

The conference is cosponsored by
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Berlin
Monday-Wednesday
July 18–20
2022



Political Theology in Jewish and Christian Contexts: Reception Histories and Controversies with Carl Schmitt

Carl Schmitt's *Political Theology*, written in 1922, is present in almost every discussion of the place of the theological within the politics of our secularized societies. Despite Jürgen Habermas's admonition that studying Schmitt is merely a gateway drug leading to the dream of a strong state, Schmittian thought continues to heavily influence contemporary discourses, on the left as much as on the right. Whether one agrees with Schmitt's thesis or not, Political Theology has become a paradigm with which some of the most urgent challenges of our age are approached. It is often through the Schmittian prism that contemporary thinkers account for populism and states of emergency, understand the present crisis of liberalism, and revisit the complex relations between modernity and religious traditions.

The 100th anniversary of Schmitt's influential work is an opportunity to inquire into the genealogy of political theology and trace its diverse and at times conflictual applications in answering these urgent questions. The conference will trace the entanglement of these and other debates from the time of the work's publication in the Interwar period to present-day debates occurring in diverse cultural and political contexts. More specifically, it will explore Schmitt's reception within Christian and Jewish circles, taking into account how political theology and the "secular" are perceived precisely from their respective theological perspectives. The attempt is not to embrace Schmitt, whose anti-Semitism and notorious involvement with the Nazi regime continue to shadow his thought, but rather to think political theology in its variety. We will trace the various religious uses of political theology, whether they serve to legitimize the political sphere through religion, to criticize politics in the name of theology, or to denote a form of secular theology, positing the political at its doctrinal core. Moreover, we will explore the critical function of political theology, not only in conflicts between religious traditions and secularism but also in frictions between competing religious traditions.

PROGRAM

Monday, July 18, 2022

Katholische Akademie in Berlin, Hannoversche Str. 5, 10115

The Jewish Reception of Political Theology

11:15 a.m. Greetings: **Karma Ben Johanan** (Humboldt University of Berlin)

11:30 a.m. Chair: **Amit Varshizky** (University of Jena)

Julie Cooper (Tel Aviv University)

The Jewish Philosopher Spinoza? Jewish Rejoinders to Schmitt's Critique of Spinoza's Liberalism

Martin Kavka (Florida State University)

Spinoza's Christian Enemies: On Jewish-Christian Relations a Century after Schmitt's Political Theology

1:00 p.m. **Lunch Break**

2:00 p.m. Chair: **Gilad Shenhav** (University of Potsdam)

Elettra Stimilli (Sapienza University of Rome)

The Enigma of the Leviathan and 'The First Liberal Jew': Thomas Hobbes between Carl Schmitt and Jacob Taubes

Adi M. Ophir (Brown University)

The Rule of God: What Could Schmitt Have Learned from a Foucauldian Reading of the Hebrew Bible?

3:30 p.m. **Coffee Break**

4:00 p.m. Chair: **Yael Atia** (University of Potsdam)

Itamar Ben Ami (Humboldt University of Berlin)

The Jewish Reception of Carl Schmitt

Yemima Hadad (University of Leipzig)

Friends and Foes: Martin Buber Reading Carl Schmitt

Assaf Tamari (The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute)

The Political Theology of the Concept: Language and the Neutralization of Politics

Humboldt University of Berlin, Senate Hall in the Main Building, Unter den Linden 6, 10117

7:30 p.m. **Evening Lectures**

Chair: **Karma Ben Johanan** (Humboldt University of Berlin)

Christoph Schmidt (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Carl Schmitt and the Dialectics of Theology and Secularisation, or: the Two Bodies of the Subject

Agata Bielik-Robson (University of Nottingham)

Carl Schmitt's Cryptotheologies

Katholische Akademie in Berlin, Hannoversche Str. 5, 10115

Schmitt's Political Theology in Christian Debates

- 9:30 a.m. Chair: **Sandra Lehmann** (University of Vienna)
Brandy Daniels (University of Portland)
How (not) to Do Political Theology? Building on, and Imagining Beyond, Schmitt's Legacy
Georg Essen (Humboldt University of Berlin)
"Political Theology" as an Impact for Catholicism
- 11:00 a.m. **Coffee Break**
- 11:30 a.m. Chair: **Benedikt Skorzenski** (Humboldt University of Berlin)
Alexandra Kemmerer (Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law)
Schmitt – Böckenförde – Ridder: Political Theology in Postwar West Germany Left Catholicism with and against Carl Schmitt
Thomas Meyer (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich)
The Silence of Political Theology: On Waldemar Gurian, Hannah Arendt, and Carl Schmitt
- 1:00 p.m. **Lunch Break**
- 2:00 p.m. **Parallel Reading Groups:**
Reading group
Tine Stein (University of Göttingen)
Böckenförde's Contribution to Political Theology
Reading group
Menachem Lorberbaum (Tel Aviv University)
The Biblical Creation of the Political
- 3:30 p.m. **Coffee Break**
- 4:00 p.m. Chair: **Ana Petrache** (Pontificia Università San Tommaso d'Aquino in Urbe)
Wolfgang Palaver (University of Innsbruck)
Carl Schmitt's Heathen-Christian Political Theology between the Sacred and the Holy
Marcia Pally (New York University and Humboldt University of Berlin)
Could Schmitt Have Gotten Human Nature Wrong? A View from Evolutionary Biology
Luca Di Blasi (University of Bern)
Political Theology of Sin
- 5.30 p.m. **Supper**

Humboldt University of Berlin, Senate Hall in the Main Building, Unter den Linden 6, 10117

- 7:30 p.m. **Evening Lectures**
Chair: **Stephan Steiner** (Katholische Akademie Berlin)
Christian Polke (University of Göttingen)
In the Long Shadow of Carl Schmitt: Protestant Theology and the Drama of the German Past
Leora Batnitzky (Princeton University)
The Absence of Redemption: Galut, Martyrdom, and Deferment in Twentieth-Century Jewish Political Theology

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Katholische Akademie in Berlin, Hannoversche Str. 5, 10115

Political Theology and Inter-Cultural Conflicts

- 9:30 a.m. Chair: **Itamar Ben Ami** (Humboldt University of Berlin)
Shai Lavi (The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute; Tel Aviv University)
Schmitt in Jerusalem: The Temple Mount as a State of Exception to Sovereignty
Reut Yael Paz (University of Gießen)
Religious Images behind *die Vereinigung der Deutschen Staatsrechtslehrer*: Kaufmann vs. Smend vs. Schmitt vs. Nawiasky vs. Kelsen
- 11:00 a.m. **Coffee Break**
- 11:30 a.m. Chair: **Omri (Hannah) Ben Yehuda** (Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin)
Zahiye Kundos (Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin)
Wait! Muslims Are Here; Let's See What They Have to Say about Islam and Politics
Ido Harari (The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute)
Anti-Leviathan: Jewish and Muslim Theo-Politics between Issac Breuer, Muhammad Asad, and Carl Schmitt
- 1:00 p.m. **Lunch Break**
- 2:00 p.m. Chair: **Vanessa Rau** (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen)
Yochi Fischer (The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute)
Political-Theological Reflections on Museums in the Twenty-First Century
Nitzan Lebovic (Lehigh University)
Political Theology in the Age of the Anthropocene
Elad Lapidot (University of Lille)
Schmitt's Wars

Humboldt University of Berlin, Tieranatomisches Theater, Philippstraße 13
(Campus Nord, Haus 3), 10115

- 6:00 p.m. **Evening Lectures**
Chair: **Shai Lavi** (The Van Leer Jerusalem Institut; Tel Aviv University)
John Milbank (The University of Nottingham)
From Schmitt to Agamben: The Theme of Divine Government
Vivian Liska (University of Antwerp; The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
German-Jewish Critical Modernists vs. Carl Schmitt
- 8:00 p.m. **Joint dinner for the conference participants**

Each talk: 15-minute paper / 20–30 minute discussion

Evening Panel Discussion: 2 x 25-minute papers / 40-minute discussion

List of Participants

Yael Atia (University of Potsdam)

Leora Batnitzky (Princeton University)

Itamar Ben Ami (Humboldt University of Berlin)

Karma Ben Johanan (Humboldt University of Berlin)

Omri (Hannah) Ben Yehuda (Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin)

Agata Bielik-Robson (University of Nottingham)

Julie Cooper (Tel Aviv University)

Brandy Daniels (University of Portland)

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Benedikt Skorzenski (Humboldt University of Berlin)

Tine Stein (University of Göttingen)

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