

Sovereignty and Eschatology: The Reordering of The Apocalypse in Carl Schmitt's
Political Theology

By

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Abstract

The thesis examines the relationship between sovereignty and eschatology in Carl Schmitt's political theology. Schmitt is seen as an important political theorist of sovereignty but the contemporary understanding of his sovereignty lacks an eschatological dimension. As a political theologian, Schmitt notices that sovereignty and eschatology are in tension: if the apocalypse is near, the earthly sovereign order has no legitimacy to exist. According to him, this tension was rooted in Christianity but radicalized by 20th century Marxism which destructs the sovereign order by extremizing the class contradiction to negate the class enemy and creating a universal unity of humanity at the end of human history. This thesis interprets Schmitt's concept of sovereignty as a response to the Marxist apocalypticism and argues that Schmitt's political theology is a project to revive the sovereign as a Katechontic power which perpetuates, but simultaneously restrains, enmity, to delay the apocalypse and continually legitimate sovereignty as the earthly order.

Keywords: Carl Schmitt, sovereignty, eschatology, the apocalypse, Katechon

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Introduction

The time is near.

(Revelation 1:3)

World history has not yet ended.

(Carl Schmitt, *Wisdom of the Cell*)

The apocalypse is a recurring theme in not only the Judeo-Christian tradition but also modern politics. In films and fiction, political order is usually turned into a state of anarchy during the apocalyptic events. When a comet hits the earth or a zombie virus breaks out worldwide, humans no longer live in a peaceful society protected by laws and authority but a chaotic one of only robbery, violence and death. The apocalypse is not only a fictional story but also a political threat in the real world. Doomsday cults have developed in many countries and they are treated as terrorists by the security departments (Gönye, 1998). Jim Jones, the leader of Peoples Temple¹, claimed himself to be the prophet of the apocalypse and led his followers to live in a remote settlement out of US control and eventually seduced them to commit mass suicide. Aum Shinrikyo², a cult movement led by Shoko Asahara, conducted a sarin gas attack in Tokyo's subway to start a Third World War and spark the apocalypse they hoped for. The two cults both promised believers redemption at the end of days if they followed the orders to kill themselves or

¹ Peoples Temple was an American religious organization led by Jim Jones in the 1970s. Its theological and political doctrines combined Christianity and communism.

² Aum Shinrikyo is a Japanese cult founded by Shoko Asahara. It combines various religious sources, including Yoga, Hinduism and Christianity.

others. Doomsday cults indicate that politics and theology are deeply intertwined through an eschatological worldview, which “conceptually fits the political realm into a symbolic universe that anticipates the imminent arrival of a divine form of governance” (Flannery, 2015, p. 4).

Christian eschatology originates from the final book of the Bible, *Revelation*, which describes the apocalypse: When God returns to the earth on his throne, the seven seals will be opened and foretell great disasters. Four horsemen will appear and bring conquest, war, famine, and death. The earth will burn up; great stars will fall from the sky; the sun and moon will be darkened and a third of mankind will be killed by plagues of fire, smoke, and brimstone. Christ and his army of angels will begin the final battle with Satan and his demon legions. God will prevail, purge all the evils and claim his eternal rule of the new world with no more suffering and death (Revelation 4:1-22:5).

The cataclysm in eschatology is a political problem. The apocalypse is a paradoxical event of creative destruction. It entails the destruction of the earthly order and simultaneously promises to create a new world where there is only happiness, comfort, peace and security. Since destruction is the precondition of creation, to enter heaven the earth must disappear. The apocalypse is the ultimate synthesis of destruction and creation. Eschatology is therefore a historical narrative that foretells a total transformation of the world. This eschatological view of history has a significant impact on sovereignty. If we understand sovereignty as an earthly order ruled by men, then it has no necessity to exist when God directly rules by himself. Undoubtedly, the apocalypse entails the destruction of sovereignty. When the apocalypse comes, the kingdom of men must give way to the kingdom of God. Sovereignty and eschatology are therefore in

tension: apocalypticism could challenge political authority with a theological worldview that only by completely destroying the earthly order can the divine rule of God be established.

In the canon of political theory, Thomas Hobbes, Niccolò Machiavelli and Hans Morgenthau have engaged with the political problem of the apocalypse as Alison McQueen examines in her book *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times*. The three realist political thinkers all encountered situations where apocalypticists challenged political order in the name of redemption, and they developed two strategies to deal with them. First, Machiavelli rejects the apocalypse as the end of politics but develops a history of cyclical tragedies indicating that human efforts to deal with politics are limited and might produce uncertain consequences. As such, there is no final settlement of politics (McQueen, 2017. p. 13, 14). Second, Hobbes redirects the apocalypse from the end of the world to the death of Leviathan to generate fear of chaos in order to make people adhere to political orders that promise perpetual peace (McQueen, 2017. p. 14). Morgenthau's approach is a mixture of rejection and redirection. He rejects the hope for the first world war as the end of wars through his theory of tragic circularity, and in the cold war period, he redirects the fear to death in the nuclear apocalypse (McQueen, 2017. p. 14). All three thinkers aim to secure sovereignty and political order from the destructive effects of the apocalypse. Their engagements remind us that political realism might be an antidote to apocalypticism.

In the school of political realism, Carl Schmitt's response to the apocalypse has not been carefully examined. Schmitt is one of the most influential and controversial realist political thinkers in the 20th century. The concept of sovereignty plays a significant role

in his political realism, as Attila Gyulai argues, the amoral decision power of the sovereign is the central principle of realist politics (Gyulai, 2018, 29, 31, 32). Mark Philp has a similar understanding that Schmitt's political realism is a theory of *macht*, a sovereign power that emphasizes order and anti-moralism (Philp, 2007, p. 68, 2012, p. 631). But those contemporary scholars do not recognize that Schmitt's realist understanding sovereignty is related to the apocalypse.

In a short essay, *Three Possibilities for a Christian Conception of History* [1950], Schmitt mentions the tension between sovereignty and eschatology: "The vivid expectation of an imminent end seems to take away the meaning from all of history, and it causes an eschatological paralysis for which there are many historical examples" (Schmitt, 2009, p. 169). He uses "eschatological paralysis" to refer to the destruction of the sovereign order and the state of political chaos. But Schmitt argues that "yet there is the possibility of a bridge", which is Katechon, the restrainer who "defers the end and suppresses the evil one" (Schmitt, 2009, p. 169). Some contemporary theologians, such as Jacob Taubes (2013) and Wolfgang Palaver (2007), acknowledges the significance of Schmitt's concept of Katechon in his project of countering the apocalypse. Hjalmar Falk, in a short internet article, suggests that Schmitt's realist principle of the sovereignty is Katechontism, which is the decision power to stop the lawless transgression of the Marxist apocalypticists and overcome eschatological paralysis (Falk, 2017). Falk's suggestion is insightful, but he does not specify why Marxism is an apocalyptic transgression in Schmitt's reception and how the Katechontic sovereign power can stop it.

According to Schmitt, in the 20th century, apocalypticism was no longer a religious superstition but a systematic philosophy of history. He believes that his most despised enemy, socialism, contained the strongest apocalyptic enthusiasm to encourage revolutions with the hope for emancipation and redemption. Schmitt directly describes socialism as the “New Christianity” (Schmitt, 2009, p. 168). Of course, Marxism was not the only ideology with apocalyptic elements in the 20th century. Schmitt also conceives liberalism as an apocalyptic ideology, as he draws parallels between American financiers and Marxist socialists who both design a fully emancipated world at the end of history where there is no sovereign order but only anarchic freedom (Schmitt, 2005a, p. 51, 65). But Schmitt mainly worries about Marxism, since he believes that the socialist movements in the 1920s were more threatening to sovereignty, as Sun Jian reminds that, for Schmitt, liberalism is an ideology hoping to end history with peaceful discussions but Marxism aims to end history with destructive class struggle (Sun, 2018, p. 28). In 1923, a year that the Weimar Republic was in a crisis and challenged from both left and right-wing extreme ideologies, Schmitt published *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* [1923] and portrayed Marxism as an apocalyptic ideology which is a conception of progress, seeking to concentrate “class struggle into a single, final struggle of human history” (Schmitt, 1988, p. 59). Schmitt perceived a great danger in Marxism: the apocalyptic vision of the final struggle of history was constantly seducing people to rebel against the political order of Weimar, engendering endless chaos and violence. For Schmitt, this danger is not a new phenomenon but a reflection of the tension between sovereignty and eschatology: if humans desire to live in a communist paradise, sovereignty has no necessity to exist but must be destroyed.

So, the research question in this thesis is: how does Schmitt understand Marxist apocalypticism and deal with the tension between sovereignty and eschatology through the principle of Katechon? I will argue that Schmitt perceives Marxism as a political eschatology that aims to accelerate the apocalypse by intensifying and overcoming the struggle between the class enemies, while Schmitt offers a Katechontic sovereign power as the counterstrategy which aims to delay the apocalypse by perpetuating and constraining enmity. For Schmitt, Marxism seeks to destroy the sovereign order and intensify and universalize enmity between the proletariat and the Bourgeoisie into the final struggle of human history and therefore negate enmity and create the earthly heaven without politics. If sovereignty wants to contain the apocalyptic chaos and legitimate itself, it must be able to perpetuate human history with infinite historical events by deciding on the enemy but simultaneously constraining the intensity of enmity by creating a global balance of concrete sovereign orders.

To be noted, the primary task of this thesis is interpreting Schmitt's view of sovereignty and eschatology. My aim is to provide a explanation of how Schmitt deals with the political problem of the apocalypse by his concept of sovereignty. My interpretation of Schmitt draws on several his major and minor texts and some secondary sources.

The significance of this project is threefold. First, it primarily provides a novel interpretation of Carl Schmitt's concept of sovereignty from the perspective of eschatology. Contemporary scholars tend to overlook Schmitt's theological dimension and hence have one-sided interpretations. My interpretation is based on an underexplored text *Political theology II: The myth of the closure of any political theology* [1970]. This

text has attracted little attention mainly because it is too theological. But the continuity between *Political Theology* [1922] and *Political Theology II* [1970] cannot be ignored. The eschatological interpretation of sovereignty informs contemporary scholars that they should not reduce sovereignty to a legal concept. Schmitt is not only a jurist but also a political theologian. The theological dimension of politics in Schmitt's thought should always be kept in mind.

Second, the thesis reveals the political implications of the apocalypse through Schmitt's eyes. The eschatological understanding of the world did not disappear with secularization but has penetrated into some modern political thought. The anticipations of the end of the world might tremendously affect the legitimacy of political order and create social chaos. The tension between sovereignty and eschatology requires reiteration and responses, and Schmitt could be an intellectual resource to reflect upon it. The thesis can show the political dangers of apocalypticism through Schmitt's eschatological interpretation of Marxism. It reminds us that we should not only keep an eye on doomsday cults but also reflect upon the intellectual tradition of apocalypticism and the theological foundation of politics.

Third, it introduces a new approach proposed by Schmitt to engage with apocalypticism. McQueen summarizes two approaches: one is rejecting the apocalypse and another is redirecting it (McQueen, 2017, p. 13, 14). But Schmitt's approach aims to delay the apocalypse, not refusing but reconciling eschatology with sovereignty through the perpetuation of human history³. Unlike Machiavelli, Hobbes and Morgenthau's

³ According to George Schwab (1989, p. 13), before Schmitt started his academic career in public law, he was raised in a Catholic family and educated in a strong religious

secular approach, Schmitt's concept of sovereignty remains in a Christian eschatology that recognizes the end of days but defers its coming. Schmitt's project is more suitable for the extreme situation that if people's enthusiasm for the apocalypse is too strong to reject or redirect, it still can be delayed and restrained.

The thesis contains three chapters.

In Chapter I, I will discuss two major interpretations of Schmitt's concept of sovereignty: conservative power of dictatorship and creative power revolution. I will show that both of them are one-sided understandings of sovereignty and failed to answer the question of legitimacy. By drawing on *Political Theology* [1922], I will prove that sovereignty is neither a political dictatorship nor a democratic revolution but an earthly order that is endangered by apocalypticism and has to be legitimated theologically.

In Chapter II, I will examine Schmitt's understanding of the tension between sovereignty and eschatology. I will start with the apocalypticism in early Christianity and show how it was tamed by medieval theological doctrine and modern sovereign order. These are the historical ages that Schmitt is mostly nostalgic about. Then I will interpret Schmitt's reception of Marxism, arguing that the Marxist conception of progress reignited the apocalyptic enthusiasm. I will demonstrate that Schmitt believes that Marxist conception of progress is a secularization of eschatology, which seeks redemption through political revolution. Schmitt views the Marxist apocalyptic

atmosphere in secondary schools. This life experience might be the reason that he associates sovereignty with theology.

enthusiasm as the biggest threat to state sovereignty and his design of sovereignty aims to be immune from it.

In Chapter III, I will argue that Schmitt reconciles sovereignty and eschatology by making the sovereign power a controlling force to delay the apocalypse. I will parallel Schmitt's concept of sovereignty in *Political Theology II* [1970] to Paul's idea of Katechon, the restrainer, in *The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*. Schmitt, just like Paul, rejects the imminent apocalypse and adopts a "yet-to-come" eschatology in order to legitimate sovereignty as a necessary arrangement. The power of the Katechontic sovereignty is to interrupt the historical continuity of progress by creating a new enemy. But it must also control the intensity of the struggle with the enemy through a global balance of concrete sovereign orders. This is because the ontological existence of the enemy is proof of the yet-to-come human history. Enmity is constantly created but simultaneously constrained by the sovereign power, and therefore confines humans in a permanent struggle with the enemies.

Chapter I: The Concept of Sovereignty: Dictatorship and Revolution

To reveal Carl Schmitt's engagement with the tension between sovereignty and eschatology, we must first understand his concept of sovereignty. Schmitt is one of the most important and controversial theorists of sovereignty, as Hannah Arendt (2006, p. 240) comments, "Carl Schmitt is the most able defender of the notion of sovereignty". But his's concept of sovereignty is a confusing term. In general, sovereignty refers to "claims to a monopoly on legitimate authority and/or power on the part of a state" (Walker, 1988, p. 7)⁴. In other words, sovereignty is a legal order about the legitimacy to rule. As a public jurist, Schmitt's concept of sovereignty is also about the legitimacy of rulership. But paradoxically, he does not associate sovereignty with legal norms but the exception. As he defines in *Political Theology* [1922], "the sovereign is he who decides on the exception" (Schmitt, 2005, p. 5). The paradox is: if the exception is something outside the law, then how it can provide legitimacy to the sovereign power. Schmitt's paradoxical definition of sovereignty has received many different interpretations. The complexity is that he does not only give a definition in *Political Theology* [1922], but also uses the term of sovereignty in other major works, such as *Dictatorship* [1921], *The Concept of the Political* [1932], and *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*

⁴ Rob Walker summarizes six meanings of sovereignty: "To express the supremacy of a norm in a legal hierarchy, as viewed by a lawyer, or by a student concerned with the legal limits of discretion; In a study of constitutions as normative orders, to refer to either to the omnicompetence, or to the supreme competence within its field, of a legislative organ; To express the self-sufficiency of a legal order from the point of view of a lawyer operating within it; To refer to a particular kind of partial order, the definition of which may vary from one legal order another (its utility in this sense being limited to particular jurisprudence); To express the ability of bodies such as armed forces to defeat all possible rivals; To express the ability of a sectional interest to influence policy decisively" (Walker, 1988, p. 7).

[1938]. Contemporary scholars interpret sovereignty using different selections of his works. In English-speaking academia, there are two mainstream interpretations: conservative dictatorship and creative revolution.

Sovereignty as a Conservative Dictatorship

Jürgen Habermas refers Schmitt's sovereignty to a conservative and authoritarian state power. In *The Horrors of Autonomy: Carl Schmitt in English*, Habermas argues that sovereignty is the power of Leviathan that aims to oppress revolutions and prevent civil wars:

Just as it is only in vanquishing Behemoth that Leviathan can be the power he is, so it is only in suppressing revolutionary opposition that the state can assert itself as a sovereign power. The state consists of the ongoing prevention of civil war. Its dynamic consists of the crushing of revolt, the containment of a chaos inherent in the evil nature of individuals. Individuals press for their autonomy and would perish in the terrors of their emancipation if they were not rescued through the facticity of a power that overcomes every other power (Habermas, 1989, p. 130, 131).

In this interpretation, the sovereign power can only be exercised by the state because the primary purpose of it is protecting the political order of a country from the threat of revolutions and civil wars waged by non-state actors. State sovereignty implies the unity of order, which is opposite to sectarianism.

Moreover, according to Habermas, the sovereign power of the state is arbitrary and unconstitutional, because:

the subversive forces always appear under the name of truth and justice, the sovereign who wishes to guard against the exceptional situation will also reserve the power to define what is publicly held to be true or just. His decision power is the source of all validity. The state alone determines the public creed of its citizens (Habermas, 1989, p. 131).

The sovereign decision is purely arbitrary, regardless of laws and moral norms, as long as it can defeat the revolutionaries and rebellions. State sovereignty can break the laws and justify the violation by the necessity of order and counterrevolution. Habermas' interpretation of Schmitt lies in the tradition of the Hobbesian absolutism. By connecting *Political Theology* [1922] and *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes* [1938], sovereignty is presented as a Leviathan, an absolutist state dictatorship which exercises arbitrary power to conserve itself from dissolution.

John McCormick has a similar interpretation but goes further, arguing that Schmitt not only preserve the absolutist power of Leviathan but also mystifies it. Schmitt rejects the technological view of the state, which is not a political unity but a neutral machine, because it cannot prevent revolutionary factions taking state power (McCormick, 1994, p. 622). Then, his task is to revive the fear of violent death in men's natural condition in order to reconstruct Hobbes' Leviathan with a stronger authority⁵. According to McCormick, his approach is in three ways:

“by demonstrating the substantive affinity between his concept of the political and Hobbes' state of nature, (2) by making clear the ever-present possibility of a return

⁵ This reflects Schmitt's desperate conservatism, in Jan-Werner Müller's words (2003, p. 12).

to that situation in the form of civil war, and (3) by convincing individuals – partisans and nonpartisans alike – that only a state with a monopoly on decisions regarding what is “political” can guarantee peace and security” (McCormick, 1994, p. 623).

By mystifying the fear of the civil war, the unity of the state and the monopoly of power are justified. State sovereignty becomes a mystical power to decide whether the individual or factions are threatening the order. The irrational fear of the civil war, the untrust to the constitution and legal norms, and the arbitrariness of the state sovereignty are great dangers. The state can easily fall into totalitarianism, as Richard Wolin (1990, p. 391) reminds, “his political decision of 1933 is the proof of the pudding: a total critique of bourgeois norms meshes seamlessly with a totalitarian political option”.

In general, I agree with their interpretations that Schmitt’s sovereignty is an authoritarian or totalitarian, arbitrary, unconstitutional and mythical power. However, there is a problem: does sovereignty have to reside in the state and preserve the existing order? Indeed, Schmitt is a statist and his concept of sovereignty seems to be state-centred. But the statuses of the state and the faction are always exchangeable. A faction can take over the state by a revolution, civil war or a military coup. The state cannot always possess sovereignty, and indeed, Schmitt does not always support the legitimacy of the state. Historically, Schmitt has endorsed Franco’s regime, praising that it has proved the capability of decision (2018, p. 286)⁶, and the Spanish

⁶ This reference is based on the preface of the Spanish translation of *The Concept of The Political* written by Schmitt himself in 1939. There is no current English translation of it,

Schmittian jurist Luis Sánchez Agesta claimed that Franco's military uprising was an expression of constituent power (Cristi, 1999, p. 1764)⁷. The Spanish dictator Francisco Franco led a counterrevolutionary partisan but he gained his sovereign position through a rebellion, as Schmitt comments, "Spain was defending itself in a national war of liberation from the grip of international communism" (2004, p. 39).

For Schmitt, sovereignty can be created by partisans, as long as they can make the decision of friend/enemy while the state cannot. Let us review the definition of sovereignty in *Political Theology* [1922]: "The sovereign is he who decides on the exception" (Schmitt, 2005, p. 5). He does not equate sovereignty to state power nor suggest that sovereignty is a pre-existing power that is able to make decisions at any time. Rather, sovereignty is a construction. When the decision is made, sovereignty emerges. The essence of sovereignty is the decision itself, not the decider, and the decision can be made by non-state actors. The contents of the decision are usually about the identification of the enemy, particularly in times of war. Identifying a group of people as the enemy and excluding them from the political community sometimes require a legal exception, such as The Nuremberg Laws which was unconstitutional to suspend the Citizenship of the Jewish in Germany⁸. So the sovereign can be

so I cite a Chinese translation that covers it. The preface express Schmitt's strong endorsement of Franco's regime and treats the Spanish Civil War as an example of the sovereign decision.

⁷ Schmitt maintained a close relationship with Franco's regime and had a strong intellectual influence on Spanish counterrevolutionary jurists: "These jurists confirmed Schmitt's counterrevolutionary intent when they underlined Franco's destruction of Spain's 1931 Constitution and the creation of a new one" (Cristi, 1999, 1764).

⁸ According to the Weimar constitution, the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 were obviously unconstitutional, but the constitution was already suspended in 1933. This is to show that

understood as the one who decides the enemy. The identification of the enemy deprives their membership of the political community in a legal sense. But, again, the state cannot always decide the enemy. Although in *The Concept of The Political* [1932], Schmitt (2008, p. 19, 26) writes that “the concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political”, he is not suggesting that the state is always political – an ability to decide the enemy. As McCormick (1994, p. 622) already shows, the technological view of the state, the parliamentary democracy, is not a political unity. The statement is rather saying that Schmitt’s ideal form of the state is a political state which is able to make the decision of friend/enemy.

If the state cannot make the decision, who can decide? Schmitt answers it in *The Theory of the Partisan: A Commentary/Remark on the Concept of the Political* [1963], a lesser famous work but it has a continuity with *the Concept of the Political* [1932]. The continuity is that in both works, Schmitt defines “the political” through intensity:

“The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation” (Schmitt, 2008, p. 19).

“The most extreme intensity of his political commitment is counted among his criteria. When Guevara says: “the partisan is the Jesuit of war,” he is thinking of the unconditional nature [Unbedingtheit] of his political deployment. The life history of every famous partisan, beginning from Empecinado, shows that. The person with no rights [der rechtlos Gemachte] seeks his justice in enmity” (Schmitt, 2004, p. 65).

deciding the exception is often related to deciding the enemy, and the ability of decision can be seen as the expression of sovereignty.

For Schmitt, partisans can possess the character of “the political”. As long as the partisan has “a heightened intensity of political commitment” (Schmitt, 2004, p. 13), they have enough intensity of enmity so they can make the friend/enemy distinction. Once the partisan eliminates or excludes all their enemies, it creates the sovereign state.

Since sovereignty can be created by a partisan, and the partisan can take over the state, then for Schmitt, civil war is not a great catastrophe that has to be avoided. If the state cannot make the decision of the enemy, it is necessary for a partisan to wage a civil war to overthrow the state and establish sovereignty. The common problem of Habermas and McCormick’s interpretations is the conflation of sovereignty and the state. As Rob Walker (1988, p. 6) reminds, “perhaps the most common understanding of sovereignty presumes that sovereignty, state, power, and supreme authority may be treated as synonyms. This presumption has always been challenged at the level of principle”. By distinguishing sovereignty and state, a new dimension is opened. As a sovereign state is a construction through the decision, the sovereign power does not have to be conservative but creative.

Sovereignty as a Creative Revolution

Unlike the aforementioned scholars who portray Schmitt’s as an authoritarian thinker, Andreas Kalyvas discovers the democratic potential within his theory of sovereignty⁹. In *Democracy and The Politics of The Extraordinary*, Kalyvas (2008, p.

⁹ Chantal Mouffe (2005) also perceives the democratic potential in Schmitt’s theory and she aims to reuse it for radical left populism.

93) argues that the authoritarian interpretations of Schmitt conflate sovereignty and dictatorship. Indeed, the sovereign power which arbitrarily decides the exception and the enemy sounds really like a dictatorship. But Kalyvas approaches the concept of sovereignty differently, through Schmitt's another work, *Dictatorship*, distinguishing two forms of dictatorship: the commissarial and sovereign:

“The commissarial dictator Schmitt argued, following the Roman republican tradition, is appointed by a higher political authority and has a very specific task to accomplish, namely, the elimination of enemies during a crisis that threatens the survival of a regime. In these emergency moments, the higher authority appoints the commissarial dictator to suspend, if necessary, the existing legal order, to remove the threat, and to restore the previous normal conditions” (Kalyvas, 2008, p. 89).

“Sovereign dictatorship, although also a type of delegation, has a different task: to establish a new political and legal order by drafting a new constitution. Sovereign dictatorship, therefore, is a “founding power” reminiscent of the classical legislator who operates outside the existing legal system and is external to the established constitution” (Kalyvas, 2008, p. 89).

The difference is that the commissarial dictatorship is a constitutional power prescribed by the constitution to protect the existing polity in the times of crisis while the sovereign dictatorship is a constituent power to establish a new polity¹⁰. The

¹⁰ The distinction between constitutional power and constituent power was originally made by Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès. This distinction is reused by Schmitt but he replaces the terms with commissarial dictatorship and sovereign dictatorship.

authoritarian interpretations of sovereignty that refers to exceptions is only a dictatorship, not sovereignty. The real meaning of sovereignty refers to not the exceptional lawbreaking power but the extraordinary lawmaking power:

“The sovereign is the one who creates the constitution and the fundamental laws of a regime, the one who decides the juridical form and content of the political existence of a collectivity and of its higher regulative and normative principles. In a word, the sovereign is the constituent subject” ” (Kalyvas, 2008, p. 95).

By this novel interpretation, Kalyvas situates Schmitt in a democratic tradition. Sovereignty as the extraordinary constituting power does not have to be related to the state of emergency and dictatorship but democratic revolution. The revolutionary and democratic character resides in “its creative, instituting powers to set new systems of fundamental laws, to ‘instaure’ political orders, and to bring into being novel constitutions” (Kalyvas, 2008, p. 91). The revolutionary moment of the sovereign constitution signifies a rupture of the existing legal order and a beginning of a new order:

“A true sovereign decision always escapes subsumption under any rules or norms because it constitutes their ultimate origin. And as their ultimate cause, it will always elude them. Hence, the instituting sovereign decision cannot be reduced or traced back to anything external or posterior to itself. It signifies a new, radical legal beginning. It is in that sense that Schmitt understood the sovereign will as originary and groundless” (Kalyvas, 2008, p. 94).

This new sovereign order is legitimated “during those singular, extraordinary moments of genuine constitutional creation” (Kalyvas, 2008, p. 95). In this way, the legitimacy of sovereignty does not rely on any existing norms but the constituting act itself and therefore constitutes “an absolute beginning” of a new order (Kalyvas, 2008, p. 94).

In contrast with the authoritarian interpretations which parallel Schmitt to Hobbes, Kalyvas portrays him as a Rousseauian, as he writes, “dictatorship, as an executive power, embodies a particular will; sovereignty, by contrast, expresses a general will” (Kalyvas, 2008, p. 91). Indeed, the constituting character of sovereignty has been signified by the French Revolution, the beginning of popular sovereignty. This perhaps derives from Rousseau’s distinction of government and sovereignty¹¹. It demonstrates, as I argued in the previous section, that sovereignty does not have to reside in the state but can be created by the people who exist in the form of partisan, with an intensity of political association.

However, Kalyvas’ interpretation is still one-sided. His reinterpretation of sovereignty as a constituent power expressed in the form of the democratic revolution is contradicted with Schmitt’s counterrevolutionary purpose of sovereignty. If the sovereign power can be legitimated by a pure constituting act, the rule of any revolutionary groups can be legitimated, such as anarchists, atheists, and socialists,

¹¹ “For Rousseau, the concept of sovereignty pertained only to the legislative body, that is, the body that forms laws. Laws, by definition for Rousseau, must be general in their object and apply to the whole body politic (SC II.VI). By contrast, the executive body, or the government, is only responsible for executing these laws by applying them to particular cases” (Douglass, 2013, p. 737). Similarly, for Schmitt, sovereignty is lawmaking while dictatorship is law-preserving.

who are most despised by Schmitt. Particularly, the socialist revolution could fuel apocalypticism and endanger the very existence of the earthly political order. Schmitt's theory of sovereignty has a clear counterrevolutionary tendency. In the fourth chapter of *Political Theology* [1922], *On the Counterrevolutionary Philosophy of the State*, Schmitt parallels himself to several counterrevolutionary theorists related to the French Revolution, including Joseph de Maistre, Louis de Bonald, and Juan Donoso Cortés. There are also contemporary scholars who see that Schmitt is a fierce counterrevolutionary thinker (Cristi, 1999; Wilson, 2019). Kalyvas' interpretation aims to separate sovereignty from dictatorship and extraordinary beginning from the legal exception to present Schmitt as a theorist of democratic revolution. But due to the purpose of counterrevolution in Schmitt's theory, sovereignty and dictatorship are not separable. Schmitt's task is to legitimate the counterrevolutionary dictatorship by the concept of sovereignty, not conflating sovereignty with revolution.

The Problem of Legitimacy

Then, we seem to return to the first interpretation that sovereignty is an unconstitutional dictatorship to oppress revolution. However, if the sovereign power is unconstitutional, how it can be legitimized? Habermas (1989, p. 131) might argue that Schmitt's sovereignty does not need legitimacy, rather, the decision-making power of the dictator is the source of all validity. However, Schmitt clearly recognizes the problem of legitimacy and rejects the decisionist authoritarianism in the fourth chapter of *Political Theology* [1922], arguing that pure dictatorship has no legitimacy:

“The true significance of those counterrevolutionary philosophers of the state lies precisely in the consistency with which they decide. They heightened the moment of the decision to such an extent that the notion of legitimacy, their starting point, was finally dissolved. As soon as Donoso Cortes realized that the period of monarchy had come to an end because there no longer were kings and no one would have the courage to be king in any way other than by the will of the people, he brought his decisionism to its logical conclusion. He demanded a political dictatorship. In the cited remarks of de Maistre we can also see a reduction of the state to the moment of the decision, to a pure decision not based on reason and discussion and not justifying itself, that is, to an absolute decision created out of nothingness. But this decisionism is essentially dictatorship, not legitimacy” (Schmitt, 2005, p. 65, 66).

This paragraph shows that Schmitt does not want to follow Cortes and de Maistre's error of logic that, in the name of counterrevolution, a dictatorship can be enacted without justification. Schmitt himself is a public jurist, who surely understands the importance of legitimacy. The question therefore is, what can legitimise sovereignty as a counterrevolutionary dictatorship?

To be sure, the legitimacy of dictatorship cannot be based on the sovereign status of the state or the constitution. As I have shown before, sovereignty does not have to reside in the state but can be created by a partisan. In the event of revolution, the revolutionary partisan will claim their sovereign status and deny the legitimacy of the state and the existing constitutional order. In the event of revolution, the revolutionary partisan will claim their sovereign status and deny the legitimacy of the state and the

existing constitutional order. In this scenario, the legitimacy of the state is no longer recognized by the revolutionary group, so a dictatorship in the name of the state will only antagonize them and fuel their revolutionary enthusiasm. This is the fatal mistake of the counterrevolutionary state philosophers during the French Revolution, as Schmitt argues,

“Authority and anarchy could thus confront each other in absolute decisiveness and form a clear antithesis: De Maistre said that every government is necessarily absolute, and an anarchist says the same; but with the aid of his axiom of the good man and corrupt government, the latter draws the opposite practical conclusion, namely, that all governments must be opposed for the reason that every government is a dictatorship” (Schmitt, 2005, p. 66).

Schmitt suggests that there is a mechanism of political polarization. The confrontation between the revolutionary partisan and the counterrevolutionary state becomes more and more extreme and eventually leads to demands for absolute dictatorship and absolute anarchy. Both sides try to demonize and demoralize the other, believe themselves to be good and condemn the others as evil, and therefore demand the immediate elimination of the other. This situation results in a Hobbesian state of nature, where each party is the enemy of the other. This is a pure state of war, not sovereignty. At least, the sovereign order has no legitimacy in the condition of civil war.

Essentially, Schmitt believes that apocalyptic enthusiasm is the very cause that drives this struggle to the extreme condition of civil war:

“Donoso Cortes was convinced that the moment of the last battle had arrived; in the face of radical evil the only solution is dictatorship, and the legitimist principle of succession becomes at such a moment empty dogmatism” (Schmitt, 2005, p. 66).

In the eschatological worldview, the apocalypse is the “moment of the last battle” between the absolute good of God and the radical evil of Satan. Schmitt suggests that Cortes believes the counterrevolutionary dictatorship represents the power of good while the revolutionaries represent the greatest evil. But the problem is that if the final struggle between good and evil, between counterrevolutionaries and revolutionaries has come, it is the apocalyptic moment in which everything will be destroyed. The counterrevolutionary philosopher Cortes seems to defend sovereignty, but only treats the sovereign power of absolute dictatorship as the manifestation of God in the apocalyptic event. Once the evil revolutionaries are defeated, and God prevails, people will live a happy life in heaven and there will be no more need for sovereignty.

The fundamental mistake of counterrevolutionary philosophers is that their conception of sovereignty falls into the trap of apocalypticism. This is to say, the apocalyptic struggle with the revolutionaries will only delegitimize sovereignty itself. If the sovereign wants to be legitimate, the apocalypse must be contained. The legitimacy of sovereignty relies not on the decision-making power of the dictatorship or the constituent power of the revolutionaries, but on a certain theological worldview that the apocalypse is not a threat to the earthly order. As Richard Wolin (1990, p. 401) argues that “political dictatorship was not only a political, but a theological necessity”. As such, it could be said that the legitimization of sovereignty entails a theological foundation of anti-apocalypse.

To sum up, both mainstream interpretations reduce sovereignty to a legal and political concept. Kalyvas' understanding of revolutionary constituent power is not the same as Schmitt's concept of sovereignty but rather the contrary. Habermas's interpretation of unconstitutional dictatorship only reflects Schmitt's counterrevolutionary predecessors, who have failed to oppress apocalyptic enthusiasm. They both reject Schmitt's belief in the apocalyptic tendency of revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries and therefore fail to present a legitimate form of sovereignty. The very existence of sovereignty relies on neither the conservation of the existing order, nor the creation of a new order, but instead on an eschatological view of history without an imminent apocalypse. To understand Schmitt's concept of sovereignty, we must inquire as to the theological dimension of how a sovereign can be legitimised in the eschatological framework. I will examine this in the next chapter.

Chapter II: From Taming to Unleashing the Apocalypse: The Rise and Fall of the Modern Sovereign Order

In the previous chapter, I showed Schmitt believes that apocalyptic enthusiasm threatens the legitimacy of sovereignty and leads to a state of civil war. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that he considers 20th century Marxism as the main threat to sovereignty because it promotes apocalypticism through a systematic theory of historical progress. In his understanding, the Marxist philosophy of history is theologically rooted in Christian eschatology but radically different. This theological transition destroyed the modern sovereign order and threw the world into a planetary civil war. To understand it, I will present Schmitt's view of the historical evolution of the relationship between sovereignty and eschatology. First, the birth of Christianity brought apocalypticism into the world but the medieval Christian eschatology and modern sovereign order successfully contained it. Second, Marxism in the 20th century resurrected apocalypticism by employing the concept of progress and destroyed the sovereign order.

It should be noted that the discussions in this chapter do not reflect my views but Schmitt's, including his understanding of early and medieval Christianity, the modern sovereign order, Marxism, and socialist revolutions in the 20th century. Particularly, his interpretation of Marxism is probably biased and does not reflect the philosophy of Karl Marx, but rather Leninism and Stalinism which were influential in his times¹². He tended

¹² Schmitt usually uses Marxism as a general term or a political ideology without naming a specific author. But he uses Lenin's thoughts as an example of the Marxist way of thinking in several works (Schmitt, 1987, p. 78; 2004, p. 66), so we can consider that his perception of Marxism is mainly based on Leninism (and the related Stalinism).

to confuse Marx and Marxism and this is evidenced by his parallel of “Hegelian-Marxist-Stalinist dialectics of history” (Schmitt, 2009, p. 168). But this is not a problem since the task of this thesis is not to understand Marxism but illustrate his reception of Marxism and how it leads to his project of sovereignty.

Christian Eschatology and The Apocalypse

Since the birth of Christianity, its eschatological view of the world was in relation to sovereignty. As Alison McQueen describes,

the apocalyptic worldview is a political theodicy – an attempt to understand the oppression, dispersion, and the loss of sovereignty that plagued the Israelites, without delegitimizing the authority of God. More broadly, it is an attempt to situate contemporary political circumstances within a sacred worldview, thereby endowing them with divine significance (McQueen, 2017, p. 26).

The Judaeo-Christian tradition of eschatology actually starts with the loss of the political state. Christians tried to explain this loss as the divine arrangement of God, telling people that nothing on earth matters because true happiness exists only in heaven. In Nietzsche’s terms, eschatology originated from Christian resentment¹³ and dissatisfaction following their political defeat and the rule of the foreign conqueror. This resentment, in turn, helped create their theology. Christians invented eschatology, imagining a perfect world

¹³ The conception of resentment appears in Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals*. He argues that Christian morality was an imaginary revenge that reversed the Roman nobility (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 36). Here I use it to explain the Christian reversal of the values of the earth and heaven.

beyond this terrible world, a saviour higher than the ruler, and hoped for the immediate coming of salvation. That is to say, Christianity was born with apocalyptic enthusiasm, which rejects earthly sovereignty and values heaven above earth, the afterlife above this life and redemption over politics.

Schmitt acknowledges the devaluation of sovereignty in early Christianity. As he describes in a short essay, *The Visibility of the Church* [1917]:

Historians of early Christianity, who have concluded that the first Christians and even Christ himself were indifferent to the things of this world because they expected the end of the world tomorrow or the day after (Schmitt, 1996, p. 47).

He suggests that as long as anticipation of the imminent apocalypse exists, all earthly things are meaningless. “When man stands before God, the world and all its inhabitants become as nothing” (Schmitt, 1996, p. 48). Human existence on the earth, and earthly sovereignty, are nothing but symbols of sin. The hierarchical valuation of the earth and heaven tremendously influences the eschatological worldview.

In Biblical texts, eschatology is developed into a sophisticated theory of the cosmos. First, the world is defined by a cosmological dualism: there is a cosmic war between good and evil ; God and his angels are fighting with Satan and demons and all human conflicts on the earth are mere reflections of this cosmological struggle (McQueen, 2017, p. 26). In Schmitt’s words, this cosmic war is “a life-and-death struggle” between “good and evil, God and the Devil” (Schmitt, 2005a, p. 55). Second, world history is defined as a chronological dualism with time divided into human history and divine history. Present human history is dominated by evil forces because God has temporarily left Earth and

ceded his control, but he will come back and eventually establish his divine rule and redeem humans from their suffering (McQueen, 2017, p. 26). For Schmitt, the apocalypse¹⁴ is the event that suddenly ruptures history and “causes an eschatological paralysis”, meaning the breakdown of sovereignty (Schmitt, 2009). It will purge all evil in the final battle and thus begin the divine reign of God. The apocalypse means the closure of the cosmological and chronological dualism, in which good forces triumph over evil forces and the Kingdom of God replaces the Kingdom of Men.

For Schmitt, theologically speaking, all aspects of eschatology are the antithesis of sovereignty. The cosmological war between good and evil suggests an inevitable and unstoppable state of war on Earth. War is the norm, not the exception. This source of chaos constantly destabilizes the sovereign order. Moreover, a catastrophic view of human history makes earthly life intolerable. Human history is characterized as a history of war between good and evil until the final battle in the apocalyptic event. This final war is crucial but it brings with it the hope of redemption. Earth is merely a site to prepare the final war in human history and to welcome the arrival of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, in this theological view, sovereignty is redundant.

However, in Schmitt’s view, in late antiquity and early middle ages, Christianity successfully eased this apocalyptic enthusiasm by reconciling sovereignty and eschatology. *In Political Theology II: The myth of the closure of any political theology* [1970], Schmitt argues that the present age since the Christianization of the Roman Empire is a period of long waiting for the apocalypse:

¹⁴ Some people mistakenly conceive eschatology and the apocalypse as synonyms. In theology, eschatology is a worldview while the apocalypse is an event that situates in it.

the entire Christian aeon is not a long march but a single long waiting, a long interim between two simultaneities, between the appearance of the Lord in the time of the Roman Caesar Augustus and the Lord's return at the end of time (Schmitt, 2014, p. 86).

Treating human history as a long waiting game, not a long march, means that the apocalypse is not controlled by humans, but dictated by God's divine will. Humans can do nothing but wait patiently. This long waiting also implies that the apocalypse is not imminent. Eschatology thus becomes a grand design for the remote future. As Schmitt continues,

the immediate expectation of the second coming, which paralyses all earthly activity, is prolonged through the Christian church and eschatology becomes a 'doctrine of the last things' (Schmitt, 2014, p. 86).

Hence, the state can play a role during the time of long waiting. Due to God's temporary absence, sovereignty is delegated to an earthly power with the divine task to combat evil. As long as the apocalypse has not come, sovereignty is the highest authority on Earth. For Schmitt, sovereignty is temporary, but legitimate.

Human history as a period of long waiting explains why doomsday cults are a political threat. From the Peoples Temple to Aum Shinrikyo, doomsday cults attract believers by claiming the coming of the end of the world and preaching the possibility of redemption. The apocalyptic prophecy aims to shift people's plans for the future from continuous living on Earth to immediate redemption in heaven. This radical hope of "no more waiting but now" transfers authority from the government to the priests who show them

the way to redemption. We may consider doomsday cults mere superstitions, but states regard them as serious political threats (Gönye, 1998). This is because the legitimacy of the state inherently relies on deferring the apocalypse and the anticipation of the continuity of historical time. The church criticizes them as heresies, telling people the correct interpretation of eschatology is that the apocalypse is yet to come. The institutional separation of church and state does not separate politics and theology. Schmitt's position is clear: the legitimacy of sovereignty is founded on a particular version of eschatology.

The Construction of the Modern Sovereign Order and The Containment of the Apocalypse

However, Schmitt believes that delaying the apocalypse and treating the state as a temporary arrangement on Earth is not enough to stabilize sovereignty. The theological understanding of the present age as a long period of waiting only provides legitimacy to sovereignty in the temporal dimension, but it does not stop the cosmological war between the forces of good and evil. In the spatial dimension, this war is constantly destabilizing the sovereign order. This is because sovereignty is not only a political power delegated by God during his temporary absence, but also a legal order to spatially structure the Earth, as the title of another of Schmitt's major works, *The Nomos of The Earth*, conveys. In this book, Schmitt argues that sovereignty relies on a territorial space:

Thus, in some form, the constitutive process of a land-appropriation is found at the beginning of the history of every settled people, every commonwealth, every empire.

This is true as well for the beginning of every historical epoch. Not only logically, but also historically, land-appropriation precedes the order that follows from it. It constitutes the original spatial order, the source of all further concrete order and all further law (Schmitt, 2006, p. 48).

He suggests that sovereignty as a legal order entails not mere norms but the substantial control of territory. The territoriality of the state means that external influences must be excluded and concrete order and laws must be enforced by the sovereign power.

However, in Christian eschatology, the struggle between good and evil forces is cosmological, which means that it is universal and trans-territorial. If this struggle rages everywhere and causes endless civil wars, sovereignty loses its territoriality and becomes a planet-wide crusade.

For Schmitt, the cosmological war between good and evil must be spatially contained to have a stable sovereign order. In the medieval ages, the sovereign order was sustained by a spatial distinction between Christian and non-Christian lands. As Schmitt describes,

The encompassing unity of the international law of medieval Europe was called *respublica Christiana* [Christian republic] and *populus Christianus* [Christian people]. It had definite orders and orientations. Its *nomos* was determined by the following divisions. The soil of non-Christian, heathen peoples was Christian missionary territory; it could be allocated by papal order to a Christian prince for a Christian mission....The soil of Islamic empires was considered to be enemy territory that could be conquered and annexed in crusades. Such wars *eo ipso* [in and of themselves] not only had *justa causa* [just cause], but, when declared by the pope, were even holy wars. The soil of European Christian princes and peoples was

distributed, according to the land law of the time, among princely houses and crowns, churches, cloisters and sponsors, lords of the land, castles, marches, cities, communities, and universities of various types (Schmitt, 2006, p. 58).

In the middle ages, the cosmological war between good and evil was manifested in the form of holy war. Theologically, holy war is the absolute confrontation between good and evil without any limitation, negotiation or juridical evaluation. In other words, holy war is always ongoing, so it needs no sovereign to decide it. However, holy war can only target non-Christian lands. Within the Christian sphere, the acquisition of lands must follow rules ordained by the pope and the emperor. Hence, “wars among Christian princes were bracketed wars” (Schmitt, 2006, p. 58). These wars between Christians are not a reflection of the cosmological war between good and evil, but rule-abiding wars that can be decided and evaluated by the sovereign. As Schmitt argues, “they not only allowed, but necessitated a moral-theological and juridical evaluation of the question of whether they were just or unjust” (Schmitt, 2006, p. 59). By excluding the possibility of an unstoppable and unlimited holy war, the Christian sphere is bounded territorially, and wars can be politically decided, and legally evaluated, by the sovereign power.

In modern times, the cosmological war between good and evil has been further contained by a clearer principle of sovereignty which is highly praised by Schmitt (2006, p. 141). The medieval concept of sovereignty did not reside in the state, but in the Christian sphere as a whole. In contrast, the Westphalian conception of sovereignty was rooted in the state. Based on the principles of state sovereignty, *Jus Publicum Europaeum* [European public law] was gradually developed as an international legal order to regulate wars in Europe. War became a legal act between European sovereign states. The Thirty

Years' War was a religious civil war that started in the Holy Roman Empire but soon spread to nearly all European nations. This civil war destroyed the sovereign order of the medieval Christian sphere because it introduced the cosmological confrontation between good and evil into the sovereign order. All parties participated in the war in the name of God and there was no sovereign to judge its legitimacy. To end this transnational civil war, first, the Peace of Westphalia confirmed the principle of territorial sovereignty, which treats the state as the only authority to govern affairs in its territory (Hassan, 2006, p. 67). In this way, the cosmological struggle between good and evil factions is precluded internally. As long as the sovereign is the highest authority, the factions cannot judge good or evil by themselves, so the state will not fall prey to civil wars. This principle also prevents international intervention in domestic affairs so civil wars will not spill over into other states.

Second, the Westphalian conference confirmed the principle of sovereign equality, which acknowledges the equal legal status of sovereign states in the international community (Hassan, 2006, p. 63). It means that for the first time in history, the non-discriminatory principle of war was legally confirmed. A discriminatory war is a war waged in the name of *justus causa* (just cause), in which one side is just while the other side is evil (Schmitt, 2006, p. 123). "War quickly became a mere punitive action... The enemy became a criminal" (Schmitt, 2006, p. 123). The cosmological war between good and evil is the criminalization of the enemy. Because they are evil, then we are just to punish and purify them. Evaluating war with the just cause of eschatology will therefore lead states into unlimited holy wars. The overthrow of the ruler of another state will follow, as the evil regime is illegitimate to rule in the eschatological framework. This will

only destabilize sovereignty and inflame the cosmological war between good and evil in occupied enemy territory. In contrast, based on the Westphalian principle of sovereign equality, European public law banned religious war in the name of just cause and only permitted interstate war in the name of *justus hostis* (just enemy):

The purely state war of the new European international law sought to neutralize and, thereby, to overcome the conflicts between religious factions; it sought to end both religious wars and civil wars. War now became a "war in form," *une guerre en forme*. Only in this way, only by limiting war to conflicts between territorially defined European states, could a conflict between these spatially defined units be conceived of as *personae publicae* [public persons living on common European soil and belonging to the same European "family." Thus, it was possible for each side to recognize the other as *justi hostes* (Schmitt, 2006, p. 141).

A just war between sovereign states means the war is just for both sides (Schmitt, 2006, p. 153). In the legal sense, for a sovereign state, its enemy during wartime is an equal sovereign to combat, not a criminal to punish (Schmitt, 2006, p. 148). This is because the principle of sovereign equality determines the absence of a higher authority to judge. In this way, the cosmological struggle between good and evil is also precluded. As all states are equal, even if they are at war with each other, they cannot judge who is good and who is evil.

Of course, It does not mean that there are no crimes in the wars between European sovereign nations. In European public law, a just war entails not only recognising the enemy as an equal sovereign, but also following rules of engagement, such as the distinction between civilians and combatants (Schmitt, 2003, p.157). If some soldiers fail

to follow the rules, then they can be condemned as war criminals. However, the most important aspect is that one sovereign nation cannot condemn another sovereign nation as a criminal in order to justify the war. This reflects the principle of sovereign equality, aiming to prevent unlimited religious wars in Europe.

The modern sovereign order was geographically limited in Europe. It means that the principles of territorial sovereignty and sovereign equality only applied to European nations. It was a legal order founded on colonialism and imperialism, meaning that European sovereign states were able to freely take indigenous lands in America and Africa and wage unlimited colonial war against the indigenous people (Schmitt, 2006, p. 142). But Schmitt believes that this Eurocentric legal order was necessary. He argues that the political foundation of European public law was the balance of power between European states (Schmitt, 2006, p. 148). This balance is dynamic and sometimes a nation's power increases and needs to be rebalanced. The scale of territory was one of the main measurements of state power. Since European public law prescribed the territorial boundary between European states based on the principle of territorial sovereignty, expansion in Europe was a bad option. However, European nations were allowed to acquire land overseas in the name of civilizing missions (Schmitt, 2006, p. 216)¹⁵. Through competitive colonial expansion, the powers in Europe could be rebalanced

¹⁵The civilizing mission was the main excuse for colonizers to take lands in the non-European world (Anghie, 2006, p. 739). This can be proved by Spanish theologian Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490-1573), who argues that Indians are not humans but slaves by nature to justify Conquista: “[the Indians] were born for servitude and not the civil and liberal life.... Such are, in short, the character and customs of these barbarous, uncultivated, and inhumane little men... the genius, wisdom, humanity, fortitude, courage, and virtue of the Spaniards are as superior to those same qualities among those pitiful little men as were those of the Romans vis-à-vis the peoples whom they conquered” (de Sepúlveda, 2011).

dynamically (Schmitt, 2006, p. 161). By creating the global spatial structure of European and non-European lands, the modern sovereign order was sustained for two hundred years. In this historical era, Europe was freed from the cosmological war between good and evil and Christians were able to settle in an earthly sovereign order.

Eventually, the modern sovereign order was constructed in the golden age of European public law from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. The historical epoch from *Respublica Christiana* to *Jus Publicum Europaeum* saw a great theological-juridical transformation of sovereignty which was all about taming the treat of the apocalypse. The theological doctrine of the present age as a period of long waiting justified the earthly state as a temporary but necessary order in the temporal dimension. And then in the spatial dimension, the Westphalian principle of state sovereignty corresponded with a legal order of just war, which successfully contained the cosmological struggle between good and evil. Since holy war was no longer permitted between sovereign European states, the legitimacy of sovereignty was no longer undermined by an ever-marching crusade, but firmly rooted in relatively stable territory. At least in Europe, sovereignty was reconciled with eschatology, and Schmitt clearly finds himself nostalgic for this historical period.

The Marxist Conception of Progress and The Reignition of Apocalypticism

In Schmitt's view, since the theological understanding of human history as a long waiting was confirmed in the medieval period, the legitimacy of sovereignty was sustained within the eschatological framework. As long as the apocalypse is yet to come,

the sovereign is the legitimate delegate of God to rule on Earth. The establishment of the modern sovereign order in Europe did not change this. However, in modern times, a conception of progress has been gradually developed in European philosophy of history and it has fundamentally changed Christian understanding of history. It eventually brought about the rise of Marxist ideology and reignited apocalyptic enthusiasm.

In *The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations* [1929], Schmitt characterizes the 18th century as the age of moral progress and that, by the 19th century, this has been transformed into technological progress:

The concept of progress, i.e., an improvement or completion (in modern jargon, a rationalization) became dominant in the eighteenth century, in an age of humanitarian-moral belief. Accordingly, progress meant above all progress in culture, self-determination, and education: moral perfection. In an age of economic or technical thinking, it is self-evident that progress is economic or technical progress. To the extent that anyone is still interested in humanitarian-moral progress, it appears as a by-product of economic progress (Schmitt, 2005b, p. 86).

The concept of progress is a historical narrative that puts historical events in order and situates the present age within it. This narrative anticipates the end of history, which is the perfection and completion of human society in terms of morality or technology. It situates the present age between the backward past and the progressive future to make people feel that they are on the way to the final form of society.

Moreover, the 19th-century conception of progress is a technological understanding of history, which attributes human progress to the understanding of scientific laws. The

most famous of these is Karl Marx's philosophy of history, which reduces moral and political advancement to changes in the material bases of technology and economic relations (Schmitt, 2005a, p. 43). Marxism claims that the engine of history can be found in scientific socialism:

Instead of being conceived from the outside according to fantasies and splendid ideals, social and political reality was to be analyzed from within, according to its actual and correctly understood immanent circumstances. Here it is a matter of looking for the ultimate and, in an intellectual sense, decisive argument among the many sides and possibilities of socialism for the final evidence of socialist belief. Convinced Marxism holds that it has found the true explanation for social, economic, and political life, and that a correct praxis follows from that knowledge; it follows that social life can be correctly grasped immanently in all of its objective necessity and thus controlled (Schmitt, 1988, p. 53).

For Schmitt, scientific socialism understood society as being technologically-driven according to the requirements of scientific laws (Schmitt, 1988, p. 53). Those laws can be discovered and understood by human praxis to gain the correct knowledge of social reality. That knowledge can be used to control and improve social life just as engineers and managers improve the productivity of a factory.

In Schmitt's telling, the Marxist conception of progress is radically different from the medieval view of history. The present age is no longer a long waiting but a march of history. As mentioned previously, the middle ages saw Christians waiting for the arrival of the millennial Kingdom because the apocalypse was an event dictated by God and beyond their control. However, for Marxists, history is marching towards the

ultimate perfection of society because people's efforts are "pushing" history moving forward. An understanding of the scientific laws of society will make people realize the "routine" of history, and grant them the capability to transform society according to it. As Schmitt describes in *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* [1923], Marxism understands world history as a history of class struggle and the final event of history will be:

The systematic concentration of class struggle into a single, final struggle of human history, into the dialectical peak of tension between bourgeoisie and proletariat. The contradictions of many classes were thus simplified into a single, final contradiction (Schmitt, 1988, p. 59).

By understanding class struggle as the fundamental driving force of human history, the proletariat feels that they are able to move history forward by struggling against the bourgeoisie. This eventually leads to communism, a classless society without oppression and exploitation. In this interpretation of history, the Christian concept of apocalypse is replaced with the final class struggle of human history, and paradise is substituted by the communist society on the earth. Most importantly, the final event of human history that will see an end to misery and lead to the establishment of a perfect world is no longer yet to come but coming. The chronological dualism of human history and divine history was reconciled into a single narrative of progress. Earth and heaven will eventually coincide. Revolution and redemption become synonymous. People believed that they were building an earthly heaven with their own hands. In short, Marxism is a political eschatology¹⁶ that

¹⁶ There are many pieces that have noticed that Marxism is a political religion (Kula, 2005; Ehret, 2007; Riegel, 2005). And some authors, like Schmitt, also interpret Marxism

ignited apocalyptic enthusiasm again roughly 2000 years following the birth of Christianity.

Moreover, Marxism fully inflamed apocalyptic enthusiasm by implying the irresistibility of historical progress. For vulgar Marxists, society is not only transformable, but will inevitably be transformed due to the “‘iron necessity’ produced by the laws of historical materialism” (Schmitt, 1988, p. 53). The belief in historical necessity is rooted in the Marxist understanding of history as a dialectical development driven by the inner contradiction of society. Every society is divided into two opposing forces, the bourgeois and the proletariat. They are in a constant class struggle and this struggle will only intensify with time due to dialectical necessity:

Everything must be forced to the extreme so that it can be overturned out of dialectical necessity. The most monstrous wealth must confront the most horrific misery; the class that owns everything must face the class that owns nothing; the bourgeois, who only possesses, who only has and who is no longer human, opposes the proletarian, who has nothing and who is nothing but a person... the inhumanity of the capitalist social order must of necessity produce its own negation from within itself...The class contradiction must become the absolute contradiction so that all contradictions can be absolutely overcome and disappear into pure humanity (Schmitt, 1988, p. 59, 60, 62).

based on the pattern of eschatology. See Klaus Nurnberger’s *The eschatology of Marxism* (Nurnberger, 1987), Roland Boer’s *Marxism and Eschatology Reconsidered* (Boer, 2010), and Karl Löwith’s *Meaning in history: The theological implications of the philosophy of history* (Löwith, 2011).

In this escalation of conflicts, both the bourgeois and the proletariat will inevitably be driven to the extreme, and lead to their absolute opposition of each other. The absolute struggle will bring about the absolute negation of the society as a whole so a new society can be born in the ashes of the old and history can move to the next stage. The dialectical opposition and negation of social forces guarantee that the progress of history is driven by the inner contradiction of society, so it cannot be stopped by an external power, such as the will of the individual or the power of the state. The march of history is, therefore, unstoppable¹⁷.

Schmitt sees Marxist eschatology as a threat because it destroys the legitimacy of state sovereignty. The Marxist conception of progress inherits the character of creative destruction from Christian eschatology. Since every society bears the necessity of self-negation, the sovereign state is not the guardian of society, but an obstacle that must be overcome. For Marxists, the state is a mere instrument for the bourgeois to exploit the workers and protect their own interests. A proletarian revolution has to be the negation of the bourgeois state. Although socialism still creates the state as a political form, i.e. the Soviet Union, it is not a sovereign order, but an instrument of class struggle. As Richard Wolin (1990, p. 396) reminds us, the subtitle of Schmitt's book, *Dictatorship: From the Beginnings of the Modern Concept of Sovereignty to Proletarian Class Struggle*, suggests that sovereignty and class struggle are counterposed. Socialism entails a proletarian dictatorship in the form of a totalitarian state, and aims to continue the class struggle by taking over the state apparatus. The proletarian dictatorship is not a sovereign power to

¹⁷ In Reinhart Koselleck's words, the march of history is the acceleration of time which is obligatory for "worldly invention" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 22).

make decisions concretely and maintain political order, but a necessary step of historical progress. As Schmitt argues:

“Development goes on without a break and even interruptions must serve it as negations so that it will be pushed further. The essential point is that an exception never comes from outside into the immanence of development... Even the most contradictory things assert themselves and will be incorporated in an encompassing development. The either/or of moral decision, the decisive and deciding disjunction, has no place in this system. Even the diktat of a dictator becomes a moment in the discussion and in the undisturbed development as it moves further” (Schmitt, 1988, p. 56).

The proletarian dictatorship has no independent decision power but merely serves the blueprint of history. Its only task is to intensify the class struggle and accelerate the historical progress towards communism. Once the classless society is achieved, the state shall be removed. Schmitt (1988, p. 58) comments that the socialist state is the vanguard of historical movement, a “midwife of coming things”. Arendt (1973, p. 463) has a similar comment that socialism is not a political structure but a “gigantic historical movement which races according to its own law of motion to the end of historical times when it will abolish itself”. If the legitimacy of sovereignty in medieval eschatology rests on the durability of the present age before the apocalypse, in Marxist eschatology, the proletarian state is not a durable order but rather a political catalyse to accelerate the end of history itself. The more the state is involved in class struggle, the sooner it will destroy itself. In other words, the socialist state is self-destructive.

The Destruction of the Modern Sovereign Order and the Planetary Civil War

According to Schmitt, the eschatological justification of class struggle destroys not only individual sovereign states, but would also destroy the whole sovereign order of Europe since the Westphalian Peace. As previously stated, for settled people, the concept of state sovereignty is attached to territory. At least in Europe, the state can only exercise sovereign power and make laws within territorial borders. This means that sovereignty is a concrete order, whose power cannot be exercised universally. The purpose of the European sovereign order was to transform religious transnational civil wars into interstate wars, so the cosmological war between good and evil could be contained juridically. However, Marxism re-invoked the concept of cosmological war and renamed it as class struggle. The class war was truly cosmopolitan. For Schmitt, every political unity is grouped through the decision of the political – the distinction of friend and enemy, the self and the other according to a particular category (Schmitt, 2008, p. 29). Modern sovereign states were grouped according to concrete territorialities. But Marxist revolutionaries regrouped people according to the universal character of class:

“Were it possible to group all mankind in the proletarian and bourgeois antithesis, as friend and enemy in proletarian and capitalist states, and if, in the process, all other friend-and-enemy groupings were to disappear, the total reality of the political would then be revealed, insofar as concepts, which at first glance had appeared to be purely economic, turn into political ones” (Schmitt, 2008, p. 38).

When all people in the world are regrouped into the bourgeoisie and the proletariat due to the universality of class, the two classes will become two opposing global political units and fight a global war. This war appeared first in the form of a revolutionary civil

war waged by the communist partisans to overthrow the sovereign and soon spread across the globe. This is what happened in the 20th century. After the Russian Revolution, global partisan wars between socialist revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries sprung up around the world. Schmitt witnessed the phenomena throughout the most active period of his academic life:

It was Lenin who recognized the inevitability of violence and of bloody revolutionary civil war as well as state war, and so affirmed partisan war too as a necessary ingredient of the revolutionary process (Schmitt, 2004, p. 34).

Stalin seized on this myth of indigenous national partisanship in World War II against Germany, turning it very concretely to the service of his communist world politics (Schmitt, 2004, p. 8).

This global class war can be no longer contained by territorial sovereignty due to its universal character. If sovereignty is a concrete order for settled people, class struggle is cosmic warfare for the nomadic. Where there is class, there is war. Where there is class, there is war. The act of war is no longer decided by the sovereign state but by the global partisan. Every state becomes the local battlefield of the global war, and therefore no sovereign order on Earth can be sustained.

In the early 20th century, with the destruction of the modern sovereign order, the whole world was thrown into a planetary civil war. From Russia to Spain, the battlefields of bloody civil wars attracted numerous international partisan fighters. In Marxist eschatology, those civil wars were the local manifestation of the global war between revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces. With the generalization and intensification

of the class wars, communists believed that the final struggle of history was near. There was only one “leap” to the kingdom of freedom. In Lenin’s prophecy, with the victory of the October Revolution, world revolution will come soon¹⁸. As Schmitt describes,

Since the October Revolution of 1917, Soviet power has sought to further the political unity of the world and the human race. From the beginning, the Russian Revolution was seen as the beginning of a world revolution. It abolished the constitutions of the Tsarist empire and the Kerensky regime, as well as the elected Russian National Assembly, and set up a "dictatorship of the proletariat."...An internal political revolution was thus "englobed" within the horizon of a world revolution (Schmitt, 1987, p. 78).

It seems that in the 1920s human history finally reached the eve of the final event of universal emancipation. However, for Schmitt, the global class wars only led to the total destruction of humanity.

For Schmitt, the advantage of the modern sovereign order is that although it does not abolish war, it can give war a form, transforming the absolute struggle between good and evil into limited interstate wars. The principle of sovereign equality guarantees that war between sovereign states is just for both sides, so the enemy is an equal opponent to combat not a criminal to punish and eliminate. If the enemy is an equal sovereign, a relative enemy, war does not destroy its existence. “But Lenin, the professional revolutionary of the world-wide civil war, went even farther and made an absolute enemy

¹⁸ The details of Lenin’s prophecy of world revolution can be seen in Neil Harding’s *Lenin's Political Thought Theory and Practice in the Democratic and Socialist Revolutions* (Harding, 1983).

out of the real enemy” (Schmitt, 2004, p. 66). Lenin’s absolute enemy is not determined by the sovereign according to a concrete situation, but determined by historical necessity according to objective categories. The bourgeois as the absolute enemy must be annihilated in the revolution because they are the obstacle to the march of history. The revolutionary war thus entails annihilation. For Schmitt, the war of annihilation is most inhumane:

“Such wars (as actually pass for ultimate wars of mankind) are necessarily especially intensive and inhuman because they exceed the political in treating the enemy as a sub-moral and even sub-categorical monster, one who must not only be defended against but definitively annihilated, so that he can no longer even be a demonstrably bounded enemy” (Schmitt, 2004, p. 78).

With the global diffusion of revolutionary civil wars, Earth’s entire population was threatened by this war of annihilation. In Marxist eschatology, global revolutionary wars force everyone to pick a side, either as a revolutionary or a counterrevolutionary, and aim to make half of the population the absolute enemy of the other. This way the division within humans can be completely eliminated by annihilating the enemy. The concept of an absolute enemy only leads to absolute cruelty and inhumanity.

In Schmitt’s view, the planetary civil war between revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries corresponds to the final battle in Christian eschatology between the greatest good and the greatest evil. Marxists hope that by concentrating all contradictions into global class opposition, class itself can be dialectically negated in the final struggle, so as to reach the “political unity of the world and human race” (Schmitt, 1987, p. 78). This is because the ultimate contradiction will be dissolved through this

dialectical negation. There will be no more internal divisions and political groupings within the human race, but only the “universal unity of humanity” (Schmitt, 1987, p. 76). In the Marxist conception of the post-apocalypse paradise, the “unfolding self-conscious mankind must end in anarchic freedom” and “there must no longer be political problems, only organizational-technical and economic-sociological tasks” (Schmitt, 2005a, p. 51, 65). In other words, there will be no more sovereign decisions and political division, but only administration and universal unity. If the existence of the enemy means division and decision, then the universal unity of the human race means that there will be no more enmity and hence no more politics. Marxism dramatically reproduces the Christian devaluation of earthly politics, as it aims to escape from politics into the communist society where there is no more enmity.

In summary, this chapter presents a history of the tension between sovereignty and eschatology according to Schmitt’s perception. The apocalypse used to be the antithesis of sovereignty at the beginning of Christianity but, for a thousand years, European theologians and jurists tamed apocalyptic enthusiasm by prolonging the duration of the present age and constraining the intensity of wars. However, Marxism reignited apocalyptic enthusiasm by constructing a political eschatology which reconciles human history and divine history through a narrative of progress towards earthly heaven. Marxist eschatology seeks redemption through politics. By delegitimizing the modern sovereign order through the necessity of revolution and politically regrouping everyone according to class, it aims to abolish politics at the final moment of negation. But without sovereign containment, the intensification of the global war between revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries led to a total war of annihilation in the 20th century.

Chapter III: Re-containing the Apocalypse: Sovereignty as Katechon

In the first chapter, I have shown that contemporary interpretations of Schmitt's concept of sovereignty lack an eschatological dimension: the legitimacy of sovereignty rests on neither the existing constitutional order, nor the constituent power, but on a theological worldview that apocalypticism is not invoked. In the second chapter, I have demonstrated Schmitt's belief in the great danger of Marxist eschatology, which he feels reactivated apocalyptic enthusiasm and threatened to overthrow the legitimacy of sovereignty in the 20th century. Facing the crisis of the modern sovereign order, Schmitt's task is clear: re-containing the apocalypse and re-legitimizing sovereignty. In this chapter, I will illustrate how Schmitt fulfils this task. In particular, I will interpret Schmitt's concept of sovereignty as a response to apocalypticism. I will argue that Schmitt develops a new conception of sovereignty by referring to the theological concept of Katechon, the restrainer, in Paul's *Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*.

Some contemporary scholars acknowledge the significance of Katechon in Schmitt's thought (Taubes, 2013; Palaver, 2007), and point out his connection with Paul (Nichanian, 2012). In particular, Agamben (1998, p. 28) argues that Schmitt's concept of Katechon is the controlling force, "which can, in the best of cases, merely slow the dominion of the Antichrist". But their interpretations are mainly theological, and thus lack connections to Schmitt's political concerns. Agamben's interpretation, meanwhile, does not specify who is the antichrist in Schmitt's mind. My interpretation will argue that 20th century Marxists are the incarnation of the antichrist and Schmitt's concept of Katechon is his distinctive tactic to respond to Marxism. His project of political theology

is about the revival of Katechon's historical and spatial powers to constrain Marxist apocalypticism and to legitimize sovereignty within the eschatological framework.

The Sovereign as the Incarnation of Katechon

Throughout the last two thousand years of history, the meaning of sovereignty has changed from the divine order of the Christian Republic to the Westphalian principle of the territorial state. However, Schmitt seeks the unchanging character of sovereignty. In *Political Theology* [1922], Schmitt calls attention to the transhistorical structure of sovereignty:

All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts not only because of their historical development - in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver-but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts (Schmitt, 2005a, p. 36).

Schmitt suggests that although political concepts of sovereignty change over time, their position within the systematic structure of a theological worldview does not change. In other words, to understand sovereignty, we must find its unchangeable theological counterpart. In the temporal structure of eschatology, sovereignty is the earthly order, and the sovereign occupies the position of the ruler in human history before they cede their position to God at the beginning of divine history. This suggests that the sovereign is not God, the omnipotent lawgiver, but the earthly ruler preceding God. This directly rejects

Kalyvas' interpretation that sovereignty is a lawmaking power. So, if the sovereign cannot make laws like God, what is their role?

In *Political Theology II* [1970], a theological debate with the German theologian Erik Peterson, Schmitt describes the Roman Emperor as Katechon, the restrainer with the responsibility to contain the antichrist and withhold the coming of the apocalypse (Schmitt, 2014, p. 92). This theological concept is drawn from St. Paul's *Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*. In 51-52 AD, some Christians in Thessalonika, a Greek city governed by the Roman Empire, were affected by a strong apocalyptic enthusiasm, believing that the end of the world was imminent. In Paul's First Epistle sent to them before, he said that "the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). Paul seemed to suggest that the apocalypse would awaken the sleeping people with revelation, but his words were misinterpreted by the believers as a suggestion of the immediate coming of Christ. For obvious reasons, the people who believed in immediate redemption would not obey a sinful earthly order, so they started to be restless, and the sign of a rebellion against Roman authority appeared. But Paul soon sent them the second epistle, telling them to be patient and not to be deceived by the man of lawlessness:

Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, will have been revealed, the one who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when

his time comes. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth. (2 Thessalonians 2: 3–8)

Paul's new suggestion was that the apocalypse is not imminent and that apocalypticism is a sinister deception instructed by evil powers. Christians naturally hope for redemption but this hope was misled by the man of lawlessness. Theologically, the man of lawlessness is an embodied manifestation of the antichrist, an agent of Satan, who spreads the false message of the apocalypse and lures people to disobey the earthly authority. This misleading power seduced people to destroy the world in the name of preparation for redemption. However, since the real apocalypse will not occur immediately but in the remote future, abolishing political authority will not lead to redemption but only destruction. This is to say, the apocalypticists are a false Messiah, who is not the messenger of Christ but the manifestation of the antichrist. Schmitt, in his literature critique, *Theodor Däubler's Northern Lights* [1916] similarly describes the antichrist as a deceptive and seductive power, who pretends to be Christ when the real Christ is yet to return and tells people that the earth will soon be totally transformed into a paradise with only security and comfort (Schmitt, 2019, p. 35, 36)¹⁹.

¹⁹ Schmitt's *Theodor Däubler's Northern Lights* [1916] has no current English translation, so I use a copy of a Chinese translation and translate the paragraph into English by myself.

To stop the misleading power, Paul, therefore, introduces the antithesis of the antichrist and Katechon, which has been significantly referred to in Schmitt's works. Schmitt believes that Katechon is the response to apocalypticism:

The belief that a restrainer holds back the end of the world provides the only bridge between the notion of an eschatological paralysis of all human events and a tremendous historical monolith like that of the Christian empire of the Germanic kings (Schmitt, 2006, p. 60).

Katechon is a restrainer who withholds the full manifestation of the antichrist and stops the false message of the apocalypse until the end of days truly comes. Paul never mentions who or what Katechon is, but Schmitt interprets it as the sovereign of the Roman Empire²⁰. Schmitt certainly notices the fall of the Western Roman Empire, but he argues that although political states could rise and fall, and political concepts of sovereignty could change with time, the theological duty of Katechon always remains. He insists on the historical continuity of the theological role of the sovereign as Katechon in the Middle Ages:

The continuity that bound medieval international law to the Roman Empire was found not in norms and general ideas, but in the concrete orientation to Rome. This Christian empire was not eternal. It always had its own end and that of the present eon in view. Nevertheless, it was capable of being a historical power. The decisive historical concept of this continuity was that of the restrainer: Katechon. "Empire" in this sense meant the historical power to restrain the appearance of the Antichrist

²⁰ Historically, several Roman emperors have been claimed by historians to be Katechon, such as Claudius ruled from AD 41 to 54 (Taylor, 2000).

and , the end of the present eon; it was a power that withholds (qui tenet) (Schmitt, 2006, p. 59, 60).

That is to say, as long as the meaning of Katechon persists in history, the sovereign has a legitimate role to play in the eschatological framework. Since the antichrist constantly seduces people to disobey the authority in the name of the Messiah, the sovereign has the duty to stop the false Messiah, ease the apocalyptic enthusiasm, and contain its destructive effects. In this way, the sovereign is granted a historical power to combat the seductive power of the antichrist who aims to sabotage God's plan by destroying the world before the real end of history. The danger of the antichrist justifies the power of Katechon. Just as Paul counterposes Katechon and the antichrist, Schmitt counterposes the sovereign and the Marxists. The sovereign, as the incarnation of Katechon, must take up the theological duty to combat the Marxists, who are the manifestation of the antichrist. Otherwise, the Marxist eschatology of progress will soon destroy the world. Therefore, the Katechontic sovereignty is a theological and political necessity.

By taking the role of Katechon, Schmitt's concept of sovereignty is no longer a passive power whose legitimacy relies on the church to preach the doctrine of a long wait. Rather, the sovereign is an active political and military power that is able to combat apocalypticism with decisive force when the false Messiah seduces people to disobey the sovereign. The purpose of the Katechontic sovereign power is to oppress the Marxists' apocalyptic enthusiasm and restore political order²¹. As Hjalmar Falk (2017) argues,

²¹ Richard Joyce (2019, p. 29) has a similar view: "from the letter and its context, it appears that the idea of Katechon was introduced to restore not just piety, but order to Thessalonika".

“Katechon is opposed to lawless transgressions—amongst which Schmitt would count the competing eschatologies of Marxist revolutionaries”.

Schmitt notices that from late antiquity to early modernity, Christian Empires – the Western Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Roman Empire—were able to activate the power of Katechon to preserve the imperial authority and the order of Europe (Schmitt, 2006, p. 60). However, with the rise of Enlightenment philosophy and the subsequent secularisation of political and juridical concepts, the theological concept of Katechon has been lost. Then, sovereignty in Europe became a groundless order. The Christian empires were able to exist because the sovereigns had oppressed the false Messiah for a long time and provided a relatively durable present age as a long waiting. However, without the maintenance of Katechon, the rise of the new forms of apocalypticism will soon destroy the durability of the temporal structure. As mentioned in the last chapter, the modern European sovereign order was unable to resist apocalypticism in the form of progress. Schmitt, therefore, gives a warning: without the theological sensitivity of eschatology and the Katechontic power to combat apocalypticism, modern states were extremely vulnerable when facing Marxists who were equipped with the newest philosophical weapon of historical progress.

Schmitt, therefore, calls for a revival of Katechon. His political theology is a project to retrieve the theological duty of sovereignty to combat Marxists, the newest and most sinister antichrists in the 20th century. He portrays a theological understanding of the world: Marxists are the incarnation of the antichrist, while the sovereign is the incarnation of Katechon, and they are in a constant struggle. The Marxist eschatology is rooted in the conception of progress, narrating the march of history towards communism

as unstoppable by any political forces. Marxists play the role of the antichrist, deceiving people with the hope of redemption and seducing them to rebel against their sovereign states in order to remove the obstacles to the communist paradise, where there is no class division and state authority, but only universal unity and anarchic freedom. For Schmitt, the coming of the apocalypse and the possibility of redemption only depend on God's divine will, and the Marxists' attempt to build paradise is a transgression in which humans dare to step into the Kingdom of God by themselves without their permission. They seduce people to build an earthly heaven by politically reconciling human history and divine history into a movement of historical progress. Then, Schmitt's task is clear: the sovereign must play the role of Katechon to stop the Marxists' transgression, which is to withhold the coming of the apocalypse in order to restore the distinctions between the Kingdom of men and the Kingdom of God, humanity and divinity, politics and redemption.

In sum, in Schmitt's understanding, the antichrist Marxists attempt to accelerate the apocalypse by seducing people to destroy the world and seek redemption before the actual return of God. Then, the Katechontic sovereign is obliged to withhold the apocalypse by forcing people to wait and live on the Earth until God truly returns.

The Historical Power of Katechon and the Perpetuation of Enmity

Although the divine duty of the Katechontic sovereign is clear so far, how Schmitt expects it to tactically fulfil this duty is still unanswered. Contemporary scholars do not specify how the sovereign can combat the apocalyptic transgression of Marxism.

Obviously, only telling people that communism will not come cannot truly stop their transgression. At least the Bolsheviks will not listen to Schmitt. He is not a priest, who just persuades people to have correct faith, but a political theologian, who calls for the sovereign power to defeat the apocalyptic Marxists politically and militarily. For Schmitt, the tactics to combat Marxists are related to their approach to the apocalypse: dialectical necessity. As mentioned in the last chapter, in a temporal dimension, Schmitt believes that Marxism calls for the proletarian revolution in the name of the dialectical necessity that class struggles can only be intensified with time until the complete negation of class. The process of the intensification and escalation of class struggles is called historical progress. Schmitt realized that Marxists insist on the historical power of the proletariat enacted by the iron necessity of dialectics to push historical progress and refuse any interruption or exception (Schmitt, 1988, p. 56). So, to combat them, in his understanding, the sovereign must have the historical power of Katechon to interrupt the historical progress and disable dialectical necessity.

The historical power of Katechon is rooted in the sovereign decision. In *Political Theology* [1922], Schmitt (2005a, p. 36) argues that the sovereign has the power to decide the exception. He follows that “the exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology” (Schmitt, 2005a, p. 36). This is more than a metaphor. The miracle is the antithesis of historical necessity: What should happen does not happen in reality. In *Three Possibilities for a Christian Conception of History* [1950], Schmitt (2009, p. 170) describes the miracle as “the virgin Mary” who carries the event of “infinite, non-appropriable, non-occupiable singularity”. This means that a miracle is an unexpected event, which can never be explained and captured by the narrative of progress. The

sovereign decision must appear like a miracle to stop Marxists. Marxism explains social reality and predicts the future by the laws of historical necessity but the miracle as an event outside the track of history makes history unexplainable and unpredictable, and therefore break historical continuity and interrupt progress. The *Katechontic* sovereign therefore must be a mythical and irrational power.

Schmitt insists that the interruption of historical progress entails the creation of a new historical event. Progress is a pattern of historical events: The socialist revolution must happen after the intensification of class contradiction due to dialectical necessity. The mythical power of *Katechon* aims to break this pattern with a historical event other than the socialist revolution in order to deny the dialectical necessity of class struggle.

Historically, in the 1920s, Schmitt perceived Fascist revolutions as miraculous events that broke the narrative of class struggle. In *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* [1923], Schmitt praises Italian Fascism as a creative power of national myth and cites Mussolini's famous speech in 1922 before the March on Rome:

Until now the democracy of mankind and parliamentarism once been contemptuously pushed aside through the conscious appeal to myth, and that was an example of the irrational power of the national myth. In his famous speech of October 1922 in Naples before the March on Rome, Mussolini said, "We have created a myth, this myth is a belief, a noble enthusiasm; it does not need to be reality, it is a striving and a hope, belief and courage. Our myth is the nation, the great nation which we want to make into a concrete reality for ourselves (Schmitt, 1988, p. 75, 76).

The mythical creation of the Italian nation reflects the creative power of the sovereign decision. In Marxist eschatology, all societies will be politically grouped by class into the proletariat and the bourgeois due to dialectical necessity. Italy should be no exception. The situation of class struggle indeed happened in Italy after the First World War and before the March on Rome, as Italian Fascist philosopher Giovanni Gentile (2017, p. 15, 16) describes: “A sense of revolution permeated the atmosphere, which the weak ruling class felt impotent to resist. Ground was gradually ceded and accommodations made with the leaders of the socialist movement”. However, the March on Rome was a sovereign decision that politically grouped people according to the nation rather than class. The nation is a category of human groupings other than class, and it was understood as a social reality created by the mythical power of the sovereign decision rather than the historical necessity of progress. This sovereign decision constitutes an unexpected event that interrupts history, like a divine display of a miracle. By the interruption, Katechonic sovereign power overcomes the dialectical necessity of class struggle and interrupts the march of history towards communism.

The creative power of the sovereign decision does not contradict the restraining task of Katechon. The divine duty of Katechon is to restrain the coming of the apocalypse in order to preserve the earthly order. However, this does not mean that it has to protect a specific polity, since the earthly order is made by many successive political orders. Schmitt deeply acknowledges the fallibility of the polity, as he notes that the Roman Empire, which used to serve as Katechon, was not eternal (Schmitt, 2006, p. 59). He also notes that the fall of the Western Roman Empire does not mean the end of earthly order and human history, because it has been succeeded by the Eastern and Holy Roman

Empires (Schmitt, 2006, p. 59). He suggests that a particular sovereign order as a material institution is mortal, while Katechon as a spiritual power is eternal unless God truly returns. Theologically speaking, the sovereign decision to create a new political order is the reincarnation of Katechon, which is essential for the continuation of the earthly order. If there is no creation but only destruction of political orders, human history is near the end. The creation of the Italian nation can be seen as a succession of the modern sovereign order, which rescued the world from destruction and withheld the end of history. The succession of political orders implies the continuity of Katechon. For Schmitt, as long as sovereign decisions continue to create new political orders, the apocalypse is withheld by Katechon.

The Katechontic power of sovereignty explains the controversy between Habermas and Kalyvas' interpretations. Habermas argues that Schmitt's sovereignty is a dictatorship to preserve the existing order, while Kalyvas believes that it is a revolution to create a new order. They are both partially right because they reduce Schmitt's concept of sovereignty to a legal and political concept and hence neglect its divine duty of preserving the earthly order and withholding the apocalypse. The Katechontic sovereign is indeed a dictatorship, but it is not necessary to preserve the existing order. This is because Schmitt notices the inevitability of the fall of empires (Hell, 2009). However, the fall of the existing order does not compromise the divine duty of Katechon, as long as the sovereign decision can create a new political order as a part of the earthly order to continue human history. Creation is the means of preservation. The purpose of sovereign creation is not the creation itself but the preservation of the continuation of the earthly order. The Katechontic sovereign is thus a history-making power.

The very reason for Schmitt's insistence on the endless creation of new orders is that Marxism constantly seduces people to accelerate the end of history. Schmitt realizes that the Katechontic power of sovereignty can ease but not eliminate apocalyptic enthusiasm. When people notice that the expected event of the socialist revolution does not happen, they will no longer believe the prophecy of Marxist eschatology. The radical hope for redemption is oppressed and transformed into despair. So, they have to settle on the Earth rather than anticipate Heaven. However, their settlement is only temporary. This is because of the human nature that men are "dangerous and dynamic beings" (Schmitt, 2008, p. 61). The dynamic human nature means that humans have a radical subjectivity that tends to let them make their own judgements rather than following the sovereign decision. Schmitt calls it the "irrepressible chaos inherent in man" (Schmitt, 2008b, p. 22). This radical subjectivity of men means that they are easily deceived and seduced by the apocalypticists. This suggests the ever-present possibility of unsettlement. Even after they witness the failure of socialism and the sovereign tells them that history does not move in one direction, they may insist that the world revolution is still coming. Even after they stop believing in the end of history and settle in this world, they can always change their minds, particularly when a new form of apocalypticism or some new evidence of socialist revolution emerges. This is because the desire to exit suffering and imperfect reality and enter the perfect world is just natural and irreducible for everyone. But if this desire for redemption is misled and inflamed by apocalyptic revolutionaries, again and again, there will never be a true settlement on the earth.

Schmitt acknowledges the inevitability of the condition of unsettlement and describes it through the concept of stasis. In the postscript of *Political Theology II* [1970], Schmitt

introduces the theological concept of stasisology and traces the etymological root of stasis:

Right in the middle of the most precise formulation of this difficult dogma, we find the word stasis in the sense of ‘uproar’. The etymology and history of the word stasis deserves to be mentioned in this context. It extends from Plato (the Sophist, 249–54, and the Republic, Book v, 470), through the Neoplatonists, Plotinus in particular, to the Greek church fathers and teachers. With this concept an intriguing contradiction of a dialectical nature emerges. Stasis means in the first place quiescence, tranquillity, standpoint, status; its antonym is kinesis, movement. But stasis also means, in the second place, (political) unrest, movement, uproar and civil war (Schmitt, 2014, p. 122, 123).

Stasis appears to be a self-contradictory term: on the one hand, *stasis* implies order and stability, but on the other hand, it means chaos and unsettlement. Historically, as Agamben (2015) describes, stasis was the civil war that occurred in ancient Greek city-states, in a cycle of political division and reunion. Schmitt uses it to describe the dynamics of sovereignty: after the sovereign order was destroyed by the uproar of apocalypticism, it is restored by the sovereign decision, and this cycle of destruction-construction will happen again and again.

For Schmitt, the circularity of the uproar entails periodic invocations of the Katechontic sovereign power. Once the apocalypticists attempt to arouse people’s desire for redemption and seduce them to overthrow the sovereign order, the decision power must be summoned to interrupt historical progress. They will attempt to do so again and again, so the sovereign power has to present itself every time. Only by defeating every

attempt can the durability of the earthly order be guaranteed. This is why, in Schmitt's description, Katechon not only interrupts but also withholds historical progress (Schmitt, 2006, p. 60). Interruption is a one-time action, while withholding the apocalyptic uproars requires endless interruptions.

Schmitt realizes that the sovereign decisions that interrupt historical progress require an unlimited source of novel creations. Since the apocalyptic attempts to end human history are endless, sovereign decisions must be able to create unlimited new events to show that history is still continuing. Otherwise, the confrontation between the sovereign and apocalypticists becomes the final struggle of human history, as no new events and new human groupings emerge. Katechon, as a history-making power, is able to restrain the last event of human history because it can create unlimited new events. In other words, the continuation of human history entails infinite new historical events.

The infinity of historical events is ontologically rooted in Schmitt's concept of the political – the decision of the enemy. As mentioned in the last chapter, Marxism aims to end human history and create a universal unity of the human race through the concertation of the class contradiction and the negation of the class enemy. Schmitt views communist society as a paradise where there is universal humanity and no enmity: “humanity as such and as a whole has no enemies. Everyone belongs to humanity” (Schmitt, 1987, p. 88). If no new enemy other than the class enemy emerges, there is no new event, and history approaches the final struggle. However, in Schmitt's understanding, the enemy is ontologically infinite. In *Wisdom of the Cell* [1947], Schmitt describes the infinity of the enemy in theological language:

Whom in the world can I acknowledge as my enemy? Clearly only him who can call me into question. By recognizing him as enemy I acknowledge that he can call me into question. And who can really call me into question? Only I myself. Or my brother. The other proves to be my brother, and the brother proves to be my enemy. Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Thus begins the history of humankind. This is what the father of all things looks like. This is the dialectical tension that keeps world history moving, and world history has not yet ended (Schmitt, 2017, p. 71).

What Schmitt is saying is that enmity is the existential condition of humanity, which originated theologically from Cain's murder of Abel. The enemy can be changed, but it cannot be truly eliminated because it has no essence, but is only a form of human grouping in relation to the other. The human grouping is not universal but concrete, as it excludes at least another group. When the intensity of dissociation is enough, even brothers Cain and Abel can be turned into enemies and start to kill each other. Essentially, enmity is the drive to distinguish the self and the other. As Schmitt argues, "the enemy stands on my own plane. For this reason I must contend with him in battle, in order to assure my own standard [Maß], my own limits, my own Gestalt" (Schmitt, 2004, p. 61). Since enmity is ontologically irreducible, the sovereign decision of the enemy and the creation of a new human group is an ever-present possibility.

But most importantly, the decision of the political is always open: humans can be politically grouped according to not only class but also morals and aesthetics (Schmitt, 2008, p. 26). As long as the intensity of the conflict in a certain dimension is enough, the friend and the enemy can be differentiated by the sovereign decision and constitute a new

political unity (Schmitt, 2008, p. 26). Since there is always the possibility of creating the enemy according to different categories, enmity bears infinity. The endless emergences of the new enemies mean that human history has not yet ended but is open to infinite possibilities of grouping. Schmitt describes the infinity of historical events in poetic language:

History blows like a storm in great testimonies. It grows through strong creations, which insert the eternal into the course of time. It is a striking of roots in the space of meaning of the earth. Through scarcity and impotence, this history is the hope and honor of our existence (Schmitt, 2009, p. 170).

The infinity of enmity implies that the sovereign can always disrupt the historical narrative of class struggle by creating new enemies. This means that people do not have to be grouped according to class, as Marxism predicts. Even when there is a constant uproar of apocalyptic enthusiasm that clamors for intensifying the class enemy to abolish enmity through dialectical negation, the infinity of different categories of the enemy can always be invoked by the sovereign to interrupt dialectical progress²². Thus, the course of history can always be changed by the creative power of sovereign decisions. The turning points of history demonstrate that human history has yet to end. As long as human history continues, the earthly order is legitimate. That is to say, the continuation of human history entails endless sovereign decisions in order to perpetuate enmity.

²² Historical facts show that during the first world war, some national labour movements and socialist parties lined up behind their countries rather than forming an international proletariat alliance (Liulevicius, 2020).

Schmitt, therefore, enables sovereignty to self-generate legitimacy. To be noted, sovereignty here does not refer to a particular political order but the earthly order sustained by the successions of many political orders, that is, the incarnations of Katechon. Sovereignty can generate legitimacy by itself because the Katechontic power creates unexpected events and interrupts the apocalyptic plan, continuing human history. Even as Marxist eschatology seduces people to rebel, again and again, particular political orders rise and fall, and sovereignty as the earthly order can well defend itself from destruction through the periodic creations of new events. Decision power sustains the sovereign order, not vice versa. By periodically creating new enemies and human groupings to demonstrate a yet-to-end history, the sovereign order is no longer self-destructive but self-perpetuating.

So far, a part of Schmitt's counterstrategy against Marxist eschatology is clear: if Marxism aims to intensify the struggle between class enemies in order to negate enmity and create universal humanity, then the Katechontic sovereign is to create new categories of enemies, such as the national enemy, to perpetuate enmity and prevent the unity of the human race. The perpetuation of enmity guarantees the continuation of human history and the deferring of the apocalypse; therefore, it is legitimate for sovereignty as the earthly order to continue to exist.

The Spatial Power of Katechon and the Constraining of Enmity

For Schmitt, the Katechontic sovereign is not only a historical power that withholds historical progress but also a spatial power. As mentioned in the last chapter, since the

modern sovereign order in Europe collapsed in the early 20th century, Schmitt notices that the cosmological war between good and evil forces has been fully manifested in the global civil wars between revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries. According to him, this spatial chaos was caused by the universality and transnationality of class struggle in Marxist eschatology. The global civil wars were no longer judged and evaluated concretely by the sovereigns according to the European Public Law but fully dictated by the universal characterization of class struggle. Proletariat revolutionary wars were always just and counterrevolutionary wars were always unjust because the former is good and the latter is evil. In his view, class struggle eventually leads to the wars of annihilation since evil must be purged in the final struggle of human history. Katechon, therefore, must contain the global civil wars.

For Schmitt, the first step is to restore the concreteness of sovereign order. This order must be attached to the space again. In contrast with borderless cosmopolitanism, a space implies a boundary between inside and outside. State territory was the materialization of space before the rise of spaceless and stateless Marxism. As Schmitt writes in *The Nomos of The Earth*,

the solid ground of the earth is delineated by fences, enclosures, boundaries, walls, houses, and other constructs. Then, the orders and orientations of human social life become apparent. Then, obviously, families, clans, tribes, estates, forms of ownership and human proximity, also forms of power and domination, become visible (Schmitt, 2006, p. 42).

The bounded space is the foundation of laws and order. The boundary is not given but constructed through land-appropriation (Schmitt, 2006, p. 46). It means that the

establishment of space entails a sovereign decision to take the land and exercise power over it by excluding external influence. The spatial order is not self-sustainable. Only decision power can create and maintain the sovereign order.

Schmitt acknowledges that the sovereign decision of land appropriation rests on the political - the distinction of friend and enemy. This judgement of the enemy cannot be based on a universal category, such as class, but on “concrete clarity” (Schmitt, 2008, p. 67). The concrete sovereign order entails a concrete decision about the enemy. In *The Concept of The Political* [1932], Schmitt argues that the enemy should be determined by clearly evaluating the concrete situation and the possibility of human grouping (Schmitt, 2008, p. 37). The evaluation of the concrete situation entails a concrete order. In other words, the decision about the enemy should not be based on the universal category of class in Marxism. The bourgeois is not always the enemy of the proletariat and the proletariats are not always friends. Rather, the enemy should be determined and the political unity should be bounded by concrete principles and valuations. As previously mentioned, Schmitt’s high praise of Mussolini’s speech in 1922 shows that the national myth can create a concrete social reality (Schmitt, 1988, p. 75, 76). Schmitt emphasizes the importance of the nation because compared to the universality of class, the nation is a better carrier of concrete order²³. There are only two classes, while there are many nations in the world. Each nation has concrete cultural characteristics and moral values so each can distinguish the enemy and the friend by its own concrete principle rather than the universal principle of class. In *The Theory of The Partisan* [1963], Schmitt (2004, p.

²³ For Schmitt, both nation and class are the categories of human grouping to distinguish the self and the other. The difference is that nation is more concrete while class is universal.

39) also praises the Spanish Civil War: “Spain was defending itself in a national war of liberation from the grip of international communism”. In this war, the republican government did not represent the Spanish nation but a branch of international proletariat partisans while Franco’s military dictatorship represented the concrete national order. The decision of civil war was therefore a concrete distinction between friend and enemy based on national character. For Schmitt, Spanish fascism successfully recreated concrete sovereign orders by excluding the international socialist revolutionaries and globalized liberal bourgeois. This concrete order attached the national character to territory and therefore survived the global civil wars.

However, Schmitt realizes that one national sovereign order is insufficient to stop the planetary revolutionary wars. Spain merely excluded the universal revolutionary force from its sovereign space, but due to the high mobility of the socialist partisans, the wars continued in other geographical areas. In Schmitt’s design, to contain the cosmological war, the earth must be restructured by multiple concrete orders. He certainly realizes that it is impossible to return to the old European sovereign order. After the Second World War, Europe was no longer the sacred centre of the world, and European nations were unable to occupy land in colonies to maintain the balance of power. But the possibility of establishing a global balance of concrete orders is still open. Schmitt seeks a new *nomos* of the earth. He introduces the concept of *Großraum*, in English, meaning “large room” or “great space”:

The third possibility also is based on the concept of a balance, but not one sustained and controlled by a hegemonic combination of sea and air power. A combination of several independent *Großraum* or blocs could constitute a balance, and thereby

could precipitate a new order of the earth.... The third possibility, an equilibrium of several independent Großraum, is rational, if the Großraum are differentiated meaningfully and are homogeneous internally (Schmitt, 2006, p. 355).

In this scenario, a global order of Großraum will replace the European order of sovereign states to substitute the spatial structure that contains the cosmological war and nomadic partisans. Großraum is a concrete order attached to a bounded space. Its internal homogeneity entails a sovereign as the common authority and common external enemies. A Großraum is usually dominated by a major nation, meaning that other minor nations have to be subjected to it. This is Schmitt's realistic concern since there are powerful and underpowered nations in the world and not every nation may have a Großraum. But most importantly, multiple Großraum constitute the plural global order in which each of them is politically, legally and morally autonomous from each other. A Großraum can be seen as the space occupied by a powerful nation and hence its order is bounded by concrete national characters and values.

When multiple powerful nations occupy their own Großraum and reach a global balance of power, the plurality of concrete orders will replace the universality of the class wars. In this case, all civil wars are externalized to be inter-Großraum conflicts. This is because there is no longer a universal category to decide on the enemy. The enemy will be decided according to the concrete characteristics and values of the Großraum and global strategic situations. This will prevent the demonization of the enemy because the Großraum's standards of good and evil cannot apply to one another. As long as the earth is spatially divided by concrete orders, the eschatological annihilation of the enemy can

be avoided. The intensity of war is constrained and therefore prevents the total destruction of the earth.

Schmitt believes that the global order of Großraum will be Katechon to restrain the universal homogenization of the world. After the Second World War, the Fascist Italy that represented concrete national order was defeated. The earth appeared as a dualist structure between the Soviet bloc and the Western world. Both sides aimed to defeat the other and created a universal and homogenous world order based on capitalist or socialist principles. This was the exact reflection of the cosmological war between good and evil forces. Soviet left-wing Marxists believed that with the globalisation of socialist revolutions, history would soon end. In the Western world, a “right-wing Marxist”, Alexandre Kojève, anticipated that human history would end up with the global triumph of liberalism. In his correspondence with Schmitt in 1995, Kojève contends that by the end of history, the ongoing planetary struggle between West and East will end up with a universal homogenization of order (Kojève, 2001, p. 98, 99). However, in Schmitt’s reply, he disagrees and argues that world history is yet to end because a global balance of Großraum will emerge:

I do not consider our Earth, no matter how small it may have become, to be a planning unit not by a long shot; and I even leave open if it ever can become one. "Großraum" does not have, for me, the sense of a contrast to "small-space"...but the sense {which is} a plurality and, therefore, enables meaningful enmity, and is hence justifiably historically noteworthy of an opposition to the unity of the world, i.e. against the assumption that the cycle of time is already over....The contemporary world-dualism (of east and west, or land and sea) is not the final dash

for unity, i.e. the end of history. It is, rather, the bottleneck through which the road to new "up-to-date" magni homines {great men} leads. I am thus looking for the new nomos - of the Earth, a geo-nomy; this does not arise from the dictate of a lord of the world, into whose hands a few Nobel prize-winners maneuvered power; it arises from a tremendous, reciprocal "match of powers" (Schmitt, 2001, p. 102)²⁴.

In this case, the theological role of Katechon is not played by a single sovereign state but a global order made by multiple sovereigns. Katechon serves as a spatial-structural power that divides the earth into plural concrete orders and therefore separates good and evil forces to prevent their clashes and intensification. It aims to constrain the intensity of enmity, preventing it from developing into the absolute enemy who must be annihilated.

Schmitt's design for the global balance of Großraum is a reflection of his political realism. As mentioned in the introduction, Gyulai and Philp argue that Schmitt's understanding of sovereignty is a realist power without any moral consideration (Gyulai, 2018. p 29-32; Philp, 2012. p. 631). However, their interpretations do not consider Schmitt's concern about the dangers of moralism in the apocalyptic times. The cosmological struggle between good and evil in eschatology is a moralizing driving force. Marxist eschatology seduces people to moralize the revolutionaries and demonize the counterrevolutionaries, the class enemy becomes the absolute evil that must be annihilated. Class struggles become an apocalyptic war of annihilation. Schmitt realizes the seductive power of apocalypticism and the drive to dehumanize

²⁴ The original date of correspondence the was 1955.

the enemy, thus warning that at any time, confrontation with the enemy could easily be turned into the elimination of the enemy. This suggests that, for Schmitt, although enmity is needed for perpetuating the earthly order, the intensity of the struggle with the enemy must be constrained by the global balance of concrete orders. Each Großraum decides and combats the enemy by their concrete standards, so in the global order of Großraum, there is no universal category of the enemy. Therefore, Schmitt's design for the global balance of Großraum is a realist arrangement for the earthly order that aims to avoid the danger of apocalyptic moralism that demands the universal elimination of the evil enemy²⁵.

Overall, Schmitt's tactic against Marxist eschatology is invoking the historical and spatial powers of Katechon. In the temporal or historical dimension, Marxism intensifies class struggle to negate the class enemy and hence accelerates the apocalypse to reach the communist paradise where there is no enmity but only unity. The historical power of the Katechontic sovereign is tit-for-tat, which is to endlessly create new enemies according to other categories to perpetuate enmity and hence delay the apocalypse through the permanent divisions within the human race. In the spatial dimension, Marxism universalizes and demonizes the class enemy to reach the apocalyptic final battle between absolute good and absolute evil and hence demands the annihilation of the absolute enemy. As a response, the spatial power of Katechon creates the global balance of concrete orders to decide on the enemy concretely without universal moral principles and hence constrain the intensity of the wars with

²⁵ This is similar to Hans Morgenthau's fifth principle of realism: "Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe" (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 8).

the enemy. And the spatial power works with the historical power in a reciprocal cycle. By transforming the war of annihilation between the global Proletariat and bourgeois partisans into the limited war between concrete Großraum, the destructive effect is constrained so the war cannot lead to the final struggle through dialectical necessity. By showing the unexpected historical transformation, not to the post-apocalypse homogenous and universal order but a global order of plural Großraum, the deception of the apocalyptic prophecies will be exposed and the apocalyptic enthusiasm will be eased; thus, the plural world order will be durably legitimated. Schmitt's political theology of Katechon is to initiate this reciprocal cycle to re-contain the apocalypse in the eschatological framework. That is to say, Schmitt's design for the Katechontic sovereignty is to create the enemy but simultaneously constrain the enmity to delay the apocalyptic final battle and legitimately exist on the earth.

Conclusion

This thesis has interpreted Schmitt's concept of sovereignty as a response to apocalypticism. Schmitt realizes that the tension between sovereignty and eschatology was a political and theological problem brought by the birth of Christianity - that if the end of days is near, there is no need for the earthly sovereign order. In Schmitt's understanding of history, this problem was successfully solved by the medieval church's preaching and the modern sovereign order. However, Schmitt argues that apocalypticism was resurrected in the 20th century through the Marxist conception of progress. The Marxist eschatology reignited apocalyptic enthusiasm through the promise of the universal unity of the human race and incited people to regroup into two opposing global political units of proletariat and bourgeoisie to trigger the dialectical negation of class. Schmitt warns that Marxist eschatology will not lead to paradise but the most inhumane wars of annihilation on a global scale.

Schmitt, therefore, offers his concept of the sovereign as a Katechontic power to restrain the destructive effects of the apocalyptic battle. According to Schmitt, the sovereign power oppresses the apocalyptic enthusiasm through perpetuating enmity, in which historical progress towards a paradise without enmity is constantly disrupted by the sovereign decisions of the enemy. The emergences of the enemies show that human history is yet to end and is open to the infinite possibility of events. At the same time, the sovereign has to constrain the intensity of enmity by creating a global balance of concrete orders. This is to prevent the enemy from developing into the absolute enemy who must be eliminated to constrain the destructive effects of global civil wars. Schmitt thus provides a new counter-apocalypse strategy: the decision power of the sovereign

perpetuates but simultaneously restrains enmity to delay the apocalyptic battle between two extremely opposed forces. As long as the end of history has not yet come, the sovereign order can exist within the eschatological framework. In other words, sovereignty and eschatology are reconciled through the historical-spatial power of Katechon which perpetuates human history by constantly delaying and containing the apocalypse.

The eschatological dimension of Schmitt's sovereignty answers the controversy between Habermas' and Kalyvas' interpretations. Habermas understands Schmitt's sovereignty as a conservative dictatorship that aims to protect the existing order, while Kalyvas understands it as a creative revolution that constitutes a new order. The two understandings are both one-sided since sovereignty cannot protect or create an order if the apocalypse is coming. Schmitt's sovereignty is rather a history-making power that preserves the eschatological structure by creating new historical events. It is both restraining and creative in a temporal dimension. Only when it can create enemies according to its concrete judgement, can it withhold the apocalypse, so the sovereign order is legitimate to exist in human history. The sovereign order should not be understood as a particular political authority but rather as an incarnation of the divine power of Katechon, which has succeeded from the Roman Empire to the modern sovereign order and the possible Großraum in the future.

The divine task of the Katechontic sovereign to withhold the apocalypse reminds us of the dangers of apocalypticism. For Schmitt, apocalypticism is a form of utopianism, which seeks something that does not exist. The search for the higher world will uproot humans from the sovereign order in reality and throw them into chaos without

redemption. According to Schmitt, the unrealistic belief in the perfection of society will only bring the destruction of social order; the efforts to create universal unity of humanity will have to annihilate half of the human race; the desire to end all wars will end up with total wars; the hope to achieve redemption will result in total destruction. Schmitt, as a Christian, clearly notices the human desire for heaven where there is only unity, peace, comfort and security, but he notices that “no one can write books about the Kingdom of God” (Schmitt, 1996, p. 48). He means that humans cannot transgress the boundary between human history and divine history. The divine power of redemption belongs not to revolutionaries but God, and he has not yet returned.

Schmitt, therefore, offers some insights into political realism. He warns about the Marxists’ desire to escape from politics into redemption, from danger to safety, from enmity to unity, and from war to peace. While realism aims to inform people that the real world is a place with inescapable wars, enemies, dangers, and politics, humans have to live in this suffering world. Many contemporary liberal scholars have warned of the danger of his political realism that might result in amoralism and dictatorial decisions (Coady, 2008, p. 26, 27), so Mark Lilla (1997) calls Schmitt “the enemy of liberalism”. But Schmitt believes that those dangers are inevitable as long as the enemy is the existential condition of the human race. Any attempt to escape enmity, wars and decisions will only end up in the extremization of the sufferings and the more extreme dangers of annihilation. Humans have to commit to politics and fight with the enemy in the real world without hope for redemption and unity. The reconciliation of sovereignty and eschatology is therefore a realist worldview with a temporal-spatial boundary that

separates politics from redemption, earth from heaven, human history from divine history, concrete order from cosmopolitan chaos.

His realism informs the necessity of sovereignty. Dangers and politics cannot be escaped, but they can be directed by the concrete sovereign decision. Although wars and enemies cannot be eliminated, they can be constrained by the concrete sovereign order. The sovereign, not God, is the only guarantee of the stability and habitability of the earth.

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