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FROM THE DAGGER TO THE BOMB: KARL HEINZEN AND THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL TERROR

Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon^a

^a Department of History, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA

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FROM THE DAGGER TO THE BOMB: KARL HEINZEN AND THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL TERROR

Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon

Department of History, Duke University,
Durham, North Carolina, USA

Historians and political scientists have been quick to draw a continuum between the tyrannicide theories of years gone by and the modern terrorism of today. Yet the underlying motivations and intended results are very different in tyrannicide and terrorism. The question this raises is what changes occurred in the theory of political violence to make the transition between tyrannicide and terrorism possible? In this article, the author looks at the writings of a little-known nineteenth-century journalist, Karl Heinzen, to gain insight into the connection made in the mind of a terrorist between tyrannicide theory and terrorism.

When a civilian airliner smashes into the World Trade Center in New York City or a car bomb explodes in a popular tourist destination in Bali, society's first reaction is one of astonishment, of muted unbelief. When the shock subsides and the anger that follows it lessens, the questions begin to flow. How could this happen? Why us? Can such violence be prevented in the future? Such anguish is usually provided temporary relief by select governmental measures. Yet after the Patriot Act and various anti-terrorism bills have been passed, once the wars on terror have been perpetrated, a single question remains that is larger than any one act of violence or any one solution. How has humanity arrived at this point in history where, for the sake of political ambition, the killing of innocent human beings is deemed morally legitimate?

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Address correspondence to Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, 4113 Beechnut Lane, Durham, NC 27707 USA. E-mail: bjf6@duke.edu

Of course, killing for political ends is not a new phenomenon in human history. In his magisterial work *Political Murder*, Franklin Ford provides a veritable encyclopedia of the taking of life for ideology, from the regicides catalogued in the Biblical book of Judges, through the assassinations of the classical Greek and Roman eras, to the recent murders of the Kennedy brothers in the last century.¹ Likewise, Walter Laqueur argues in *A History of Terrorism* that violence 'has always been justified as a means of resisting despotism' and that the origins of such action 'are of course to be found in antiquity'.² As with Ford, Laqueur draws a continuum from the earliest notions of tyrannicide to the modern brutality of terrorism. In a newly published textbook to be used in university survey courses on terrorism, Gus Martin writes: 'Terrorism has been a dark feature of human behavior since the dawn of recorded history. Great leaders have been assassinated, groups and individuals have committed acts of incredible violence, and entire cities and nations have been put to the sword—all in the name of defending a greater good. Terrorism, however defined, has always challenged the stability of societies and the peace of mind of everyday people'.³ In the historical section of his work, Martin traces terrorism from Biblical society, through the Roman, ancient, and medieval Middle East, and into the French Revolution as a seemingly continuous strand of related violence.

However, this continuum between tyrannicide theory and terrorism is perhaps a little simplistic. In *Assassination & Terrorism*, David C. Rapoport argues that although there is a close relationship between the assassin and the terrorist, there are still 'profound differences' separating the two. He writes: 'In his mind the assassin destroys men who are corrupting a system while the terrorist destroys the system which has *already* corrupted everyone it touches. The vastness of this difference and the variety of ensuing consequences simply cannot be overestimated.... Assassination is an incident, a passing deed, an event; terrorism is a process, a way of life, a dedication'.⁴ For Rapoport, although the means employed in assassination and terrorism may be similar, the motivations underlying such acts and the intended ends are poles apart.

Indeed, it is a huge step to take to go from the killing of a single, condemned figure (an unjust king) to the placing of a bomb in a trash can with no regard for the innocent lives that the blast will take. The question the historian must seek to answer is not whether there has always been political violence, for the reply to that would be a resounding 'yes.' Rather, as Rapoport suggests, the historian must attempt to discover how humanity has moved from tyrannicide to terrorism, from the dagger to the bomb.⁵ Part of the answer to that

question lies in the writings of a little-known journalist, Karl Heinzen, who immigrated to the United States from Germany following the 1848 European revolutions. This article will explore the thought-processes of Heinzen, tracing the logic he uses to move from tyrannicide to terrorism in his theories of violence.

Karl Heinzen has been largely ignored in academic studies of terrorism. Historian Martin Miller is one of the few scholars to note Heinzen's importance, claiming that a 'quantum leap into the modern age of terrorist theory' was made by Heinzen.⁶ Likewise, Walter Laqueur claims that Heinzen was 'the first to provide a full-fledged doctrine of modern terrorism'.⁷ However, neither Miller nor Laqueur draw a connection between Heinzen and later terrorist theorists, Laqueur even noting that Heinzen only seems important 'in retrospect'.⁸ Even so, in his *Terrorism Reader*, Laqueur reprints an essay written by Heinzen titled *Murder*, or *Der Mord*, which was first published in the radical German newspaper *Die Evolution* in the spring of 1849. *Der Mord* was written in the aftermath of the 1848 European revolutions, in which Heinzen had participated. Upon immigrating to the United States the following year, Heinzen published a new edition of *Murder*, which he titled *Murder and Liberty (Mord und Freiheit)*. In contrast to the original essay, this much-expanded version draws explicitly on earlier notions of political violence detailed by the tyrannicide theorists, and provides a stepping-stone between traditional theories of tyrannicide and the theories of modern terrorism. Surprisingly though, this later document, despite being far more comprehensive and thorough than the original *Murder*, has not been reprinted in recent times. Before looking at Heinzen's writings though, it is important to ask who Karl Heinzen was?

Walter Laqueur says only that he was a 'radical democrat' who, following the publication of *Murder*, 'did not blow up half a continent but migrated to the United States and became an editor of various short-lived German-language newspapers, first in Louisville, Kentucky, and eventually in Boston'.⁹ Martin Miller explains that Heinzen was influenced by Karl Marx, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Arnold Ruge (all of whom he met), but found them 'insufficiently radical'. Instead, Heinzen advocated a "'temporary republican dictatorship" to destroy the forces of reaction in Europe'.¹⁰ Other than the brief comments by Laqueur and Miller, there have been only two English-language biographies written about Heinzen. The first, *Karl Heinzen: Reformer, Poet and Literary Critic*, by Paul Otto Schinnerer, was published in the German-American journal *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter* in 1915. This work deals little with Heinzen's political thought, choosing instead to focus on his literary pursuits,

the author wishing to show that the ‘final achievement [of German unification] is due not only to Bismarck, the statesman, but in a very large measure the campaign for unification, for liberty and freedom, [was] inaugurated by German patriots, thinkers, and poets, after the national disaster of the battle of Jena in 1806’.¹¹ In the collection of Heinzen’s publications listed as an appendix to this work, *Der Mord* is not included.¹² According to Schinnerer, Heinzen was primarily a poet, not a terrorism theorist. Indeed, he makes no mention whatsoever of Heinzen’s writings on violence.

The second work on Heinzen’s life, Carl Wittke’s *Against the Current: The Life of Karl Heinzen*, does discuss *Der Mord* (although it makes no mention of *Mord und Freiheit*). However, the biographer unfortunately falls into the trap of hero-worship, idealizing Heinzen for his ‘crusading spirit’, and downplaying the violence inherent in his words.¹³ Wittke provides a fairly accurate three-page summary of the writing contained within *Der Mord*, yet provides no analysis of any possible future influence it may have had on other terrorist theorists. He is content merely to comment that Heinzen ‘saw the problem in simple terms—kings and princes were the greatest obstacles to progress, so have them removed by the quickest and most practical methods’.¹⁴ In the end, the reader is left with an impression of Heinzen that is far from violent or terrorist. Wittke’s main belief, which is repeated again and again throughout his work, is that Heinzen’s only goal (an honorable and worthwhile one at that) was the creation of a ‘republic which would be conceived in liberty, and responsible always to the popular will, and whose aim would be world peace, freedom under law, and respect for the rights of all men’.¹⁵

Perhaps a more accurate view of Heinzen can be found in the writings of Frederick Engels in an essay he wrote in 1847, just two years before the publication of *Der Mord*. In a biting criticism, Engels sums up Heinzen in this way:

Herr Heinzen is a former liberal, lower-ranking civil servant who in 1844 was still enthusiastic about legitimate progress and the wretched German Constitution, and who at best confessed in a confidential whisper that a republic might be desirable and possible, of course in the far distant future. Herr Heinzen was wrong however about the possibility of legal resistance in Prussia. The bad book he wrote on bureaucracy (even Jacob Venedey wrote a far better book about Prussia years ago) compelled him to flee the country. Now the truth dawned on him. He declared legal resistance to be impossible, became a revolutionary and naturally a republican as well. In Switzerland he made

the acquaintance of that *savant serieux* Ruge, who taught him the little philosophy he has, consisting of a confused hotch-potch of Feuerbachian atheism and humanism, reminiscences of Hegel and rhetorical phrases from Stirner. Thus equipped, Herr Heinzen considered himself mature and inaugurated his revolutionary propaganda, leaning on Ruge to the right and Freiligrath to the left.¹⁶

Engels continues in his criticism of Heinzen, scorning him for declaring Kings and Princes to be the chief causes of human suffering, an opinion which Engels believes to be not only 'ridiculous but exceedingly damaging'.¹⁷ He writes, 'Herr Heinzen calls for an immediate insurrection. He has leaflets printed to this effect and attempts to distribute them in Germany. We would ask whether blindly lashing out with such senseless propaganda is not injurious in the highest degree to the interests of German democracy. . . . We would ask whether Herr Heinzen has ever done anything else in his leaflets except exhort and sermonize. We would ask whether it is not positively ridiculous to trumpet calls for revolution out into the world in this way, without sense or understanding, without knowledge or consideration of circumstances'.¹⁸ Engels spurns Heinzen for only offering mindless, 'bloodthirsty', rhetoric, with no thought to the possible consequences of the actions he is advocating. Whether this is a fair criticism or not is difficult to assess, but one thing becomes clear from Engels' writing: by 1847, Heinzen was an advocate of violent radicalism, not the peaceful poet or caring humanitarian that Schinnerer and Wittke describe him to be.

In *Der Mord*, Heinzen argues that, 'murder is the principle agent of historical progress'.¹⁹ He claims that no matter what name is given to it, 'any voluntary killing of another human being is a crime against humanity, that no one under any pretext whatsoever has the right to destroy another's life and that anyone who does kill another or has him killed is quite simply a murderer'.²⁰ However, because the state had introduced murder as a political practice, revolutionaries also (regrettably, he claims) had to turn to murder. 'If to kill is always a crime, then it is forbidden equally to all; if it is not a crime, then it is permitted equally to all. . . . We take as our fundamental principle, taught us by our enemies, that murder, both of individuals and masses, is still a necessity, an unavoidable instrument in the achievement of historical ends'.²¹ He ends his piece with the chilling statement:

The revolutionaries must try to bring about a situation where the barbarians are afraid for their lives every hour of the day and night. They must think that every drink of water, every mouthful of food, every

bed, every bush, every paving stone, every path and footpath, every hole in the wall, every slate, every bundle of straw, every pipe bowl, every stick, every pin may be a killer. For them, as for us, may fear be the herald and murder the executor. Murder is their motto, so let murder be their answer, murder is their need, so let murder be their payment, murder is their argument, so let murder be their refutation.²²

In his second pamphlet, *Murder and Liberty*, Heinzen begins with a reassertion of the main thesis of *Murder*, that any form of killing, whether in war, by the state, or by an individual, is murder. Any such 'destruction of the life of another' is always 'unjust and barbarous'. As such, humanity must condemn all murders, for humanity 'refers all hostile conflicts among men to the tribunal of reason, and not to that of force; she is, therefore, only consistent if she designates every voluntary annihilation of the life of another human being with the condemnatory term murder. Her only endeavor can be to abolish murder'. In this first page of his essay, Heinzen seems to be advocating complete pacifism, based on humanitarian principles of reason over violence. However, his logic takes a frightening turn: 'Yet, as long as murder offers the only means for the attainment of this object, Humanity is also compelled to draw the sword and to become the murderess of murderers'.²³ If the state can use murder, so can the people.

Heinzen's underlying logic for murder has remained remarkably consistent in terrorist theory. Perhaps best captured in Albert Camus' play *The Just Assassins*, terrorists have, with few exceptions, claimed to be killing for the sake of life. In Camus' play, based on a true story, Camus carries a conversation between Ivan Kaliayev and Dora Dulebov, two members of the Russian terrorist group the Social Revolutionaries, who are planning an assassination attempt on the Grand Duke. Kaliayev states: 'I'm ready to give my life up for it [the Revolution]. I, too, can be cunning, silent, resourceful, when it's called for. Only, I'm still convinced that life is a glorious thing, I'm in love with beauty, happiness. That's why I hate despotism. The trouble is to make them understand this.' Dora says, perhaps confused by Kaliayev's revolutionary rhetoric, 'Only—what we're going to give isn't life, but death.' Kaliayev corrects her: 'But that's not the same thing. When we kill, we're killing so as to build up a world in which there will be no more killing. We consent to being criminals so that at last the innocent, and only they, will inherit the earth.'²⁴

Of course, there is much in Camus' play that is in direct contradiction to Heinzen's philosophy of violence. Kaliayev and Dora wrestle

with the question of morality, of the rights and wrongs of killing innocents. Heinzen does not. Likewise, other terrorist theorists such as Peter Kropotkin and Nikolai Morozov have agonized over the correct use of physical violence. In his essay 'The Terrorist Struggle', Morozov advocates the use of individual terrorist assassinations over mass revolutionary movements because only in this way could the terrorist punish 'only those who are really responsible for the evil deed. Because of this the terroristic revolution is the only just form of revolution'.²⁵ Sergei Nechaev, in contrast, shares no such concern for innocents in his advocating of terrorism. For him, the revolution provides the sole basis of morality and 'everything is moral which assists the triumph of revolution. Immoral and criminal is everything which stands in its way'. He even goes as far as to write, "He is not a revolutionary if he feels pity for anything in this world. If he is able to, he must face the annihilation of a situation, of a relationship, or of any person who is a part of this world—everything and everyone must be equally odious to him".²⁶ There is a great spectrum of 'terrorist ethics', and certainly Heinzen is closer on this scale to Nechaev than Kropotkin.²⁷ Yet all terrorists, regardless of their position on the killing of innocents, have agreed that some killing—killing for the revolution—is justified.

Working from this assumption that some murders are life-giving, some not, Heinzen seeks to define several categories of murder (a task he did not attempt in *Murder*). The first type he lists is 'murder of destruction', which proceeds from the 'mere passion of annihilation'. This includes such events as 'the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans [when] a million Jews were murdered' and when the 'Spaniards and others slaughtered millions of men in America without necessity and without any rational object'. His second category is the murder of 'pitched battles', such as the battle of Cannae where sixty thousand Romans were killed. He writes, 'Only by millions can the corpses be summed up, with which the great men of history from Alexander down to Napoleon manured their laurel fields. Napoleon alone dispatched several million men to the Kingdom of Death in order to be ruler of the survivors, and this mastery earned for him the title of *The Great*'. Heinzen's third and final type is the 'murder of stupidity', or, 'the murder which men have committed on entire nations for the sake of their human and superhuman idols'. He explains, 'In the name of Christianity more human beings have been dispatched to the "world beyond" than are left of the faithful Christians in this world, so that Christ indeed showed a wonderful foresight, when he said, "my kingdom is not of this world"; he might have said, "my kingdom is the cemetery"'.²⁸

Following these categories of murder, Heinzen claims, through simplistic mathematics, that for the four thousand years of human history, there have been 2,000,000,000 murders.²⁹ He argues that if the number of these committed by princes, aristocrats, and priests is removed, 'this number is reduced to an insignificant series of individual murders'. In contrast, however, 'the contingent of murder which has been furnished by the opponents of princes, aristocrats, and priests, by the champions of justice and truth, is quite insignificant. The revolution has committed at most one single murder to 50,000 murders of the reaction'.³⁰ This, for Heinzen, is where the revolutionaries of 1848 went wrong, who in his opinion had cowardly surrendered when faced with military force.³¹ It is at this stage in his essay that he turns to tyrannicide theory.

Heinzen argues that no number of deaths suffered by tyrants can make up for their wrong doings. 'What signify the daggers of Harmodius and Brutus, or the arrow of Tell, or the attempt of Alibaud in comparison with the numberless murders by which the tyrants put their opponents out of the way in all conceivable murders? . . . Caesar, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Galba, Otho, Vitellius were murdered. From Commodus to Constantine the Great, 27 out of 36 emperors were murdered. Of all these assassinations of tyrants, only the smallest share is to be attributed to friends of freedom or revolutionists; but suppose they were all committed by them—are they worth mentioning, in comparison, with the mass-destruction of human life that proceeded from these tyrants?'³² The death of a tyrant is always justified, and any revolutionary who fails to assist in such killing is failing in his duty.

Yet Heinzen's theory of tyrannicide is not limited merely to the killing of the tyrant, as was traditionally the case in tyrannicide theory.³³ He condemns the revolutionaries of 1848 for acting with 'ill-conceived humanity' when they failed to secure 'the complete annihilation of their enemies'. Heinzen does not simply want an unjust king to be killed and replaced. He wishes to see an entire system, and with it all those human beings who represent or are involved in that system, completely wiped out. 'A revolutionist in whose power it lay to annihilate all the representatives of the system of violence and murder which rules the world and lays it waste, would deserve a thousand-fold traitor's death, if he hesitated but a moment'.³⁴ He continues, writing, 'Fellow-partisans of liberty, of justice, of truth, of humanity! Let our study be murder, murder in every form. In this word there lies more humanity than in all our theories; and if sentimental psychologists would bewilder you by charging you with heartlessness, remember that the most benevolent statesman, the most

humane character, the most warm-hearted of the men of the French Revolution was—Robespierre'.³⁵ For Heinzen, the killing of a king is not enough. All those that represent 'the system of violence and murder' must be cleansed from the face of the earth.

Despite this extremism, Heinzen continually refers back to more traditional notions of tyrannicide. He condemns the German people for praising in their gymnasia (schools) the tyrannicides Tell and Brutus, Harmodius and Aristogitan, while spurning the present revolutionaries. 'Why are these assassins moral and great men even in the eyes of your own tyrants and their legal and loyal schoolmasters? Because they belong to the past and not the present, to history and not to life? Translate them from Latin and Greek into Russian and French, and they will be described as "monsters of immorality", although a Harmodius would be more appropriate in St. Petersburg and a Brutus in Paris, than in ancient Athens and Rome'.³⁶ Nevertheless, having argued for the moral justification of contemporary tyrannicide using past examples, Heinzen again takes a further step away from traditional notions of tyrannicide by claiming that only the ends, not the means, matter. 'Whether we gain the victory by powder or by poison, by the sword or the dagger, by fulminating silver or by cannon—the difference is not worth a hair. Only conquer, only annihilate the enemy—that is the only point of view. History will judge us in accordance with this, and our fate will only be determined by the *use we make of our victory*, not the manner of gaining it over enemies who have banished every humane consideration from the world'.³⁷ All restraint on violence has been removed from Heinzen's tyrannicide theory. So long as the king and his followers die, any atrocity or method of killing can be used.

Following this development, Heinzen again turns to traditional notions of the tyrant, or despot. He argues that the 'greatest of all follies of the world is the belief that *it is possible to commit a crime against despots and their accomplices*. This very belief, indeed, is a crime'.³⁸ Drawing on the classical notion of the tyrant as an uncontrollable animal, he writes, 'It were a crime to spare a tiger that rages among a society of defenceless persons, if any one could shoot him down. The despots are out-lawed like tigers. The despots belong to the animal kingdom'.³⁹ Heinzen uses the animal nature of the tyrants, and their past crimes against humanity, to justify atrocities against them, arguing that, 'it is permissible to do everything against the despots and their helpers, be it treachery, poison, assassination or what not. Indeed, a "crime" directed against them is not only a right, but a duty of every one who has an opportunity to commit it; and it will be accounted his glory, if he is successful'.⁴⁰ It is important to note here that not only does Heinzen view any method as justifiable in the slaying

of a tyrant, but he also expands who is to be considered a legitimate target of assassination. It is not only the tyrant who is to be killed, as would be the case in traditional tyrannicide theory, but also the tyrant's 'helpers'.

Heinzen continues his discussion of how to treat the 'enemy', claiming that the fault of the revolutions of 1848 'lies in the fact that it [the revolution] is satisfied with the immediate results without using its victory to secure guarantees for the future'.⁴¹ The immediate overthrow of a tyrant is not enough for Heinzen. He explains: 'A bandit attacks a traveler and is disarmed by him, but allowed to live; this gives the bandit opportunity to make surer work of the traveler the next time, and jeopardizes also the lives of his friends. Just so with the revolution'.⁴² If the revolutionaries only remove the tyrant from power, the tyrant is free to regain power and oppress them in the future. To prevent this, the revolutionaries must kill the tyrant. Furthermore, the revolutionaries must not only destroy and remove the tyrant as an act of self-defense, but must also kill all those who are in any way associated with the tyrant and could act in a destructive manner in the future. It is here that Heinzen makes the shift from tyrannicide theory to modern terrorism. It is now the revolutionaries' job to 'root out the reaction in its carriers, its representatives; for its enemies are *incurable*, like the merely disarmed bandit, like the spared tiger. We *know* our enemies, we know them all and in every place personally. There will be no more excuse, if they are again spared. Whoever stands beyond the line that separates the ruling powers from the people, is doomed'.⁴³

Declaring that the 'road to humanity leads over the summit of cruelty',⁴⁴ Heinzen states his aim in writing the essay is to 'make the murder of despots a cause of the people, so that the people may without considering the genteel great men *murder democratically* on every *occasion*, if they would live democratically after the revolution'.⁴⁵ In a final separation from traditional tyrannicide theory, the people were no longer to leave the punishment of tyrants to the community, but were to take murder into their own hands, each man and woman determining for him or herself who was aiding the tyrant and therefore deserving of death. In his essay, Heinzen removed any checks on the scale of murder that had been contained within traditional tyrannicide theories. He presents a vision of mass terrorism.

In writing his essay though, Heinzen was not content to give a mere philosophical defense of tyrannicide. Instead, he provides hints on how this new form of tyrannicide might take place, writing these suggestions as fictional newspaper reports of anticipated future

terrorist killings. The first article details what Heinzen projects would be 'the most terrible, most lamentable event of modern history'. His fictional journalist writes, 'When the illustrious crowned heads of Germany, who had assembled at the congress of monarchs at Vienna, made an excursion by railroad, a fearful explosion was heard at a place where the road passes a precipice a hundred feet high. At the same time, the locomotive and the entire train darted over the precipice. All the monarchs broke their necks, and only two mistresses escaped with their lives, so that, at present, Germany is without monarchs'. The article reports that the explosion had been created by a revolutionary who had 'laid upon the rails a small case of the size of a thimble filled with fulminating silver, which exploded on the first contact with the wheel of the locomotive, and hurled the whole train from the track'. The fictional journalist notes that, 'A similar accident is said to have overtaken the czar of Russia in the vicinity of Warsaw'.⁴⁶

Heinzen's second article reports that revolutionary guerrillas of the Baconyan Forest had obtained guns of double the ordinary thickness. These weapons 'are first charged with a strong charge of powder, and on top of this with an iron capsule fitting the barrel exactly, about four inches long, and conical at the upper end. Inside of this capsule there is another smaller one filled with powder which is closed at the upper point with an easily explosive percussion-cap, and the space between the inner and outer capsule is filled with poison iron shot. Whenever this charge is shot against some object, the capsule explodes and scatters a shower of poisoned shot, each grain of which may destroy a human life'.⁴⁷

The third atrocity imagined by Heinzen is the use of 'iron tubes filled with melted lead, which scattered a deadly shower on the advancing [Prussian] battalions'. According to his fictional piece, as the troops were fired on by this melted lead and began to retreat, 'they were cut down in companies by explosive bombs which suddenly burst forth from the pavement of the street, and which did such terrible execution, that even the most gallant soldiers could not be induced to proceed further, since at every step they had to fear a fresh explosion'. The article explains that, 'these explosive bombs consist of shells filled with powder and furnished with a percussion hammer, which are buried beneath the pavement in places which the enemy cannot discover, in such a way that the hammer acts as soon as a foot steps on the stone placed over it'. Heinzen's journalist comments that, 'It seems that the men of the revolution no longer deem it necessary to imperil their lives in a useless martyrdom, as mere machines can assure their success'.⁴⁸

Heinzen's fourth suggestion calls for the extensive use of poison. The fictional article notes, 'Every one who is of any value for the order and morality of society must tremble day and night for his life. *Poison* is the universal watchword of the revolutionists, since they are deprived of all other weapons'. The newspaper continues, stating, 'Cases of poisoning the victuals, the water, the tobacco, etc. for the soldiers, we have previously reported. But their hellish invention has gone farther. Every knife, every dagger, every pin that is drawn against the men of order, is now poisoned'. The article claims that the revolutionaries used 'glass bullets filled with quicksilver and even with Prussic acid, which, of course, kill without fail, if their contents come in contact with the blood. In filling hollow metal balls with less refractory poison, they mix these first with wax or tallow, in order to avoid their volatilization as much as possible'.

A fifth article discusses the structure of these future revolutionary groups. It states, 'At the head of their assassins, whom they call liberators, is a single person, whose name has not been mentioned yet in the revolutionary world but who, on account of his reliability and astuteness, enjoys the full confidence of the principle leaders. This person continually receives considerable sums of money, without his knowing whence they come. It is his principle task to have new means of destruction invented and manufactured, and to engage reliable agents that use them. These assistants, fanatical men of extreme determination and reliability, exist under all possible characters, do not know each other, and converse singly with their chief who visits them in their residences, and whose domicile they do not know. It is said that in France and Italy alone there are several hundred of these agents'. The article explains that it is much more difficult to escape these agents than a single assassin, 'since, if an especially important person is the victim, they are all directed at the same time against him. If one of these should be discovered and arrested, he could not betray the others, even if he should wish to do so, and these others are at once busy to take his place and to avenge him'.⁴⁹ The assassins, unknown to each other, will continue in their attempts to kill until their victim is slain.

Heinzen's sixth and final fictional article details how, 'The palace was last night suddenly blown up by a terrible explosion, and buried under its ruins the emperor and the entire court, that was just assembled around him'. It explains that, 'The explosion was brought about by a few copper balls about the size of a man's head. These balls had been made by some revolutionist and placed in a lower story by a soldier. The greater part of each ball was filled with nitro-glycerine or, as some maintain, with carbonic acid which, as

is well known, has by far more explosive power than powder, and which explodes by a simple elevation of temperature'.⁵⁰ Not only is the emperor killed in this assassination, but also all those that reside or work in the palace, from the tyrant's advisors to his cook to the gardener. The copper explosive ball, unlike the dagger, is indiscriminating in its victims. Heinzen's tyrannicide theory, while showing direct relation to traditional notions, moved in a direction that today would be clearly understood as terrorism.

When Heinzen was writing, in the early 1850s, none of the atrocities he envisioned had ever even been attempted, let alone successfully carried out. Each and every one of these fictional articles was a complete product of his imagination, an alarming vision of a terrorism that had not yet descended on the earth. In moving the object of tyrannicide from the removal of a single unjust leader to the destruction of an entire system, by expanding the legitimate means of violence from a one-on-one stabbing to indiscriminate explosions, Heinzen widened the boundaries of what means could be considered just to achieve a sought after end. In his doctrine of tyrannicide, there is no restraint given on the amount of violence to be used by the assassin. There are no humanitarian principles allowed towards the enemy. In Heinzen's philosophy, the sought-after ends justify any means.

What influence did Heinzen's writing carry? When he wrote *Murder and Liberty*, he was an exile from Germany, a small-time journalist writing for the radical German-speaking newspapers in the United States. Certainly Marx and Engels paid no credence to his thought, and the Communist movement as a whole spurned his ideas. John Lewis sees Heinzen's writing as mere 'expressions of revolt...cast in rather symbolic terms'.⁵¹ The Russian terrorists had no knowledge of Heinzen, and, indeed, those in the Russian terrorist group People's Will struggled far more with the morality of terrorism than did Heinzen. For them, self-sacrifice was intimately tied with the terrorist act itself, a distinction Heinzen never expressed.⁵² For many terrorist theorists, the moral meaning of terrorism was as important as the committed atrocity, yet for Heinzen, it is only the ends that count.⁵³

Under similar circumstances, with a different twist of fate, Heinzen's violent urges might have been forgotten, his essays turned into ash in the cold winters of New York and Boston. Yet this was not the case, for a far more prominent thinker than Heinzen, the editor of a powerful and well-known radical newspaper who gained notoriety just as the memory of Heinzen was passing away, rediscovered the German radical's pamphlets and began to reprint them. Heinzen's words found a new mouthpiece through the man whom

historian Frederic Trautmann has called the 'voice of terror'.⁵⁴ Heinzen had been discovered by Johann Most.

Max Nomad has characterized Most as a 'preacher,' a 'terrorist of the word'.⁵⁵ Robert Hunter wrote that, 'The history of terrorist tactics in America largely centers about the career of Johann Most'.⁵⁶ Although he did not personally explode any bombs or set any charges, Most inspired and taught others how to use such tactics, drawing much of his inspiration for these violent methods from Heinzen. Most was a single-minded man, bordering on the despotic, repeating that disturbing phrase so often used by tyrants and villains in asserting their autocracy, 'If you're not for It [in this case, the Revolutionary Cause], you're against me'.⁵⁷ There was no room for dissent of democratic difference in Most's terrorist philosophy. All who were not with him were with his enemies.

In his newspaper *Freiheit*, Most catalogued actual terrorist atrocities in the way Heinzen had suggested might be done but had only ever dreamed of. For example, in 1881, while living in London, Most was arrested for glorifying in *Freiheit* the assassination of Tsar Alexander II by Russian terrorists.⁵⁸ A year later, still in captivity but with only six more months to serve, Most was still publishing *Freiheit*, smuggling articles he had written out of prison. It was at this time, in May 1882, that the Irish terrorist group the 'Invincibles' assassinated the new Chief Secretary in Ireland, Lord Cavendish, along with his Under Secretary. *Freiheit* immediately expressed its support for this action, giving the sympathy of the German revolutionaries to the cause of the Irish rebels.⁵⁹ Most declared the murders to be a 'heroically bold act of popular justice'. He characterized Cavendish as 'only a poor simpleton', but believed this 'in no way diminishes the significance of the admirable deed'.⁶⁰

Most's most significant publication, which was originally printed as a series in *Freiheit* in 1884, was his *The Science of Revolutionary Warfare* (originally known as *Military Science for Revolutionaries*). In this work, Most provided his followers with minute details of how to carry out a terrorist act, explaining with words and diagrams 'how to brew disappearing ink; use codes; prepare gunpowder; spin guncotton; concoct, store, and administer poisons; handle guns, knives, detonating gas, dynamite, Greek fire, and Congreve rockets; and wrap and dispatch his [Most's] invention, the letter bomb'.⁶¹ Throughout, Most filled his piece with encouragement for future revolutionaries and terrorists. Following a detailed description of how to build a spherical bomb out of zinc, four inches in diameter, with half a pound of dynamite contained within in, Most gleefully wrote, 'Just imagine this bomb had been planted under the table at

a high society banquet, or had been thrown through a window onto their table—it would have achieved wonderful results!”⁶² He also cautioned his followers to be careful when constructing and experimenting with explosions: ‘Many simple-minded people talk glibly about revolutionaries not needing to do more than be courageous and risk their lives. This is utter nonsense: the real plan is for *others* to lose *their* lives’.⁶³ Towards the end of this work, Most summed up his argument succinctly: ‘In a nutshell, this adds up to the slogan: “Proletarians of the world, arm yourselves! Equip yourselves with weapons, by whatever means you can; the hour of battle is not far off”’.⁶⁴

Historians are agreed that Most’s influence on future terrorism in the United States is pronounced. Oscar Jaszi has stated that Most played ‘a conspicuous role in American anarchism’.⁶⁵ James H. Billington, calling Most the ‘leading violent anarchist in America’, has written that Most ‘helped the European revolutionary tradition find roots within the new industrial working class in America. Because he wrote and spoke powerfully in German as well as English, he reached the largest and best-established of all minority groups in urban America: the Germans’.⁶⁶ Yet few have drawn the connection between Heinzen and Most, Heinzen having been seen only as an aberration in the history of violent thought, not a catalyst in that history. However, Frederic Trautmann explains that Heinzen’s essay *Murder* was ‘a favorite of Most’s’, and was reprinted numerous times in *Freiheit*.⁶⁷ Furthermore, on the day that American President McKinley was murdered by an anarchist, *Freiheit* carried in place of the usual editorial by Most a reprint of Heinzen’s *Murder*.⁶⁸ Much of Most’s theory of violence came from Heinzen’s essay, and the later theorist took his style from those earlier fictional reports of terrorist atrocities catalogued by Heinzen.

Although definitions of what constitutes modern terrorism have great variation, and, indeed, varying terrorist organizations have used different methods and been inspired by contrasting value systems throughout history, certain common themes are found in the ideologies of modern terrorist groups. The most prominent of these is a lack of restraint regarding the means used to reach any given end. Indiscriminate tactics are considered perfectly legitimate if a sought-after goal is achieved. While it is true that individual terrorist views towards violence have fallen across the ethical spectrum, as illustrated by the difference inherent between Morozov and Nechaev, most terrorists have held that some civilian casualties or deaths are an unavoidable, and acceptable, price to pay for the Cause. Furthermore, the violence in modern terrorism is usually not directed against a single individual, or even a select group. Rather the intended target

is a large segment of the population, or sometimes an entire system, the aim being to create as much damage and instill as much fear as possible. Such characteristics are far more compatible with Heinzen's 'the road to humanity leads over the summit of cruelty' than with earlier notions of tyrannicide. Yet in Heinzen's essay, the transition from traditional notions of tyrannicide to the larger violence of modern terrorism is one that is easily made. The gap between the dagger and the bomb is not as large as had at first appeared.

By looking at Karl Heinzen's extreme theory of violence, it is possible to see part of the progression that was made when moving from tyrannicide to terrorism. By subscribing to the myth of redemptive violence (as so many others have done, both before and after him), Heinzen justified the killing of innocents for the attainment of a larger goal. To use modern parlance, he blended notions of 'collateral damage' with older theories of tyrannicide. By dehumanizing the enemy and those surrounding him, Heinzen was able to suggest extreme methods of violence which, sadly, have become all too common today. There is a lesson to be learned in Heinzen's logic of violence that all levels of society should take note of. Those not in favor of his cause were the enemy who deserved death. Those not completely with him were with the enemy, and they too were deserving of death. Any atrocity thus is justifiable and possible.

NOTES

1. Franklin L. Ford, *Political Murder: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).
2. Walter Laqueur, *A History of Terrorism* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1977), 21.
3. Gus Martin, *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives, and Issues* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 2.
4. David C. Rapoport, *Assassination & Terrorism* (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1971), 37–38.
5. Much has been written attempting to define terrorism and explicate how it differs from tyrannicide and other forms of violence. For more on this, see: Yonah Alexander and Dennis A. Plunchinsky, *European Terrorism: Today & Tomorrow* (Washington: Brassey's (US), Inc, 1992); Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Walter Reich, ed., *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1990); Peter Alan Sproat, 'Can the State Be Terrorist?' *Terrorism*, Volume 14, No. 1 (January–March 1991); and E.V. Walter, 'Violence and the Process of Terror', *American Sociological Review*, Volume 29, Issue 2 (April 1964).

6. Martin Miller, 'The Intellectual Origins of Modern Terrorism', in Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism in Context* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995). 36.
7. Laqueur, *A History of Terrorism*, 26.
8. *A History of Terrorism*, 26.
9. *A History of Terrorism*, 27.
10. Miller, 'The Intellectual Origins of Modern Terrorism', 34–35.
11. Paul Otto Schinnerer, *Karl Heinzen: Reformer, Poet and Literary Critic*, in *Deutsch–Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter* (Volume 15, 1915), 84.
12. *Karl Heinzen*, 143.
13. Carl Wittke, *Against the Current: The Life of Karl Heinzen (1809–80)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), v.
14. *Against the Current*, 75.
15. *Against the Current*, vi.
16. Frederick Engels, 'The Communists and Karl Heinzen', *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung*, No. 79. October 3, 1847, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 6: Marx and Engels 1845–1848* (New York: International Publishers, 1976), 292.
17. 'The Communists and Karl Heinzen', 293. It must be remembered that Engels believed that class, not individuals made history.
18. 'The Communists and Karl Heinzen', 294.
19. Karl Heinzen, *Murder*, in Walter Laqueur and Yonah Alexander, eds., *The Terrorism Reader* (New York: A Meridian Book, 1987), 53.
20. *Murder*, 54.
21. *Murder*, 54–55.
22. *Murder*, 64.
23. Karl Heinzen, *Murder and Liberty, printed for the first time in 1853, as a contribution to the 'Peace League' of Geneva* (Indianapolis: H. Lieber, 1881), 1–2. It is not clear here what 'Peace League' the publisher is referring to. The League of Peace and Freedom in Geneva, a pacifist institution, was only founded on September 5, 1867, fifteen years after *Murder and Liberty* was first published.
24. Albert Camus, *Caligula & Three Other Plays* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 245.
25. Nikolai Morozov, 'The Terrorist Struggle', in Walter Laqueur and Yonah Alexander, eds., *The Terrorism Reader*, 74.
26. Sergei Nechaev, 'Catechism of the Revolutinist', in *The Terrorism Reader*, 69–70.
27. I am indebted to Professor Martin Miller for this concept of 'terrorist ethics'.
28. Karl Heinzen, *Murder and Liberty*, 6–8.
29. *Murder and Liberty*, 8. 'Of the whole number of human beings, estimated at one thousand millions, every second one dies; and it is fair to assume that in the five principle divisions, at least one is murdered every minute, which would make for every day 1440 or in round numbers 1500, and for every year 547,500 or in round numbers 550,000 murders. Now even if in counting back into the past we assume the number of human beings as steadily diminishing, we find on the other hand at the same time, the cruelty steadily increasing, so that we are justified in assuming for the era of history 500,000 murder each year. This makes for nearly

four thousand years the respectable sum of 2,000,000,000 murders by which the “images of God” have put each other out of the world’. A modern scholar, Rudolph Rummel, has provided a similar estimate using more credible and complex methods than Heinzen. Rummel found that pre-20th Century, between 89,158,000 and 260,424,000 people had been killed by governments. Rudolph J. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (Munster: Lit Verlag, 1998), 12. See also his *Death by Government* (Munster: Lit Verlag, 1994).

30. Karl Heinzen, *Murder and Liberty*, 9.
31. For background information on the 1848 Revolutions, see Chapter 6, “German Nationalism and the Revolutions of 1848,” in David MacKenzie, *Violent Solutions: Revolutions, Nationalisms, and Secret Societies in Europe to 1918* (Lanhan: University Press of America, 1996).
32. Karl Heinzen, *Murder and Liberty*, 9–10.
33. For a discussion of traditional tyrannicide theory, see Oscar Jaszi and John D. Lewis, *Against the Tyrant: The Tradition and Theory of Tyrannicide* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957).
34. Karl Heinzen, *Murder and Liberty*, 10–11.
35. *Murder and Liberty*, 16–17.
36. *Murder and Liberty*, 17.
37. *Murder and Liberty*, 19.
38. *Murder and Liberty*, 19.
39. *Murder and Liberty*, 19.
40. *Murder and Liberty*, 19.
41. *Murder and Liberty*, 20.
42. *Murder and Liberty*, 20.
43. *Murder and Liberty*, 20.
44. *Murder and Liberty*, 20.
45. *Murder and Liberty*, 24.
46. *Murder and Liberty*, 25.
47. *Murder and Liberty*, 26.
48. *Murder and Liberty*, 26–27.
49. *Murder and Liberty*, 29.
50. *Murder and Liberty*, 30.
51. Jaszi and Lewis, *Against the Tyrant*, 123.
52. For more on this, see Zeev Ivianski, ‘The Moral Issue: Some Aspects of Individual Terror’, in David C. Rapoport and Yonah Alexander, eds., *The Morality of Terrorism: Religious and Secular Justifications, second edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).
53. See David C. Rapoport, ‘The Politics of Atrocity’, in Yonah Alexander and Seymour Maxwell Finger, eds., *Terrorism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (New York: The John Jay Press, 1977).
54. Frederic Trautmann, *The Voice of Terror: A Biography of Johann Most* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980).
55. Max Nomad, ‘The Preacher: Johann Most, Terrorist of the Word’, in Max Nomad, *Apostles of Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939), 257.

56. Robert Hunter, *Violence and the Labour Movement*, quoted in Trautmann, *The Voice of Terror*, viii.
57. Johann Most, *Freiheit*, 20 August 1896, quoted in Trautmann, *The Voice of Terror*, 10.
58. Nomad, 'The Preacher', 272.
59. 'The Preacher', 276.
60. Johann Most, *Freiheit*, 13 May 1882, quoted in Trautmann, *The Voice of Terror*, 70.
61. Trautmann, *The Voice of Terror*, 100.
62. Johann Most, *The Science of Revolutionary Warfare* (El Dorado, AR: Desert Publications, 1978), 14.
63. *The Science of Revolutionary Warfare*, 47.
64. *The Science of Revolutionary Warfare*, 58.
65. Jaszi and Lewis, *Against the Tyrant*, 139.
66. James H. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1980), 437.
67. Trautmann, *The Voice of Terror*, 225.
68. *Freiheit*, September 7, 1901.