In his Foreword to the 1963 edition of Concept of the Political, Carl Schmitt admits that the text of 1932 contained a major lacuna – a lacuna, he adds, that was pointed out to him by ‘a Frenchman, Julien Freund’ and ‘an American, George Schwab’. He explains: ‘the main deficiency [of Concept of the Political] lies in the fact that the different types of enemy – conventional, real or absolute – are not separated and distinguished with sufficient clarity and precision’.\(^1\)

The clearest understanding of the differences between conventional, real and absolute hostility can be gained from the Theory of the Partisan which was published by Schmitt at about the same time as the Foreword to Concept of the Political.

The first five sections of this chapter offer a textually-based analysis of Schmitt’s typology of enmity which attempts to explain the meaning of different forms of enmity; the circumstances when they materialize; the original carriers of conventional, real and absolute hostility; the multiple historical causes that affect the dominant notion of enmity of an age; and the rise and growth in the twentieth century of ‘absolute hostility’.

In the final section of the chapter I will put forward an interpretation of the triad of hostility which is more controversial and yet, in my opinion, in line with Schmitt’s political thought. First, I will argue that ‘absolute enmity’ is not more intense than real or conventional enmity. This claim (that was anticipated in Chapter 1) is crucial for a correct understanding of the political in Schmitt. Second, I will suggest that although historically Schmitt presents us with a triad of enmity, theoretically he is interested in the duality of
limited and unlimited hostility. Third, I will claim that Carl Schmitt uses *jus publicum europaeum* in a subversive way.

I

In his works, Schmitt discusses ‘conventional enmity’ only briefly and indirectly, using it merely as a standard relative to which one can evaluate and explore the nature and meaning of ‘real’ and ‘absolute’ enmity. Schmitt links ‘conventional’ hostility to *jus publicum europaeum*, namely the system of law borne out of the Westphalia Treaty that informed foreign policy between nation states and regulated hostility and war between them. Schmitt stresses that the central unit of *jus publicum europaeum* is the sovereign state\(^2\) and that, by its lights, the acknowledgement of a state’s sovereignty implies an acknowledgement of the right to wage war. In this classical model of war and enmity, the state is the agency which makes the political decision of naming the enemy; the soldier has a duty of obedience to the state and ‘the distinction of friend enemy is therefore no longer a political problem which the fighting soldier has to solve’.\(^3\) The army is trained to recognize and to respect the difference between soldiers and civilians and to regard as enemies only those who wear a uniform.\(^4\) All weapons are clearly visible and the uniform is worn with pride and as a symbol capable of immediate identification; the enemy is not denied respect, when captured or wounded the enemy is not denied rights or justice, victory over the enemy is valuable and honourable exactly because the enemy is acknowledged to have both value and honour. In Schmitt’s view, *jus publicum europaeum* was able to regulate the waging of war by sovereign states precisely because it did not regard war as a crime. Schmitt insists that according to *jus publicum europaeum* ‘the enemy has a status; he is not a criminal’.\(^5\)

Conversely, Schmitt contends, as soon as waging war is regarded as a crime, the attempt to regulate wartime conduct becomes as nonsensical and futile as an attempt to regulate murder. *Jus publicum europaeum*, Schmitt remarks, established clear distinctions between war and peace, between internal and external, between combatant and non-combatant, legal fighter and non-legal fighter, between neutrality and engagement, between enemy and criminal. These distinctions imposed boundaries on hostility which in turn,