohemian writers and agitators—Edgar included—who resided in Berlin and styled themselves as "die Freien" or "the Free" (de Vriese 2018, 683–686).[7] More accurately, Marx became editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* just as an internal division was taking shape within the Young Hegelian movement between the Berlin faction (who were generally organised around Bruno Bauer), on the one side, and the faction organised around Ruge, on the other. The former tended to believe (as we saw Edgar argue above) that freedom is less something granted or even something won that it is a principle or axiom that one must enact. The latter, including Marx, viewed such voluntarism and subjectivism as puerile and counterproductive. Thus, while under its first editor Adolf Rutenberg the pages of the *Rheinische Zeitung* had been open to the members of "the Free," who wrote precisely in the hopes of sparking a confrontation with the authorities, under Marx the journal took a less incendiary, more serious, more methodical approach. As Marx put it in one of his editorial notes on the matter, while "as individuals [the members of 'the Free'] are excellent people," their "insipid aping of the French clubs," "rowdiness," and "blackguardism" must be "loudly and resolutely repudiated in a period which demands serious, manly and soberminded persons for the achievement of its lofty aims" (Marx 1975b, 287).

That said, without denying the veracity of de Vriese's reading of "Es Leben Feste Grundsätze" we might suggest that the novella can bear the weight of more than one interpretation, and that, along with a disparaging portrait of Marx, it offers an account of Edgar's own disillusion with the abstract political concepts that had sustained Prussian radicals from 1841 to 1843, and with the possibility of advancing the cause of freedom through politics and the state—a disillusion that is projected onto the Karl character, rather than discovered in Marx himself. Indeed, and as the argument developed in *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat* makes clear, Edgar's response to the suppression of Young Hegelian journals in early 1843 was to abandon the concept of the people and the process of political struggle in general. The split within the Young Hegelian movement that began to take shape in late 1842 with the debate between Ruge and his followers, on the one side, and "the Free," on the other, was solidified amidst the state repression of early 1843. The group around Bruno Bauer decided the best strategy was

to remain in Prussia, but to shift the terrain of struggle from politics and the state to literature. This was the explicit purpose of Bruno's new *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, which appeared monthly between December 1843 and October 1844. Ruge and Marx, on the other hand, initially planned to continue the specifically political project, but to do so from exile in France, and thus beyond the reach of the Prussian censor. And, as they lay out in the series of open letters with which its first and only issue begins, this was the explicit purpose of their new *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (German-French Yearbooks) (Ruge and Marx 1844, 17–40). The salient question here is whether Ruge and Marx's endeavour involved expanding on the ethico-juridical republicanism and radical political republicanism outlined above, or whether it involved an effort to compose a third form of republicanism—one that was less fixated on the state, and more capable of addressing the social and economic issues that were beginning to take centre stage among radical intellectuals.

With respect to Marx in particular, the question of his proximity to or distance from republicanism has always been a rather vexed one. In the twentieth century, often under the influence of Hannah Arendt, a fairly standard republican critique of Marx emerged and held sway. On this account, Marx was guilty of having reduced politics and law to an ostensibly more fundamental social or economic base, thereby threatening the space of public freedom and individual right. Similarly, he was slotted into a genealogy of so-called totalitarianism—one which proposed that the political disasters of real socialism had intellectual roots in things like Rousseau's general will and Hegel's dialectics of history (Edelstein 2017; Furet 1988; Hunt 1974; Lefort 2007). More recently, however, there has been an effort to reclaim Marx for the republican cause, and to see him as extending rather than repudiating its essential tenets. William Clare Roberts, for instance, creatively interprets the first volume of *Capital* as a piece of political rather than economic theory, and an effort to promote a neo-Roman conception of freedom as "non-domination"—except, as Roberts sees it, Marx is interested in destroying, not the personal domination of individuals, but the impersonal domination of the market (Roberts 2018). Similarly, if also more expansively, Bruno Leipold has sought to reread Marx's entire body of work as an effort to embed republican principles of civic virtue and self-determination, not only in the state, but in the institutions of civil society, and thus to compose a kind of "social republic" adequate to modern conditions (Leipold 2017, 2020). This is not the place to undertake a detailed consideration of either of those approaches, both of which seem simultaneously promising and incomplete. I would only suggest that any effort to make sense of Marx's relationship with republicanism would have to work through in exacting detail the various republicanisms that were available to him and espoused by those around him at the time, and consider the ways that Marx sought to disentangle himself from these early influences. The study of Edgar Bauer is just one piece of that much larger and still very much unfinished puzzle.

## Notes

1. All the quotations from German references in the following are translated by author.
2. While I will use the term "Young Hegelian" throughout, there is a significant and ongoing debate as to how best to characterise and categorise the Hegelian philosophers of the *Vormärz*, and whether one must distinguish between "Young Hegelians," "New Hegelians," "Left Hegelians," "Radical Hegelians," and so forth (Eßbach 1988; Bunzel and Lambrecht

2011; Lambrecht 2013). While I will not attempt to resolve this debate, my own approach is to think of such terms, not as categories that contemporary scholars might use accurately to group together past philosophers, but as speech acts or weapons used by those philosophers to accomplish specific polemical and political tasks. What should concern the historian is less their semantic content in the present than their practical effects in the past, or what J. L. Austin would call their "illocutionary force." I make this argument more extensively in Barbour (2021, 660–661).

3. While very little literature is available on Edgar Bauer, what is agrees that he was the most radical of the Young Hegelians and presents him as an early advocate of anarchism (see Pepperle 1978, 97; Stepelevich 1983, 263–264; Luft 2006). I agree with the first claim but withhold judgment on the second. If Edgar's work after 1843 can be called an anarchist, it must be acknowledged that this position emerged out of his republicanism as much as it represented a break with that republicanism. It would perhaps be more accurate to say he pursued a social rather than exclusively political republic.
4. In an essay on Arnold Ruge, Warren Breckman develops a similar distinction between two types of republicanism among the Young Hegelians, although he emphasises the ethical but not the juridical aspect of what I call ethico-juridical republicanism (Breckman 2015). Under the influence of Philip Pettit and Quentin Skinner, and their effort to compose a republican response to Isaiah Berlin's classic distinction between "positive" and "negative" liberty, much recent discussion has revolved around developing a republican conception of "negative" freedom as the negation of arbitrary power, or "non-domination" as opposed to "non-interference" (Pettit 1997; Berlin 2002; Skinner 2008). But I would be reluctant to map ethico-juridical and radical political republicanism of the Young Hegelians across this axis too readily, or to consider the former "negative" and the later "positive." All Young Hegelians placed the active participation of citizens in public life at the centre of their political agenda and understood freedom in terms of public action and political community.
5. I should emphasise that it is the Jacobin interpretation of Rousseau, or even better the popular understanding of that interpretation in the nineteenth century, that undergirds the radical political republicanism of the Young Hegelians, not any authentic account of Rousseau's thought. The emphasis throughout is on popular sovereignty, civic virtue, and the general will. Richard Tuck has recently proposed that Rousseau's political theory turns on a distinction between "sovereignty" and "government," with the former largely dormant except at moments of crisis, and the latter charged with the day-to-day operation of public life (Tuck 2016). As we will see in what follows, Edgar Bauer, for one, would have neither recognised nor countenanced this distinction.
6. For the sake of concision, I leave aside two significant pamphlets that Edgar wrote in 1843. Both take similar positions to the one set out in *Bruno Bauer und Seine Gegner*. In *Georg Herwegh und die literarische Zeitung* (Bauer 1843e), Edgar defends the political poet Herwegh against an attack levelled in the official Prussian state journal. In doing so, he champions public freedom and develops a critique of those who conceive of the state as "a mere private institution" and "a private agreement." Edgar says with reference to the editors of the *Literarische Zeitung*,

> He who pays homage to such a lack of vision, cannot understand what true freedom entails. He only knows the freedom of the private person, the independence that I enjoy in the particular; but not that I also want freedom in general (*Allgemeinen*), freedom as a citizen (*Staatsbürger*). And this freedom consists in the fact that I recognise my own will in the laws of the state and common reason in its institutions; that my true existence is not inhibited by paternalism and raw power, and my spirit is not supressed. (Bauer 1843e, 27)

In *Staat, Religion und Parthei* (State, Religion and Party) (Bauer 1843f), which was published anonymously, Edgar opposes the liberal "state of common sense" and the conservative "state of individuality" (that is, a state founded on the individuality of the king) to the radical "state of principles." He writes,

In the principled state private consciousness and political consciousness coincide. Everything I do I do as a citizen, and it is the overall unity of the state that occupies my whole being. For me, the state is not a rigid, abstract power, which governs and administers in my best interest, nor an otherworldly being to which I bow in humility. Here I do not know any such higher alien ideality, since the purpose, performance and essence of state life is woven into my personality, and its ideality has passed into my flesh and blood. (Bauer 1843f, 19)

7. While de Vriese does not mention it, there is a larger debate concerning who belonged to "the Free" and what their relationship was with other figures associated with Young Hegelianism (Eßbach 1988, 213–225; Bunzel and Lambrecht 2011, 35–36). This is not the place to take up that question. Here it is enough to acknowledge that Edgar and Marx held distinct and often opposing positions on question of political tactics and strategy. I will address the issue in more detail in a future article.

## Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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