

Multipolar encounters: Carl Schmitt and the political left.

Despite his anti-enlightenment and anti-egalitarian thinking, Carl Schmitt, who is considered by some to be the "Kronjurist" (Söllner 1992) of National Socialism, has exerted an enduring fascination on leftist intellectuals since the 1920s. Particularly well-known in this context is Walter Benjamin's reception of Schmitt, the extent and significance of which is still controversially discussed today. Personal acquaintances such as the one between Schmitt and Jacob Taubes are another evidence of a lively intellectual exchange, which by no means only had an effect on Schmitt's discussion partners and recipients, but conversely also influenced Schmitt's reflections. In general it can be stated that Carl Schmitt not only had a major impact on left-wing thinkers, but he was himself an attentive reader of left-wing writings, as well.

Schmitt's great influence on his opponents is exemplified by Hannah Arendt's main work *Elements and Origins of Total Dominion*. In this text, Arendt uses terms such as "political romanticism" with explicit reference to Schmitt for her analysis of the National Socialist system, which Schmitt had partially supported with his writings. The fact that Schmitt, who is decisively rejected by Habermas as a fascist thinker, is still highly regarded by parts of the left in the recent past, is shown in an anthology published by Chantal Mouffe in 1999. In this volume Slavoj Žižek, among other authors, uses Schmitt's ideas to argue against liberalism.

The interdisciplinary and international conference "Multipolar encounters: Carl Schmitt and the Political Left", which will take place from 12 to 14 March 2021 at the Albert-Ludwigs-University of Freiburg im Breisgau, will focus on the question why Carl Schmitt's thinking had such a strong impact in parts of the political left. The event aims to portray a broad spectrum of Schmitt's left-wing reception since the 1920s. In this way, we intend to provide a historical and systematic overview on the writings, theorems and considerations of Schmitt that were and still are of particular interest for the left reception. Moreover, we want to focus on the past and present role of the 'left-wing Schmittians' within the political left, and how their internal dynamics and tensions are also reflected in their reception of Schmitt.

Please send us an abstract (max. 3000 characters) with your lecture topic. The lectures should not exceed 30 minutes. The publication of selected contributions in an anthology is planned. We are seeking project funding from the Thyssen Stiftung.