

Not One Opponent Would I Kill

Many people have killed — sometimes a few, sometimes millions — in order to put their ideology in the saddle. I am deeply invested in my ideology; I have great confidence in its coherence and its foundational values; I have little doubt that if it were to become a society's reigning belief system the members of that society would reap enormous benefits.

But would I kill to put my ideology into operation? No, not one opponent would I kill. Were I to do so, I would have lost my war at the outset by virtue of how I had gone about fighting it. An ideology whose adherents must kill to attain its success is in essence just another in a long line of fanaticisms.

If we believe that love, compassion, and peace are the keys to a better world, we are obliged to live by those beliefs even when we are tempted to commit the same crimes that the adherents of uglier ideologies have always committed. Unless we can win on the strength of our logic, our evidence, and our demonstrated good will, we will lose regardless of whatever other means we employ, especially if those means include homicide.