

## CARL SCHMITT AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS - ACTUALITY AND THEORETICAL POSITION

**BERNARDO CALHEIROS**

[bernardo.calheiros@gmail.com](mailto:bernardo.calheiros@gmail.com)

Master in Strategy and Graduate in International Relations. National Defense Course and Course of Advanced Studies in Geopolitics. He was Director of Bilateral Relations Services at the Ministry of National Defense. He was a consultant for the companies Gaporsul and Kyron Consultants. He was part of the Board of Directors of *Instituto Lusíada de Cultura*. He is currently a senior advisor at the Directorate of National Defense Policy and is a doctoral candidate in International Relations: Geopolitics and Geoeconomics at UAL (Portugal). He is a researcher at *Observare*. He belongs to the governing bodies of the Luso African Foundation for Culture.

### Abstract

Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) is one of the great absentees from the university in Portugal. We can even say that Portugal is one of the most arid landscapes existing in European lands regarding Schmittian studies (although a reference is due, among others, to Professor Alexandre Franco de Sá, the main disseminator and translator of his work in our country).

Author of a multifaceted oeuvre, he influenced several disciplines - constitutional and international law, political science, history of ideas, political philosophy, and political theology - as well as international relations and its history, geopolitics and polemology. Breaking paradigms, he left us a "heterodox" work (Odisseos and Petito, 2007: 11), where his intuition about the concept of the political stands out naturally; but he was also a man who lived in a dangerous moment, in an almost permanent state of exception, who suffered temptations and disillusionments, who was judged by the authorities and, more severely, by the people. Especially by his peers. Momentary adhesion to the Third Reich was at the basis of his demonization and exclusion from the university (Balakrishnan, 2006: 27), he who was a Catholic conservative and one of the central figures of the "Conservative Revolution" movement (Mohler, 1993: 661) and even, during the Weimar Republic, tried to prevent Hitler from coming to power.

In this article we will focus on Carl Schmitt's contribution to international relations. But why talk about him now? Because we cannot fail to highlight - whether we agree with him or not - his concept of the political; because we believe that some of his theorizations - the case of the *partisan* or the great space - are important for the understanding of the moment we live in, namely regarding the changing international system, helping us to understand the emergence of the new civilization states and the concept of illiberal democracy; finally, because works such as "The Nomos of the Earth" should be part of the canon of mandatory readings of the discipline of International Relations.

His trajectory is well known, especially in its more controversial aspects. By way of introduction, we will make a quick tour through his life, framing his personal evolution in the great trends of the century. Then, we will try to analyze some central aspects of his work, which constitute relevant contributions to the study of international relations. We will analyze the timeliness of his thought, seeking to prove - this is our ambition - that he is a "modern" and important author for understanding current events, and that he should be an obligatory reference in the discipline of international relations.

### Keywords

Friend/enemy, realism, decision, big space, state, war

### How to cite this article

Calheiros, Bernardo (2021). Carl Schmitt and International Relations – Actuality and theoretical position. *Janus.net*, e-journal of international relations. Vol12, Nº. 1, May-October 2021. Consulted [online] at date of last visit, <https://doi.org/10.26619/1647-7251.12.1.10>

**Article received on August 3, 2020 and accepted for publication on February 19, 2021**





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### A troubled life

Few authors have been so praised, and vilified, as Schmitt. Some accuse him of, with his critique of Weimar liberalism, having contributed to Hitler's rise to power, having become the "crown jurist" of the new regime; others, looking mainly at his revolutionary intuition about the concept of the political, emphasize instead his multiple contributions to various sciences.

Carl Schmitt did not have a blameless career, but he was not the *kronjurist* of the regime<sup>2</sup>. It is necessary to contextualize him, in time and space, in a particularly troubled period (through two world wars) and in a Germany that was consecutively defeated and crushed.

Born in 1888, in Plettenberg, a Catholic, he soon embarked on a career in law and as a university professor. In the interwar period, the consequences of Versailles are felt in the economy and in society, where unemployment and inflation reach almost unreal figures. It is the time of demilitarization and the fighting between the French and the *Spartakist* Corps, which brings to Germany a climate of civil war, and Schmitt comes close to the "Conservative Revolution". However, his critique of liberalism, the theoretical option for decisionism and the concept of legitimacy over legality, as well as the apology of the defender of the Constitution, will attract the attention of the rising National Socialist milieu. He joins the party (in 1933, the year of its rise to power, prompting accusations of opportunism) and rises in university circles to leadership positions. However, more than sympathy for the Nazi ideal, Schmitt adheres to the regime for its "concern for order" (Hirst, 2011: 20). His theories, however, do not please SS<sup>3</sup>, being expelled from the party in 1936 (Brown, 2007: 63) and choosing to resign from his university leadership positions to devote himself to a professorship at the University of Berlin<sup>4</sup>. At the end of

<sup>1</sup> Article translated by Cláudia Tavares.

<sup>2</sup> "A man of fine culture, he could not be a Hitler supporter and never was. But, right-wing doctrinaire, nationalist, full of contempt toward the Weimar Republic of which he ruthlessly analyzed the contradictions and agony, he interpreted as a jurist Hitler's coming to power" (Aron, 2003: 650).

<sup>3</sup> In the SS newspaper, *Das schwarze korps*, there is some rather threatening criticism (Freund, 1978: 7)

<sup>4</sup> Adeel Hussain and Armin von Bogdandy consider that "the state may even have been the main reason for the Nazi party's skepticism towards Schmitt. Their emphasis on the popular movement (*Volksbewegung*) did not correspond to Schmitt's more statist point of view" (2018: 19).



the war, he is released after being interrogated by the allied forces. He writes about this experience, "*Ex Captivitate Salus – Memories of 1945-47*" (1950).

There are different phases in Schmitt's thought. We could distinguish three: in the first, during the interwar period, he covers themes of Political Science and Constitutional Law<sup>5</sup>. The young professor is already an avowed statist, a political realist and defender of the nation-state. He is not, however, part of the German positivist tradition<sup>6</sup>, focusing on the critique of liberalism and the denunciation of the state's neutrality and depoliticization. His theoretical production is greatly influenced by political theology, still giving great prominence to decision, as well as to the dichotomy of legality vs. legitimacy. In this phase, he theorizes "The Concept of the Political"<sup>7</sup>. After 1933, in a second period, he was attracted to the National Socialist regime and produced his most controversial works: "State, Movement and People" (1933) and "The Führer Protects the Law" (1934). But he soon became disappointed and began a third phase dedicated to reflecting on international relations, where he produced a vast body of work including, among other important titles, "The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of "Jus Publicum Europaeum"" (1950) and "Partisan Theory" (1963). His heterodoxy in relation to the realist school becomes more evident when he adopts a systemic view marked by the study of institutions and the use of history, which leads him to some parallels with institutionalist and even constructivist theories.

He died in Plettenberg on April 7, 1985, in the residence he had named San Casciano, the land where Machiavelli died, but also the name of a saint who, in the fourth century, was killed by his pupils with the quills with which they transcribed their lessons. Schmitt dies sad, feeling unjustly treated.

### **A scientific revolution**

Schmitt is part of the tradition of European political realism. In the line of great thinkers such as Thucydides (460 b.c.-400 b.c.), Marsilio of Padua (1275-1342), Nicolaus Machiavelli (1469-1527), Jean Bodin (1530-1596), and Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), Schmitt is the last of the classics, influencing authors such as Hans Morgenthau (1904-1980), Raymond Aron (1905-1983), Julien Freund (1921-1993) or Eric Voegelin (1901-1985), among many others.

Regardless of the labels<sup>8</sup>, his theorization of the political (of the political phenomenon) is at the origin of a scientific revolution essential to understand the world we live in. The

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<sup>5</sup> The main works of this period are perhaps: "Political Romanticism" (1919), "The Dictatorship" (1921), "Political Theology" (1922), "Roman Catholicism and Political Form" (1923), "The Concept of the Political" (1927), "Theory of the Constitution" (1928), "The Defender of the Constitution" (1931), "Legality and Legitimacy" (1932).

<sup>6</sup> In the very first sentence of "The Concept of the Political" it states that: "The concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political".

<sup>7</sup> Benno Teschke, a theorist of the Marxist school of international relations, sees in this theorization of Schmitt, "the attempt to define the political in terms of a friend/enemy grouping, existentialist, ontological and agonial, served the purpose of uniting a fragmented mass democratic industrial society into a homogeneous community against external threats and to redeem Weimar Germany's right to make war (Teschke, 2011: 187).

<sup>8</sup> "Schmittian positions are a refusal of academic boundaries" (Pasquier, 2018: 57), and his followers fall within a wide variety of theoretical schools.



new paradigm takes the form of the criterion of the political: the dichotomy friend/enemy.

In *"The Concept of the Political"* (1927), he would show that, just as ethics arises from the opposition between good and evil, and aesthetics is based on the dichotomy between the beautiful and the ugly, the political has as its criterion the opposition friend/enemy. It is this opposition that allows us to conclude that we are facing a political phenomenon. Schmitt here rejects positivism, by declaring the primacy of the political over the State, inasmuch as he considers that the concept of the State presupposes the concept of the Political. Schmitt, moreover, always puts the State in perspective, never forgetting that it is a historical construction, made by men, which at any moment may be replaced by another form of organization of power. Also, contrary to normativist currents, he doubts the viability of the liberal humanist ideal leading to a future world government.

It should be noted, however, that the enemy is always a public enemy, not a private enemy. This political enmity exists between states and is not an absolute enmity. The enemy is considered a *justus hostis*, not an *inimicus*. It is an adversary that is respected, that has the same rights and with whom we can negotiate peace, because, since the conflict is regulated by Law and according to the laws of war (in force since the Peace of Westphalia), its objective is always the return to normality, to peace.

The Westphalian system of states found this way to control war and limit its effects, making it, according to Schmitt, akin to a duel<sup>9</sup>. On the contrary, in wars of religion, civil wars, or "just wars" (or humanitarian wars), this enemy is considered an *inimicus*, an absolute enemy from the moral point of view, with all the implications that this brings.

Schmitt's heterodox realism leads Alessandro Colombo (2007: 22) to consider him as a representative of "realist institutionalism"<sup>10</sup>. Before, it was the highest exponent of "Decisionism": *it is the sovereign who decides the state of exception*, and Benno Teschke calls attention to "his change of position during the 1930s, from political decisionism to *concrete-order-thinking*" (2011: 191)<sup>11</sup>.

The belief in the centrality of the nation-state as the privileged (but not unique) actor in international relations will be shaken when one realizes that this model, which persisted for centuries, began its decadence at the end of the 19th century, receiving a new blow with the Treaty of Versailles, which dictates an era of neutralizations where power is disputed by other actors and the concept of sovereignty loses relevance. The trend becomes more pronounced after World War II.

Chantal Mouffe, self-proclaimed "left-wing Schmittian", recalls that the friend/enemy dichotomy also applies to internal political conflict, arguing that this can happen even within a liberal democracy, where democratic debate can only be conceived as "conflictive consensus" since "the adversary is in a certain sense an enemy, but a legitimate enemy towards whom there is common ground. The opponents fight against each other, but do not question the legitimacy of their respective positions. They share a common loyalty to

<sup>9</sup> See, Carl Schmitt, *"Teoria del Partisano"*, p. 57.

<sup>10</sup> Also Alain de Benoist (2007: 142), states that "in 1934, at the moment when he partly abandons his former decisionism to join a 'concrete order thinking' (*konkretes Ordnungsdenken*) [...] comes close to Maurice Hauriou's or Santi Romano's institutionalism".

<sup>11</sup> The *concrete-order thinking* states that "all legal orders are concrete territorial orders, founded on an original constitutive act of land appropriation" (*op. cit.*: 193).



the ethical-political principles of liberal democracy" (Mouffe, 2011: 15). The author is, however, careful to use the expression "in a certain sense", and rightly so since Schmitt would renege on this statement. The author herself recognizes this when she says that, for Schmitt, this adversary is nothing more than a competitor or a fellow debater (*op. cit.*: 16)<sup>12</sup>.

### **Land and Sea /Land und Mer. *Eine Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtung* (1942)**

In this markedly geopolitical work, Schmitt contrasts two realities: the Land, a localized space organized by Law (the 'Nomos of the Earth'), demarcated by boundaries between sovereign states that respect each other and whose disputes are regulated by Law; and the Sea, an immense space, free and without borders, that the Law is unable to regulate (in this initial phase of the appropriation of overseas lands by European states), which conditions the way of waging war.

As he says, "the great historical transformations are usually accompanied by a mutation of the image of space. The greatest "spatial revolution" was carried out in the 16th and 17th centuries by the Portuguese and the Spanish, and later the Dutch and the British, who will give a sense of space with the demarcation lines of their respective territories. First with the Treaty of Tordesillas, between Catholic powers and arbitrated by the Pope, but later contested by Protestant powers and the intervention of England, which will guarantee the freedom of the seas. As Sir Walter Raleigh states (1552 or 1554-1618): "whoever dominates the sea, dominates world trade, and to him who dominates world trade belong all the riches of the world and the world itself" (Schmitt, 1952: 90).

This land/sea dichotomy leads to different ways of making war, the former being governed by law and the latter (at an early stage) unregulated. In the latter, the enemy is no longer seen as a *justus hostis* but as an *inimicus*, leading to all-out wars - even between European powers, but only at sea and in overseas territories - where it is permitted to ruin the trade of the "other", with all the implications for the populations. The land, however, ends up taking over the sea, legislating on the distinction between figures such as the pirate and the privateer, the latter being legitimized by being mandated by a state.

The industrial revolution will finally "change the relation of man to the sea" (*op. cit.*: 103) and this is the secret of English dominance over the oceans.

In the opposition between Land and Sea, Schmitt gives natural primacy to the Land, the telluric element where there is a *nomos*, an order. However, he does not forget that three-fourths of the globe is composed of the liquid element and that, consequently, the sea can surround the land. He quotes, by the way, the work of Admiral Castex (1878-1968), "*The sea against the land*", explaining that the sea can strategically block the land, cutting off its means of supply.

Also interesting is the reference to Admiral Mahan (1840-1914), an American, who developed the theory that the "big island" is no longer England, but the US, the real world power (*op. cit.*: 107). We are facing the sunset of European power. What was a

<sup>12</sup> See also "The Concept of the Political" (Schmitt, 2015: 54).



*pluriversum* of European powers is succeeded by a *universum* dominated by the global power, the USA.

But also in "Land and Sea," Schmitt tells us about a new spatial revolution: the emergence of airspace as strategic space, with characteristics similar to the sea. He believes that "the airplane has changed the nature of war and military strategy by challenging the traditional spatial concepts of war, especially the idea of 'theater of war' and 'front,' and even the distinction between land war and naval war, and the rules governing them" (Dean, 2007: 253).

### **A planetary revolution: The end of the Westphalian system of states and the Great Spaces (*Grossraum*)**

One of his most relevant works for international relations is "The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*" (1950). Strongly marked by geopolitics, it theorizes the end of the Westphalian system of states<sup>13</sup>, announcing the emergence of a new North American international order, which it considers could be countered through the concept of great spaces (*Grossraum*). These conclusions are based on the historical analysis of the international order since the end of the *Respublica Christiana*, passing through the advent of the nation-state, its generalization and decadence, until the current international system, which leads to a proposal for the rebalancing of powers and the restoration of a *pluriversum* of powers in the international order.

The Westphalian nation-state, characterized by sovereignty, is an independent political entity that interacts with other states at the international level on equal terms defined by law (the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*). This is his frame of reference, Schmitt, defender of the sovereign state, being a convinced realist from the ontological point of view (Odysseos, 2007a: 124).

However, with the end of World War I, the League of Nations, and the criminalization of the vanquished<sup>14</sup>, the nation-state can no longer respond to the great challenges of modernity. A new international law arises, in which "Schmitt sees the Briand-Kellog Pact of 1928 as representing one more step in Washington's attempt to establish its global hegemony" (Mouffe, 2007: 149), that will materialize in the post-World War II period. This will be the basis of the new international system, founded on the humanitarian liberal ideology and having as safeguard instrument the concept of "just war".

Faced with a changing nation-state, Schmitt believes that it will evolve by ceding sovereignty to the great space (*Grossraum*), which will encompass the states belonging to a particular culture or civilization and will ensure the main functions that it had. The international system would cease to be a *universum* marked by North American hegemony and would resume its condition of *pluriversum*, with the various great spaces as the main actors, each of them directed by a director-state. For the theorization of this new concept, he takes inspiration from the Monroe Theory (1823), which has the USA as the dominant power. In Europe, the role of geopolitical center would fall to Germany as

<sup>13</sup> Beginning with the League of Nations (limiting state sovereignty), as well as the Briand-Kellog Pact and the prohibition of war.

<sup>14</sup> The Treaty of Versailles, in article 227, criminalizes Kaiser William II, who will have to abdicate the throne.





the main European power<sup>15</sup>, just as the Soviet Union would have Russia at its center. In this way, it is intended to end the interference of other powers in the European continent.

Schmitt also recovers the concept of empire (*Reich*) as an alternative to the federal and confederal models but stressing that "the *Grossraum* should not be confused with the *Reich*, whose mission is only to organize the 'great space' and to protect it from any outside intervention. In short, it admits that 'empires', and no longer nations, may become the main actors in international relations, while warning against a simple mechanical extension of the idea of national sovereignty to the dimension of *Grossraum*" (Benoist, *op. cit.*: 146). The states will not necessarily disappear, for "a certain territorial organization is preserved; but on the essential political question, that which defines political sovereignty itself, that is the faculty of deciding who is the enemy, competence is shifted to a higher level, that of the *Reich*. The line of sharing between friend and enemy is now between large spaces rather than between states" (Pasquier, 2018: 62).

In parallel, Schmitt refers to the geopolitical importance of the emergence of "new spaces" and the race for them by the great powers. "The race of modern physicists, technicians, and cosmonauts is determined by the question as to who will dominate the immeasurable new spaces," first of all the air frontier, the cosmos, and then all the others unexplored under the oceans (Schmitt, 1962: 57). He predicts the reappearance of the figure of the pirate, now a reality, and we can even conceive of the emergence of the space pirate (who may soon appear). A particularly important new domain is cyberspace, where we will encounter an irregular enemy - the computer pirate - who often has no telluric character and obeys no rules.

With the theory of large spaces, Schmitt departs from the assumptions of classical realism and approaches systemic realism. The study of international relations, after World War I, is no longer centered on states, but on broader realities at the level of systems, and the appropriation of the political by non-state actors, who take advantage of the weakness of the state. Here Schmitt shows his originality when he talks about new institutions and political actors and dedicates himself to a historical analysis of international relations that will identify the nation-state as an entity in deep transformation.

In short, "Schmitt's *Nomos* must be given its rightful place, side by side with other great classics, as one of the founding texts of International Relations, correcting the non-historicity of the discipline" (Odysseos, 2007b: 8).

### **Polemology: the new forms of war, the figure of the Partisan and the excluded third party**

In the old Law of the People (the *jus publicum europaeum*), States had equal legal status, and war was conceived as an activity in which they fought sovereignly in defense of their rights. The enemy was seen as a *justus hostis*, entitled to defend his interests<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> It is a concept that has nothing to do with Karl Haushofer's (1869-1946) proposals on Pan-regions and Steering States, very much tributary to the theorizations of *Lebensraum*.

<sup>16</sup> Bohdana Kurylo states that, "contrary to encouraging war between states, Schmitt argues that political violence can only be justified when it is in response to a threat to a group's 'way of life'" (2016: 4).



The peace of Versailles, putting an end to *jus publicum europaeum*, inaugurates a new international law dictated by the United States, which will have serious implications for war:

determining relations between states, the ancient law of the people (*jus publicum europaeum*) which, at the time of the treaty of Westphalia, put an end to religious wars, conceived war as a war in which each belligerent was authorized to assert his right: *justus hostis* (just enemy, i.e. legitimate), and not just cause (just cause). This is what made it possible to contain the war within certain limits, hence the importance of the *jus in bello*. Discriminatory war, resurrecting the "just war" of the Middle Ages, is a war in which *jus ad bellum* prevails, on the contrary, over *jus in bello*. The enemy is no longer an adversary who, under other circumstances, might well become an ally. He is now an absolute enemy. Demonized, criminalized, considered an evil figure, he is an enemy of humanity, who must not only be defeated, but eradicated (Benoist, 2011: w/p).

This evolution of war produces new concepts. Schmitt reminds us that the intervening parties in the "humanitarian wars" of the 20th and 21st centuries consider themselves to be defenders of a "just cause" and, therefore, in a Manichean way, they see in the adversary a representative of evil, an existential *inimicus* that must be destroyed. "The attempt to see international military intervention as a police action is [...] linked to a fundamental remoralization of war and the emergence of a new kind of discriminatory total war" (Dean, 2007: 254).

The attempt to impose on states the renunciation of war (as intended by the SDN and the UN) has put an end to the concept of war in form (regulated by Law) and has given rise to a reality where conflict is unregulated and tends to be more dangerous and lethal. The "just war" becomes a war against "unjust" causes, inhuman, evil and that must therefore be eliminated<sup>17</sup>.

In "*The Theory of the Partisan*" (1963), he analyzes some characteristics of this new form of warfare, namely the figure of the partisan, who contests the state monopoly of legitimate violence and constitutes himself as an irregular combatant (but endowed with a telluric character, which differentiates him from the international terrorist)<sup>18</sup>. This characterization of the partisan, endowed with a political nature and struggling, irregularly and asymmetrically, is especially important<sup>19</sup>, for a territory, which distinguishes him from the revolutionary and the terrorist, both of them deterritorialized, having the world as a field of action and not accepting the existence of limits to violence. Among the partisans, we find the members of the guerrillas against Napoleon, but also the combatants of the "liberation wars" such as Cuba or Algeria, and Schmitt also cites the case of the OAS<sup>20</sup> and General Salan; whereas international terrorists, such as al Qaeda or Daesh, enter the realm of absolute enmity<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> For a defense of the "just war" model and a critique of Schmitt, see Chris Brown, *op. cit*

<sup>18</sup> For Schmitt (1966: 34), the partisan is identified according to "four criteria - irregularity, marked mobility, intensity of political engagement, and telluric character".

<sup>19</sup> The "asymmetry lies in the opposition of two opponents who have totally unbalanced means and capabilities" (Tomé, 2004: 165).

<sup>20</sup> *Organisation Armée Secrète*.

<sup>21</sup> Gary L. Ulmen, in "*Partisan warfare, terrorism and the problem of a new nomos of the earth*", advocates that, if there is a distinction between the partisan and the terrorist, a "Theory of the Terrorist".





However, Schmitt does not consider them to be mere criminals since they have a political character and the conviction of waging a war of resistance against a more powerful enemy. The result of their action is a crime, but a political crime (Benoist, op.cit.: 99).

The *partisan* often acts in proxy wars on behalf of others. Schmitt thus brings to mind the work of Rolf Schroers (1919-1981), "*Der Partisan*"<sup>22</sup> and the figure of the "interested third party", justifying here a longer quotation:

In his book on the *Partisan*, Rolf Schroers [...] talks about the third party stakeholder. It is an accurate term. This interested third party is not some banal figure [...]. Rather, it belongs essentially to the situation of the partisan and therefore also to his theory. The powerful third party not only provides the necessary weapons and ammunition, money, material aid and medicine, but also seeks a kind of political recognition, necessary for the *partisan* who fights irregularly in order not to disqualify himself as the robber or the pirate and not to fall into the apolitical, which is identical in this case to the criminal. In the long run, the irregular has to legitimize itself with the regular. For this to happen, there are only two possibilities: recognition by an existing regular force, or the achievement of a new regularity by the force itself. It is a hard alternative.

The *partisan* loses its ground as it becomes motorized. At the same time, its dependence on the technical-industrial means it needs for its struggle increases. The power of the third party grows more and more, until it reaches planetary dimensions. It seems, then, that all the aspects of *partisanship* we have considered so far are overwhelmed by the all-powerful technical aspect (Schmitt, 1966: 105).

In this work, resulting from a meeting with Schmitt in 1955 (Müller, 2006: p/p), Rolf Schroers "makes the *partisan* the last incarnation of autonomy in a world that is increasingly regulated by bureaucracy and technology", although the author warns that the involvement of the interested third party can instrumentalize it, thus leading to the 'moral death' of the partisan (idem). We have seen this in several conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, and today, with *proxy wars* and the increasing use of Private Military Companies.

### **Conclusion: Schmitt's return**

Carl Schmitt made a major contribution to the theorization of international relations. His concept of the Political identified the existential friend/enemy relationship as his criterion. However, he is far from being an advocate of war and violence in politics. On the contrary, Schmitt is a lover of order and, as such, he always hopes that the state of exception will be succeeded by a return to constitutional normality. But it is important to keep in mind that no matter how pacifist we are, we can always be unilaterally designated as enemies, and in that case, there is no way to avoid it.

Those who accuse him of defending dictatorship because he wrote a book with that title have certainly not read it. His model is clear and inspired by the Roman commissary dictatorship, in which, in the event of an exception, a decision-maker is appointed with

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<sup>22</sup> Rolf Schroers, 1961, "*Der Partisan; ein Beitrag zur politischen Anthropologie*", Cologne, Kiepenheuer & Witsch (quoted by Schmitt in *Teoria del Partisano*: 105).



extensive powers to restore order and, once this is achieved, he returns these powers to return to normality.

Also fundamental is his explanation of the end of state dominance based on the *Jus Publicum Europaeum* and its replacement by a new liberal-democratic international system with the future unity of the world as its ideal. The replacement of the previous *pluriversum* by a *universum* centered on the single superpower: the US. This ideal, which was widely accepted after the war, seemed to have been adopted by the entire world in the post-Cold War era. However, several powers are now beginning to question this ideal, which they see as benefiting only the West and, in particular, the US.

Schmitt, faced with this reality, was already proposing the construction of an international order based on the great spaces and inspired by the Monroe Doctrine. The return to a *pluriversum* that generates stability in the international system. A new world order. In fact, along these lines, something new is emerging in countries like China, Russia, India, or Turkey, which are clamoring for a new multipolar system based on great spaces, where the liberal matrix will no longer have universal validity<sup>23</sup>. The European construction itself obeys to some extent this logic although, like the USA, respecting the liberal democratic matrix.

Schmitt makes us realize that globalization, although focusing on free international trade, does not bring an end to war. On the contrary, the ideal of the unity of the world leads to the neutralization of the state, creating other types of divisions that can reach a degree of enmity in which, in the absence of the European International Law, can lead to much more violent confrontations, similar to civil war. Wars have not, in fact, disappeared, and we have witnessed the systematic criminalization of the vanquished and the creation of international criminal tribunals of rather dubious legitimacy.

In the field of Polemology, Schmitt also leaves us with fundamental concepts: that of partisan, and the idea of the return to the "just war". Also important is the reference to the third party, helping us to understand proxy wars and the new types of modern irregular warfare, and to understand phenomena such as 9/11 and the concept of the "Axis of Evil". We better understand the permanent state of exception in which we live, and which is becoming eternal, with military missions assuming the characteristics of police operations. Finally, theorizing about the new strategic spaces gives us an amazing prospective analysis of the current race to militarize space - be it outer space or cyber space - and to explore the deep sea.

Schmitt's contribution to the study of international relations is enormous. Whether one agrees or disagrees with his thinking, it is no longer possible to ignore his leading role in the theoretical production of this science.

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<sup>23</sup> Exemplified by the Russian case, where "the illiberal understanding of democracy is clearly articulated in Vladislav Surkov's notion of 'Sovereign Democracy'" (Lewis, 2017: 14).



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### Television shows

“Une évocation de Carl Schmitt”, programa *Les idées à l’endroit* nº 25, da TV Libertés, com Alain de Benoist, Aristide Leucate e Alexandre Franco de Sá, available at <https://www.alaindebenoist.com/2017/07/13/les-idees-a-lendroit-une-evocation-de-carl-schmitt/>