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**Hobbesian Anthropology, the Interminable Enemy,
and State Theory: Intellectual Convergences
in Carl Schmitt and Sigmund Freud***

Abstract

The author argues that Carl Schmitt's distinction between *Freund und Feind* and the depiction of the political in stark and aggressive language of friend-enemy relationships appeared to confirm the supposed inherent defects in Schmitt's thinking that underlie his anti-liberal politics. Such critiques overlook, however, that other thinkers, even those deeply entrenched personally and politically in the liberal-democratic tradition, have found value in Schmitt's work or have themselves harbored similar ideas. Among the prominent figures that might be cited in this latter regard, Sigmund Freud is a particularly illuminating case in point. This is especially so because, at first glance, any comparison between Schmitt and Freud might appear highly dubious. Not only were their disciplines (jurisprudence and psychoanalysis) so different, but these two leading thinkers appeared to be mirror opposites of each other in political stances, personal experience, and the judgment of history.

The concept of *Freund und Feind* constituting the specific criterion for the political has elicited more animosity towards Carl Schmitt than perhaps any of his other theories. Condemnation of this concept has often served as the salient argument in attempts to generally discredit the man and his ideas. The very depiction of the political in such stark, seemingly crude and aggressive language as friend-enemy relationships appeared to confirm the supposed inherent defects in Schmitt's thinking that underlie his anti-liberal politics.¹ Such critiques overlook, however, that other thinkers, even those deeply entrenched personally and politically in the liberal-democratic tradition, have found value in Schmitt's work or have themselves harbored similar ideas. Among the prominent figures that might

* The original version published in *Studia Philosophica Wratislaviensia*, 4 [1] (2009), pp. 59–70.

¹ See M. Lilla, 'The Enemy of Liberalism', *The New York Review of Books*, 44 [8] (1997), pp. 38–44.

be cited in this latter regard, Sigmund Freud is a particularly illuminating case in point. This is especially so because, at first glance, any comparison between Schmitt and Freud might appear highly dubious.²

Not only were their disciplines (jurisprudence and psychoanalysis) so different, but these two leading thinkers appeared to be mirror opposites of each other in political stances, personal experience, and the judgment of history. Freud, the progressive Viennese liberal of Jewish descent, remained very much a child of the Enlightenment, while Schmitt, of conservative Catholic heritage, ranked among the most renowned critics of eighteenth-century liberal thought and its nineteenth-century legacies in political and legal theory. Forced into exile in 1938, Freud also became a victim of the very Nazi regime with which Schmitt had collaborated. Moreover, Schmitt had little to say about Freud and it is unknown whether the latter was aware of Schmitt's work at all.³

Nonetheless, even a cursory reading of the works of these two intellectuals reveals parallels in their political thinking that are simply too striking to either ignore or minimize. This is true whether one considers such basic questions in

² The documentation for this article has been revised to include the most recently available sources on Schmitt from his *Nachlass*, particularly his published and unpublished diaries. The text remains essentially in the original because the latest documentation further substantiates its inferences, arguments, and conclusions.

³ Schmitt started reading Freud before World War I. He made reference to Freud's theories in *Gesetz und Urteil: Eine Untersuchung zum Problem der Rechtspraxis* (München, 1912), p. 19; and in 1919, he critically addressed the psychoanalytical approach to causation in human behavior and history in *Politische Romantik* (3rd ed. Berlin 1968), pp. 118–120. The recently published Schmitt diaries of 1912–1915 confirm that he read only Freud's works on psychoanalysis and those on culture and religion such as *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism*. Although into the 1950's he might occasionally invoke a Freudian allusion (e.g., the “killing of the primordial father”), from his earliest years Schmitt harshly rejected psychoanalysis. In Schmitt's early diaries, he noted that “Freud ein Schwein ist,” dismissing psychoanalysis as “a ridiculous theory.” See C. Schmitt, *Tagebücher, Oktober 1912 bis Februar 1915*, E. Hüsmert (ed.) (Berlin 2003), pp. 36, 57–58, 246. Schmitt's otherwise extraordinarily significant and revealing diaries of his years of military service contain no references to Freud. See C. Schmitt, *Die Militärzeit 1915 bis 1919*, E. Hüsmert, G. Giesler (eds.) (Berlin 2005).

In 1923, Schmitt had his Jewish publisher, Ludwig Feuchtwanger, send him a copy of Freud's *Group Psychology and The Analysis of the Ego*, which apparently only reinforced Schmitt's inherent condemnation. In his private notes of August 1923, Schmitt disparagingly compared psychoanalytical methodology to the “ridiculous mythology of historical materialism.” See C. Schmitt, L. Feuchtwanger, *Briefwechsel, 1918–1935*, R. Riess (ed.) (Berlin 2007), p. 29. See also Schmitt's unpublished diaries, with the tentative title *Der Schatten Gottes: Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1922 bis 1924*, Carl Schmitt Nachlass, Nordrhein-Westfälischen Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf, RW 265–19605.

It is unknown whether Schmitt ever read those works of Freud dealing with politics, the state, and war such as *Civilization and Its Discontents* or *War and Death*. Schmitt's reactions to these Freudian excursions into political thought would have been rather intriguing, since these were the works in which the Hobbesian dimensions of Freud were so clearly articulated. There is, in fact, much ironic potential here. For Schmitt often categorized Freud, Marx, and Darwin as the progenitors of similar grandiose systems of thought which he found seriously wanting. Perhaps had he read more of Freud's political thought, Schmitt would have discovered not only the general Hobbesian perspectives they shared but also that, ironically, they had almost identical observations and criticisms of Marxism as a system of thought as well as a political movement, particularly in the Bolshevik variant in Russia. See C. Schmitt, *Glossarium: Aufzeichnungen der Jahre 1947–1951* (Berlin 1991), pp. 61, 100, 214–215, 262, 310–311, 318–319.

political theory as the political nature of men, the role of the state, or war itself. It is also so concerning such precise concepts as friends and enemies. For generally speaking, the historical experiences of the ages, as well as the behavior of organized groups they observed in their own time, offered a disturbing vision to both Schmitt and Freud of a world full of harsh political realities and interminable conflict arising from friend-enemy distinctions.⁴

Many of the similarities in the political ideas of Freud and Schmitt emanated from a basic agreement as to the fundamental anthropological nature of man, which Schmitt contended was the test by which all political theories could be categorized. For both thinkers were unabashed Hobbesians.⁵ To Schmitt, “[...] all genuine political theories presuppose man to be...a dangerous and dynamic being,” while Freud invoked the phrase *homo homini lupus* (“man is as a wolf to other men”).⁶ “Men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked,” Freud wrote, “they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness... [whose neighbors] tempts him to satisfy their aggressiveness on him [...] to seize his possession, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture him and to kill him.” This immutable “inclination of human beings to be aggressive

⁴ The comparison with Freud is also important in light of the recent claim that Schmitt’s friend-enemy thesis “had to end in the Jews being excluded from German society in some radical way.” See D. Dyzenhaus, *Legality and Legitimacy: Carl Schmitt, Hans Kelsen, and Hermann Heller in Weimar* (New York 1997), pp. 100–101. This erroneous and ill-conceived argument is countered not only by the fact that Freud held similar ideas to Schmitt on friends and enemies, but that other significant thinkers of Jewish heritage, including Leo Strauss and Waldemar Gurian, praised *Der Begriff des Politischen*. Indeed, the Nazis explicitly rejected Schmitt’s friend-enemy thesis precisely because it was a neutral concept totally devoid of racial or anti-Semitic meaning. See J.W. Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich* (Princeton 1983), pp. 93–95, 222–223, 238–240. Although Schmitt’s published and unpublished diaries, in particular those of 1930–1934, do reveal an undeniable anti-Semitism in Schmitt that is yet to be adequately explained, these newly available sources do not support the untenable claims that Schmitt’s works were inherently anti-Semitic. These documents certainly do not suggest, as some have alleged, that his legal and political theories were an attempt to construct a purely German type of legal theory as a bulwark against Jewish thought and forces accelerating the process of modernization. See C. Schmitt, *Tagebücher 1930–1934*, W. Schuller, G. Giesler (eds.) (Berlin 2010). For an effort to interpret Schmitt’s corpus as essentially anti-Semitic and directed against alleged Jewish influences see R. Gross, *Carl Schmitt und die Juden: Eine deutsche Rechtslehre* (Frankfurt am Main 2000), and my critical review of its English translation in *Central European History*, 43 (2010), pp. 377–380.

⁵ The relationship between Schmitt and Hobbes is among the most significant questions concerning this jurist. Those exponents of the recent “theological twist” in Schmitt studies seriously underestimate this key Hobbesian dimension to his thinking. See A. Koenen, *Der Fall Carl Schmitt: Sein Aufstieg zum “Kronjuristen” des Dritten Reiches* (Darmstadt 1995). However, the Hobbesian influence on Schmitt is undeniable. Not only did Schmitt write on Hobbes but he personally identify with him in *Ex Captivitate Salus: Erfahrungen der Zeit 1945/47* (Cologne 1950) and elsewhere. Hobbes also holds a central theoretical place in Schmitt’s Weimar works as well as his later *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaem* (Berlin 1960). See also H. Rumpf, *Carl Schmitt und Thomas Hobbes: Ideelle Beziehungen und aktuelle Bedeutung mit einer Abhandlung über: Die Frühschriften Carl Schmitts* (Berlin 1972).

⁶ C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (Berlin 1963), pp. 59, 61, 64–65.

towards one another,” Freud viewed as “greatest impediment to civilization”.⁷ It was here, the psychoanalyst’s noted biographer Peter Gay pointed out, that “Freud linked up with the tough-minded political thought of Thomas Hobbes”.⁸

Although it was psychoanalysis that led Freud to identify the source of this innate aggressiveness as related to a subconscious wish for destruction and death, its existence and power were also self-evident from the “experience of life and history.” The “atrocities” of the past, of the Huns, Jenghiz Khan and Tamerlane, or crusaders in Jerusalem, had their continuities in the “horrors of the recent World War”.⁹ And Schmitt, while tending to disparage psychoanalysis in favor of more traditional political and sociological methodologies, with their emphasis on rational causation and objectives, nonetheless, did cite his agreement with Wilhelm Dilthey on Machiavelli’s “psychological observations,” including “animality, drives, passions... [and] above all love and fear,” as well as “irrational life decisions”.¹⁰

No matter what sources, psychological or otherwise, to which one could trace motives, the supposition of *homo homini lupus* led both thinkers to view the social relationships of men to men as among the most problematical of all questions of human existence. The attempt at regulating such volatile relationships, Freud argued, led to the establishment of the community and subsequently civilization as group identities, interests, and power dominated and subdued individual ones. The community acquired the monopoly on violence and on the determination of law or what is accepted as “right”, both of which were necessary for maintaining the stability and endurance of the community. It is the monopoly on violence that provides the conditions for the “rule of law” which, in turn, ensures the emotional identity, loyalty and acceptance of members of such communal control. Freud held, in fact, a relativistic and positivistic concept of law as the will of the community which “[...] implies nothing as to the ethical value of such a law.” And “justice”, far from suggesting a reflection of a higher or universal law, is essentially equality before the law. In a functional sense, “Peoples are more or less represented by the states which they form, and these states by the governments which rule them”.¹¹

In this context, there appears to be little real difference, theoretically or practically, between the purpose and nature of Freud’s “community” and that of Schmitt’s “state.” As “the political status of an organized people in an enclosed territorial unit,” the state, according to Schmitt, has as its primary purpose the maintenance of order, peace, and tranquility which are “the prerequisite for legal

⁷ S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, [in:] P. Gay (ed.), *The Freud Reader* (New York 1989), pp. 755, 770–772. See also P.E. Stepansky, *A History of Aggression in Freud* (New York 1997).

⁸ P. Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York 1988), p. 546. On Freud’s Hobbesian thought see also P. Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (New York 1961), pp. 214, 243–244.

⁹ S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 749–750; S. Freud, *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*, [in:] S. Freud, *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XIV, transl. J. Strachey (London 1957), pp. 281, 285; S. Freud, *Why War?*, [in:] S. Freud, *The Complete Psychological Works*, vol. XXII (London 1964), pp. 203–215.

¹⁰ C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, pp. 60–62

¹¹ S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 740–741, 750, 756. S. Freud, *Group Psychology and The Analysis of the Ego*, [in:] S. Freud, *Complete Psychological Works*, vol. XVIII (London 1955); *Why War?*, pp. 275–278; *War and Death*, pp. 279–280.

norms [rule by law] to be valid.” To this end, the state must remain the decisive political entity whose power transcends that of all other associations and whose authority grants it a monopoly on the *jus belli*. To no other entity belongs the “right to demand from its own members the readiness to die and unhesitatingly to kill enemies.”¹² And Freud definitely concurred on this central point: “A belligerent state permits itself every such misdeed, every such act of violence, as would disgrace the individual... The state exacts the utmost degree of obedience and sacrifice from its citizens...” and in war “it stamps strangers as enemies, whose death is to be brought about or desired; it tells us to disregard the death of those we love”.¹³

It was such distinctions between friend and enemy that actually constituted the criterion or essence of the political for Schmitt. States defined themselves and their members were bound together by identities or similarities created from various sources, such as territory, religion, nationality, etc., which at the same time distinguished and separated them existentially from those outside their political entity. What determined the political was always “[...] the degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation.” As Schmitt phrased it, “every religious, moral, economic, ethical, or other antithesis transforms into a political one if it is sufficiently strong to group human beings effectively according to friend and enemy”.¹⁴ Freud, too, clearly viewed the social relations of men as they were organized and regulated through communities or states in terms of a friend-enemy dichotomy, of identities and dissimilarities, of the familiar and the stranger.

In *Group Psychology*, one of Freud’s first excursions in social psychology, he invoked Schopenhauer’s simile of the freezing porcupines to illustrate the antagonisms emanating from like and dissimilar qualities. Drawn together by the common need for warmth they are likewise repelled by their quills until some tolerable distance provides a mutual accommodation of interest and danger. Through group formation, individuals within “[...] tolerate the peculiarities of its other members, equate themselves with them, and have no feeling of aversion toward them.” An emotional tie or identification of “common quality” or “whatever leads men to share important interests produces this community of feeling, these identifications. And the structure of human society is to a large extent based on them.” However, even after group formation the “mutual hostility of human beings” threatens social cohesion so significantly that civilization has to expend enormous efforts to prevent domestic conflict and even societal disintegration. Since this inherent “readiness for hatred, an aggressiveness,” continues to exist within groups, “We are no longer astonished that greater differences should lead to an almost insuperable repugnance, such as the Gallic people feel for the German, the Aryan for the Semite, and the white races for the coloured.” One method of binding a group together in love, Freud argued, is by providing an outlet for their hostility in the

¹² C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, pp. 20, 43–50, 53–54.

¹³ S. Freud, *War and Death*, p. 299.

¹⁴ C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, pp. 26–28, 37–38.

form of "[...] the other people... [who are targeted] to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness".¹⁵

Recognizing its central importance conceptually and in social reality, both Freud and Schmitt paid far more attention in their analyses to the other (the potential enemy) and the likelihood of conflict with him, than to the group associate – the friend. Since friend-enemy relationships can develop from countless diverse and changing spheres of existence, there are no natural or permanent enemies for Schmitt. The enemy need not be considered morally evil or an object of hatred; neither is he the private competitor, but always only the public enemy of the group not the individual. What matters is that, through some characteristic of his nature or situation, the political enemy is "[...] the other, the stranger, [who is] in a specially intense way, existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible." Following Hegel's idea of the enemy as mutually "negated otherness," Schmitt saw the decisive point when it is determined that "[...] the adversary intends to negate his opponent's way of life and therefore must be repulsed or fought in order to preserve one's own form of existence".¹⁶

The biblical quote "Love your enemies" could only refer, Schmitt insisted, to the private adversary and not the public enemy. Christians, for example, never considered allowing love for the Turk to lead to the abandonment of Europe to Moslem forces.¹⁷ And Freud's reaction to "Love thine enemies" was far harsher; it "[...] seems to me," he exclaimed, "even more incomprehensible and arouses still stronger opposition in me" than the principle of "love thy neighbor," which he also found problematical. Paralleling Schmitt's interpretation that "it certainly does not mean that one should love and support the enemies of one's own people," Freud asserted rather forcefully how difficult it would be to love the "stranger". "Indeed, I should be wrong to do so, for my love is valued by all my own people as a sign of my preferring them, and it is an injustice to them if I put a stranger on a par with them." Moreover, the stranger "[...] has more claim to my hostility and even my hatred [...] since he has no hesitation in injuring me [...] and the more helpless I am, the more certainly I can expect him to behave like this to me".¹⁸

The ineradicable source of such Hobbesian relationships are, Freud wrote, the "undeniable differences" arising from various existential natures and circumstances of men and groups. These mutually repelling existential differences have caused conflict throughout history, as an innate "cruel aggressiveness" against the stranger has channeled hostility away from potential internal strife and reinforced the social cohesion of the group as well. "In this respect, the Jewish people, scattered everywhere, have rendered most useful services to the civilizations of the countries that have been their hosts..." Even the Christian concept of universal love related only to those who belonged to the community of believers; extreme cruelty

¹⁵ S. Freud, *Group Psychology*, pp. 98, 101–102, 105–108, 119; *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 747–752.

¹⁶ C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, pp. 27–28, 62–63.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 28–30.

¹⁸ S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 748–749.

and intolerance were exercised against the outsiders. Since for Freud “killing an enemy [also] satisfied an instinctual inclination,” he continued to recognize that in the modern world “[...] for strangers and enemies we do acknowledge death, and consign them to it quite and readily as unhesitatingly as did primeval man.” The enemy serves such a useful purpose, Freud mused, “One only wonders, with concern, what the Soviets will do after they have wiped out their bourgeois”.¹⁹

The decision to identify and combat a foreign enemy remained for Schmitt the prerogative of the state and for Freud its theoretical equivalent – the community. Schmitt recognized that in extreme cases the state might also confront a *Staatsfeind* (domestic enemy), consisting of any societal group that sought the destruction of the existing political order or which, in its conflicts with other groups, threatened to create domestic turmoil. Either case could, and historically had, culminated in civil war, endangering the very survival of the state. “Every state provides, therefore, some kind of formula for the declaration of an internal enemy”.²⁰ Like Schmitt, Freud also felt that, though common needs and identities usually provide for peaceful resolutions within a community, unavoidable domestic “conflicts of interest” could cause violence. A completely and permanently pacified state remains “only theoretically conceivable.” Thus, if the violence of the individual is to be transformed into, and maintained as, the violence of the community for its common interests, the community “[...] must draw up regulations to anticipate the risk of rebellion and must institute authorities to see that those regulations – the laws – are respected and to superintend the execution of legal acts of violence”.²¹

Nonetheless, the focus of Schmitt and Freud remained the foreign enemy and war rather than civil war or revolution. From their observations of human behavior historically and in the contemporary world, they had concluded that war was an inevitable consequence of the relations among states. But neither was bellicose, or could be considered a militarist or advocate of war in pursuit of some theoretical or concrete political or economic objective. They warily accepted its presence as a horrible, lamentable fact of existence, which could not be eliminated by theoretical formulations to the contrary or sincere, reasonable desires for peace. It was the extreme case to be avoided, if at all possible, but it persisted as an ever-present reality nonetheless. “War,” Schmitt held, “is the existential negation of the enemy. It is the most extreme consequences of enmity... [and] must remain a real possibility for as long as the concept of the enemy remains valid”.²² Writing during the previously unimagined destructiveness of World War I, while his sons served at the front, Freud, likewise, agreed that “[...] war cannot be abolished; so long as the conditions of existence among nations are so different and their mutual repulsion so violent, there are bound to be wars”.²³

The only time Freud appeared to deviate from this position was at the very end of *Why War*, an exchange of public letters with Albert Einstein on the subject in

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 749–752; S. Freud, *War and Death*, p. 297; *Why War?*, p. 204.

²⁰ C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, pp. 46–47.

²¹ S. Freud, *Why War?*, pp. 205–206.

²² C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, p. 33.

²³ S. Freud, *War and Death*, p. 299.

1932, sponsored by the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation. Here, Freud, the theorist of innate aggression, declared himself a pacifist, who could not help but “rebel against war.” In addition to the perennial killing, waste, and oppression of war, modern technology had become so destructive that it held out the possibility of exterminating one or more of the belligerents and possibly the demise of civilization itself. Freud hoped that it was not utopian to think that cultural advancements, that would restrain and internalize instinctual aggression, together with the terror of modern warfare, would eventually prevent wars. But this conclusion contradicted not only the logic, tone, and arguments of most of what he actually wrote in this same essay about the nature and causes of war, it ran counter to the Hobbesian thinking that furnished the foundation for much of his approach to politics and society. This *volte face* constituted a kind of wishful thinking highly uncharacteristic of the otherwise sober, realistic Freud. He seemed, in fact, aware of the tenuous nature of the position he attempted to establish, as he juxtaposed next to his utopian statement a question that undermined its likelihood of fulfillment: “And how long shall we have to wait before the rest of mankind become pacifists too. There is no telling”.²⁴

Freud’s belatedly proclaimed pacifism aside, his attitude towards war was not that different, if at all, from Schmitt’s. Describing why he now rebelled against war, Freud wrote: “[...] because everyone has a right to his own life, because war puts an end to human lives that are full of hope, because it brings individual men into humiliating situations, because it compels them against their will to murder other men, and because it destroys precious material objects which have been produced by the labours of humanity... [and] in its presentday form war is no longer an opportunity for achieving the old ideals of heroism...”.²⁵

Schmitt’s own reactions to the nature and purpose of war were quite comparable: “But no program, no ideal, no norm, no expediency confers the right to dispose of the physical life of other human beings. To demand seriously of human beings that they kill others and be prepared to die themselves so that trade and industry may flourish for the survivors or that the purchasing power of grandchildren may grow is sinister and crazy [...]. There exists no rational purpose, no norm no matter how true, no program no matter how exemplary, no social ideal no matter how beautiful, no legitimacy nor legality which could justify men in killing each other for this reason. If such physical destruction of human life is not motivated by an existential threat to one’s own way of life, then it cannot be justified”.²⁶

Not only did Schmitt remain convinced that such existential threats inherent in friend-enemy antagonisms would continue to culminate in war, but Freud, his pacifist hopes notwithstanding, tended to agree. For Freud had followed his own reasons for rejecting war with qualifications more consistent with his earlier political and social thought. He acknowledged that his position was debatable on such questions as whether “[...] every war is not open to condemnation to an equal

²⁴ S. Freud, *Why War?*, pp. 214–215.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 213.

²⁶ C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, pp. 48–50.

degree.” Equally important, Freud conceded that “so long as there exist countries and nations that are prepared for the ruthless destruction of others, those others must be armed for war”.²⁷ Freud’s conversion to optimism appears even more doubtful when one considers that merely a year before he had concluded the second edition of *Civilization and Its Discontents* with misgivings as to whether mastery of aggression and even dread of total annihilation by modern technology could prevent an ultimate fateful outcome. There was a hope that “eternal Eros, will make an effort to assert himself in the struggle with his equally immortal adversary [death/aggression],” he wrote, “But who can foresee with what success and with what result?”²⁸

Even more striking was the strain of pessimism pervading Freud’s thoughts as well as those of Schmitt. They were cognizant that their assumptions, analyses, and results would perturb, even shock, much of their audience, and anticipated hostile receptions of their work. They rarely hesitated to chide their critics for their lack of realism or unwillingness to abandon the false sense of security that any candid examination would force upon them. Like Hobbes and Machiavelli, Schmitt offered a “disquieting diagnosis.” Such “[...] realism can frighten men in need of security... [because man] prefers the illusion of an undisturbed calm and does not endure pessimists”.²⁹ Freud, the great destroyer of the illusions of traditional as well as modern culture, argued that man’s quest for happiness often resulted in the creation of whatever arguments were necessary to support his illusions. That is why it was so easy in the prewar milieu of bourgeois security to deceive ourselves that western civilization, in contrast to that of others, had achieved unique heights for humanity. Part of the shock of witnessing actual behavior in the Great War was due to the fact that many of these assumptions about humanity “[...] were based on illusion... [for] in reality our fellow-citizens have not sunk so low as we feared, because they had never risen so high as we believed.” Men recoiled from Freud’s candor because he could “[...] offer them no consolation: for at bottom that is what they are all demanding – the wildest revolutionaries no less passionately than the most virtuous believers”.³⁰

To many of these critics, the horrors of the war had definitely demonstrated the unavoidable necessity of rejecting traditional power politics and of finding a less destructive alternative to organized relations among nations. But despite their own revulsion at the realities of war, Freud and Schmitt felt that the facts contradicted this contemporary illusion. Freud even denied the treatises of those anthropologists who had claimed that cultural groups existed in various parts of the globe who either did not have instinctual aggression or mastered it by providing for all basic human needs, thus living in freedom and tranquility.³¹ Schmitt’s response was equally unwavering: “It is irrelevant here whether one rejects, or accepts, or perhaps finds it an atavistic remnant of barbaric times that nations

²⁷ S. Freud, *Why War?*, p. 214.

²⁸ S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 772.

²⁹ C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, p. 64–66.

³⁰ S. Freud, *War and Death*, p. 285; *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 771–772.

³¹ S. Freud, *Why War?*, pp. 211–212.

continue to group themselves according to friend and enemy... [For] rationally speaking, it cannot be denied the nations continue to group themselves according to the friend and enemy antithesis".³²

Marxism and liberalism, especially the variant of the latter in the form of a new international order through the League of Nations, were among the most prominent movements offering alternatives to the politics of conflict that Freud and Schmitt criticized. To Schmitt, Marxism, had usurped for itself the banner of universal humanity, on whose behalf the Communists would wage "[...] the final battle against the last enemy of humanity" – the bourgeoisie. But despite its claims of establishing a new world order in a post-revolutionary era, Marxism, Schmitt concluded, was a political power like any other that might arise and had merely substituted the "international class enemy" for other friend-enemy antagonisms.³³

Using similar concepts and terminology, Freud expressed an identical assessment of Marxism. He challenged in particular the very notion that with the destruction of private property and the bourgeoisie "[...] illwill and hostility would disappear among men. Since everyone's needs would be satisfied, no one would have any reason to regard another as his enemy." Yet, in Russia, Marxism has evolved ideologically and institutionally into a dogmatism with "an uncanny likeness to what it is fighting against." Its new enemies are ideological deviants within and class enemies without. Anyone within the movement who fails to adhere to the correct interpretation "[...] is punished in the same way heresy was once punished by the Catholic church." Moreover, the Russian Communists "[...] are armed today with the most scrupulous care and not the least important methods by which they keep their supporters together is hatred of everyone beyond their borders".³⁴

Freud also challenged the Marxist postulate that by eliminating the alleged sources of conflict and oppression – classes, property, economic need, etc. – one could, over generations, "alter human nature" to such an extent that aggression would be eliminated from the relations among men and then the dream of the new society of universal humanity and equality brought to fruition. But the anthropological and psychological assumptions underpinning such goals, Freud asserted, rested upon "an untenable illusion." Historical experience, even trends in the Bolshevikism itself, and Freud's lifetime work clearly revealed, in his mind, the utopian nature of such expectations.³⁵

It was Freud's recognition of the "untamable character of human nature" that made his psychology equally challenging to many of the principles and aspirations of liberalism.³⁶ The major thrust of *Civilization and Its Discontents* was that

³² C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, pp. 28–29.

³³ *Ibidem*, pp. 37–38, 62–63, 73.

³⁴ S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 750; *The Question of a Weltanschauung*, [in:] *Freud Reader*, p. 794; *Why War?*, p. 212.

³⁵ S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 750–751.

³⁶ As to why, despite his pessimism about human nature and skepticism of so many liberal political expectations, Freud should still be considered a classical liberal see P. Gay, *Freud*, pp. 16–18, 547–548, and P. Rieff, *Freud*, pp. 270, 277. Ronald Clark answered this question by classifying Freud as an "old fashioned liberal." See R. Clark, *Freud: The Man and His Cause*

despite the conquest of nature and the achievement of material progress through tremendous advances in science and technology, the very biological-psychological nature of man precluded the fulfillment of the ideals of freedom, morality, and happiness that the improvement in material civilization would supposedly produce. The very existence of civilization demands repression, causing dissatisfaction and neuroses. One of the essential causes of disillusionment with nineteenth-century expectations was that the barbaric behavior of states and individuals during World War I shattered the belief that this “highest human civilization” had achieved such social progress in the spheres of morality, rationality, truth, and general humanitarian concern.³⁷

For Schmitt, it was this combination of eighteenth-century intellectual-moral progress and nineteenth-century economic/technological advancement that formed the basis for the liberal assault against the state, tradition, and politics, which supposedly inhibited freedom as well as improvements in the material and ethical conditions of humanity. But the new societal restraints, modern forms of economic exploitation, and the weapons of mass destruction produced by the most advanced science and technology have proven that material “progress no longer produces *eo ipso* the humanitarian and moral perfection which was considered progress in the eighteenth century”.³⁸

Schmitt also contested liberalism’s hope that economic development and interdependence would reduce the power political conflicts of the past, because “economic antagonism can become political...” and thus continue to serve very much as the source of friend-enemy relationships. They cannot be neutralized or depoliticized as liberal theory proposed. In any event, economic benefits, no matter how great, would never supersede or eliminate the other aspects of human existence that divided men with such intensity that conflict results.³⁹ Once again, Freud appeared to agree: “We had hoped, certainly, that the extensive community of interests established by commerce and production would constitute the germ of such a compulsion, but it would seem that nations still obey their passions far more than their interests. Their interests serve them, at most as rationalizations for their passions; they put forward their interests in order to be able to give reasons for satisfying their passions”.⁴⁰

Both thinkers realized that, rather than depoliticizing various spheres of life, opposing sides in friend-enemy relationships attempt to usurp the banner of universality and truth by claiming that they hold a neutral, disinterested position. They promoted their own political cause under the guise of “natural law or law of reason,” etc., while simultaneously undermining similar claims by their opponent. During war, Freud noted, “science herself lost her passionless impartiality; her deeply embittered servants seek for weapons from her with which to contribute towards the struggle with the enemy. Anthropologists feel driven to declare him

(New York 1980), p. 484.

³⁷ S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *passim*; *War and Death*, pp. 278–280.

³⁸ C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, pp. 72–77.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 68–71, 75–78.

⁴⁰ S. Freud, *War and Death*, p. 288.

inferior and degenerate, while psychiatrists issue a diagnosis of his disease of mind or spirit".⁴¹ A frequent contemporary effort of this kind, Schmitt stated, was in identifying one's own position with that of humanity and civilization, thereby delegitimizing and devaluing – perhaps even dehumanizing – the enemy.⁴² Like Schmitt, Freud had experienced this directly when he found the very essence of his cherished German culture maligned and under attack by western countries that had usurped as their own the rule of reason, freedom, and humanity. "Indeed," Freud retorted in reference to Germany, "one of the great civilized nations is so universally unpopular that the attempt can actually be made to exclude it from the civilized community as 'barbaric', although it has long proved its fitness by the magnificent contributions to that community which it has made... [and it] has been precisely the one which has least transgressed the laws of civilization".⁴³

Neither Freud nor Schmitt had much faith in the post-World War I attempt to achieve similar liberal objectives by organizing a supranational institution that could claim universality and serve as a judge in conflicts of interests among states. But the very structural components of the League of Nations (i.e., sovereign states) prevented it from having the authority and power necessary to succeed. Its efficacy depended, Schmitt claimed, on two unlikely developments: grasping the *jus belli* from all other political entities (presumably also from the very states that compose the League) and, at the same time, not assuming that authority and power for itself.⁴⁴ Freud was even more Hobbesian in tone when expressing the reasons for his pessimism about the League's prospects: "[...] the attempt to replace actual force with the force of ideas seems at present doomed to failure. We shall be making a false calculation if we disregard the fact that law was originally brute violence and that even today it cannot do without the support of violence".⁴⁵

In the final analyses, though the sources of conflict and the specific associations and dissociations might change with time and context, Schmitt and Freud assumed that friend-enemy relationships would endure. There will always remain, Schmitt wrote acknowledging his debt to Hobbes, "concrete human groupings which fight with other concrete human groupings in the name of justice, humanity, order, or peace".⁴⁶ Freud's prognosis for the future was equally pessimistic. He expected that new motivations of significance to groups would perennially ensure that "[...] there will be the same intolerance towards outsiders as in the age of the Wars of Religion...".⁴⁷

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 275.

⁴² C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, p. 54–56.

⁴³ S. Freud, *War and Death*, p. 279.

⁴⁴ C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, pp. 56–58.

⁴⁵ S. Freud, *Why War?*, pp. 207–209.

⁴⁶ C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, p. 66–67.

⁴⁷ S. Freud, *Group Psychology*, p. 99.