Research Package #3
(Junior and Senior High)

"**Junior High** BIRT we should ban extremist Political Parties in Canada

Senior High THBT we should ban extremist Political Parties"

(Policy DEBATE for Junior High)

(For Senior High, the notion of policy and value don't exist anymore. It is just debate, with a model if the resolution lends itself to it – this one will!)

Regional / Provincial Topic (Feb. / Mar.) 2008-2009

Defining Extremism

Extremism is a complex phenomenon, although its complexity is often hard to see. Most simply, it can be defined as activities (beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions, strategies) of a person or group far removed from the ordinary. In conflict settings it manifests as a severe form of conflict engagement. However, the labeling of activities, people, and groups as "extremist," and the defining of what is "ordinary" in any setting is always a subjective and political matter. Thus, we suggest that any discussion of extremism be mindful of the following:

> Typically, the same extremist act will be *viewed* by some as just and moral (such as pro-social "freedom fighting"), and by others as unjust and immoral (antisocial "terrorism") depending on the observer's values, politics, moral scope, and the nature of their relationship with the actor.
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> In addition, one's sense of the moral or immoral nature of a given act of extremism (such as Nelson Mandela's use of guerilla war tactics against the South African Government) may change as conditions (leadership, world opinion, crises, historical accounts, etc.) change. Thus, the *current and historical context* of extremist acts shapes our view of them.
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> *Power* differences also matter when defining extremism. When in conflict, the activities of members of low power groups tend to be viewed as more extreme than similar activities committed by members of groups advocating the status quo. In addition, extreme acts are more likely to be employed by marginalized people and groups who view more acceptable forms of conflict engagement as blocked for them or biased. However, dominant groups also commonly employ extreme activities (such as governmental sanctioning of violent paramilitary groups or the attack in Waco, Texas, by the FBI in the U.S.).
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> Extremist acts often employ violent means, although extremist groups will differ in their preference for violent vs. non-violent tactics, in the level of violence they employ, and in the preferred targets of their violence (from infrastructure to military personnel to civilians to children). Again, low power groups are more likely to employ direct, episodic forms of violence (such as suicide bombings), whereas dominant groups tend to be associated with more structural or institutionalized forms (like the covert use of torture or the informal sanctioning of police brutality).
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> Although extremist individuals and groups (such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad) are often viewed as cohesive and consistently evil, it is important to recognize that they may be conflicted or ambivalent psychologically as individuals, and/or contain a great deal of difference and conflict within their groups. For instance, individual members of Hamas may differ considerably in their willingness to negotiate their differences with the Palestinian Authority and, ultimately, with certain factions in Israel.
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> Ultimately, the core problem that extremism presents in situations of protracted conflict is less the severity of the activities (although violence, trauma, and escalation are obvious concerns) but more so the *closed, fixed, and intolerant* nature of extremist attitudes, and their subsequent imperviousness to change.

The Consequences of Extremism

Depending on one's perspective, extremism can have both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, it can draw the attention of one's opponent, the general public, or the international community to one side's hidden concerns. It can also send a message of desperation or of a deep and abiding commitment to a cause. As such, it may motivate a more powerful foe to consider negotiating, or third parties to intervene. And as the prevalence of such activities increase in a given conflict, they may become normative or glorified within one's group, thereby attracting others to the cause.

The negative consequences of extremism are varied. Violent atrocities committed by extremists (such as civilian bombings, kidnappings, and the spread of bio-toxins) enrage, traumatize, and alienate their targets, their opponents, and many potential allies to their cause (such as moderates on the other side and other regional and international members who morally oppose such acts). Extreme acts, even if committed by a small minority within a group, are often attributed to the entire group, and elicit an escalated response from the other side. At times, such responses are desired, as in the case of "spoilers" whose aim it is to stop peace processes which they believe to be exclusive or a betrayal of their cause. Ultimately, extremist ideologies, actions, and hostile inter-group interactions lead to a hardening of oppositional identities and deep in-group commitments which contribute to the perpetuation of hostilities.

Why do individuals adopt such extreme tactics?

In many cases, extremists are those who have lived in poverty and have inadequate access to healthcare, nutrition, education, and employment. Persistent experiences of oppression, insecurity, or humiliation may lead individuals and groups to adopt conflict strategies that seem appropriate in their dire circumstances. In other instances, political leaders capitalize on these adverse conditions and reward extremism in order to gain power for themselves. For example, they may offer monetary awards to families or emphasize the benefits to "martyrs" in the afterlife in order to legitimize militant behavior and draw attention to their cause.

There are also instances where extremist actions are an effective strategy for gaining and maintaining power in a hierarchical environment where resources are scarce and there is an ongoing struggle for power. In short, individuals adopt extreme positions because extremism is effective. It can call attention to one's cause, damage one's opponent, and unite one's group against a common enemy.

Why are Extremists So Dangerous?

Ultimately, the hostile tactics used by extremists have a profound influence on conflicts, contributing greatly to their escalation and polarization.

The violent actions committed by extremists include civilian bombings, kidnappings, and the spread of bio-toxins. In addition to taking innocent lives, these actions enrage their opponents, their potential allies, and often the international community as a whole. Other members of the group may be radically opposed to the actions of extremists. However, because the extremists and other hardliners usually gain the most media coverage, it is easy to come to the conclusion that everyone on the other side feels that way. Even if only a minority of the group commits the violent acts, these acts may be attributed to the group as a whole. This leads opponents to conclude that they must respond with extreme tactics of their own and causes the conflict to escalate quickly, even when most of the people on both sides of the conflict are far more moderate in their views.

The provocative actions of extremists can also threaten broadly-supported efforts to de-escalate conflicts**.** In fact, some extremists desire this sort of response. Spoilers often use extreme tactics in the hopes of disrupting peace processes that they believe will harm their cause. Examples are the many violent acts in the Middle East that were meant to derail the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Such acts increase hostility, generate additional issues that require resolution, and make parties less willing to compromise.

What can be Done about Extremism?

There are no clear or easy answers about how to deal with extremists or spoilers. Some people suggest they should be marginalized, and negotiation carried on with more moderate parties. Other suggest that extremists should be included in the discussions, so as to prevent them from becoming spoilers. Both of these approaches are discussed by Peter Coleman and Andrea Bartoli in their essay Dealing with Extremists. Another approach is disarming them through humanizing gestures. Juan Gutierrez's article on the Humanization of Extremists in this knowledge base illustrates this approach. **Curbing or banning them has become the norm in Europe.**

Junior High: **BIRT we should ban extremist Political Parties in Canada**

Senior High: **THBT we should ban extremist Political Parties**

The **Proposition Team supports the resolution and will say "YES"**

The **Opposition Team opposes the resolution and will say "NO"**

Both Proposition and Opposition Teams will try to pick about 3 good reasons to support their position and try to develop each by going through 4 steps:

1. State your point.
2. Explain your point.
3. Provide evidence in support of your point (give an example).
4. Explain how that evidence proves your point (tie it back to your theme).

Each argument will look like this:

Point #1: _____

Explanation: _____

Example: _____

Tie point to theme: _____

Point #2: _____

Explanation: _____

Example: _____

Tie point to theme: _____

Point #3: _____

Explanation: _____

Example: _____

Tie point to theme: _____

PROPOSITION TEAM

The job of the Proposition in any debate is to persuade the judges that the resolution should be supported. In order to accomplish this, there are a number of steps that the Proposition team must go through.

> 1) Define the resolution (Make sure everyone is clear upon what the Proposition is debating).
> 2) Present a Model (if needed)
> 3) Present arguments in favor of the resolution.
> 4) Refute Opposition attacks on the Proposition case. (Show why the Opposition is wrong and the Opposition is correct).

Owing to time restrictions, the Proposition duties are normally divided up between the first and second Proposition speakers. It is customary for the first proposition speaker to present two arguments followed by the second speaker who presents the final argument.

AN EXAMPLE OF A PROPOSITION STATEMENT

I call on the international community to adopt at the global level what democracies apply at the national one - a universal set of standards for participation in genuine democratic elections.

The core values of tolerance, co-existence and peace that lie at the heart of every democracy must be protected within societies and promoted between them.

The conflict is driven by those who reject these core values - those who seek power without responsibility; those whose aim is not to realize their own rights, but to deny those rights for others. At its heart, this is a conflict not about territory, but about values.

This is a global battle. The notion that this battle was a local one - limited to isolated regions - collapsed with the Twin Towers on a September morning seven years ago.

Today it is clear that the extremists are engaged in a bloody war against civilians and communities, against hearts and minds, in every corner of the world.

This battle is global not just because it targets civilians everywhere, but also because the extremists have taken aim at the fundamental pillars of every modern society: democracy, tolerance and education. These are the new battlefields of the 21st century, and it is in these arenas, more than any other, that the future of our world will be decided.

I believe in democracy. I believe in its extraordinary power to produce free and peaceful societies founded on the respect for human rights. Democracy is a profound ideal, but it is also a vulnerable one.

Today, in different parts of the world, terrorists - opposed to the very ideals of democracy - are entering the democratic process not to abandon their violent agenda but to advance it. As a spokesman for Al Qaeda recently declared, "We will use your democracy to destroy your democracy."

This should be a wake up-call for all of us. It is time to reclaim democracy, and this begins by rejecting those who abuse it – **I mean ban them**.

Genuine democracy is about values before it is about voting. No true democracy on earth allows armed militia, or groups with racist or violent agendas, to participate in elections. But some demonstrate a troubling double standard. There are some who insist on high standards in their own country, but forget them when they look abroad. Violent extremists who could never run for office at home, are treated as legitimate politicians when elected

elsewhere. As a result, we empower those who use democratic means to advance anti-democratic ends. And we strengthen the forces of those who not only undermine their societies but threaten our own.

I call on the international community to adopt at the global level what democracies apply at the national one - a universal set of standards for participation in genuine democratic elections. We need a universal democratic code that requires that all those seeking the legitimacy of the democratic process, earn it by respecting such principles as state monopoly over the lawful use of force, the rejection of racism and violence, and the protection of the rights of others.

The goal of such a universal code is not to dictate our values or to stifle legitimate voices with which we may disagree. Its goal is to protect core democratic values from those determined to use the democratic system against itself; and to make clear that participation in the democratic process is not just a right - it is also a responsibility.

I know that the temptation to engage with extremists can be strong. It may seem to promise stability and quiet. We may hope that by feeding the beast we can gradually tame it. As free societies, we pride ourselves - rightly - on our respect for difference and diversity. But we do a disservice to diversity when, in its name, we tolerate the intolerant.

Here are some arguments that the Proposition can use in developing their case for saying that **we should ban extremist Political Parties**

- **Societies have a right to set moral judgements and standards that exclude extremist groups:** We can declare things abhorrent and not justified in decent society. Such a function is a role for government in making any laws. A removal of this moral dimension from law making would lead to extreme moral relativism and anarchy.
- **Extremist parties can be banned if they express hate speech that causes harm to other groups:** Free speech does not exist in a vacuum: It can be restrained specifically in this case on grounds of harm. Extremism as hate speech that causes harm to minorities is a justifiable reason for the curbing of free speech.
- **Society can develop a general consensus about what extremist views can be deemed "harmful":** While there are some things society disagrees on, there are other things that we agree on and can establish as norms, standards, and morals. In setting these norms and laws, we establish that their violation can automatically be deemed "harmful" to society. Disagreement among accepted political parties exists in the area in which societies have not formed a consensus on the "harm" of differing policies. That's why such disagreement is tolerated; we're not sure of the true effects. Yet, if society is able to deem by general consensus that an extremist political party violates these norms, then that party should be deemed "harmful" to society, and excluded from politics.
- **Extremist groups often bring what might be protected in private into the public sphere, which should be restrained:** The former is to be preserved, but the latter has an impact on other people, and it is this that we are seeking to restrain.
- **Extremist groups are not naturally dying out of politics, so they should be pushed out:** The recent rise in popularity of right wing extremist parties across Europe - from Le Pen in France to Pim Fortuyn in Holland, not including the success of the BNP in Burnley council - shows the success that appealing to voters on extremist grounds can have. It is not good enough to say that there is no threat, or that parties are not successful. We have a duty to act against a threat to our society in the form of extremism.
- **Merely by being allowed to advocate their views, extremist parties are given a veneer of respectability:** The fact that the vast majority of people disagree is irrelevant. They cannot be allowed on the same democratic ticket as respectable, pro system groups, because merely in their presence they tarnish the system.
- **Banning extremist groups will effectively snuff them out**: Those that talk of parties going underground with such banning legislation are wrong. Their censorship will mean that the vast majority of people in the country never have access to them, even if a small hardcore still do, who are probably converts anyway. The parties will never get anywhere without mass support and publicity.

A model

The simplest explanation of a model is that "it is a proposal to be implemented". A model is an extension of the definitions that aims to add increased clarity to the motion. The model answers the four W's of the debate. Who, What, When, Where. A good model creates more context and makes the debate cleaner by removing much of the debate from the implementing of a policy to the actual policy itself. **The model must be fully explained in the first Proposition speech**.

Suppose, for example, that your team is arguing in favour of the legalisation of thedrug marijuana. It is not enough to say, "marijuana should be legalised". This statement encompasses everything from legalisation for limited medical use to legalisation under any circumstances, for people of any age, for use as a recreational drug. Your team should go further and present a specific model. For example, you could argue:

1. The parliament should pass laws to:
     (a) Remove the absolute legal prohibition on the use of marijuana as a recreational drug;
     (b) Require licenses to sell marijuana;
     (c) Require the consumption of marijuana to be either in the home or on specifically licensed premises;
     (d) Require health warnings on marijuana products;
     (e) Tax the sale of marijuana.
2. The Department of Health (or similar government body) should run public education campaigns warning the public of the risks of marijuana usage. In other words, marijuana should be treated in essentially the same way as alcohol and tobacco products are.

In this case, the model involved a specific policy to be implemented through the institutions of government.

How specific does the model need to be?

We have established that a model is necessary for many debates in order to provide clarity. But how specific does that model need to be? We know that any stance should be *simple* and *secondary to the main issue of debate*, but what does this mean for developing a model? The simple and often-quoted answer is that the Proposition team does not need to 'write the legislation'. That is, the Proposition team obviously does not need to spell out the operation of its model with the same degree of clarity and precision that a government might use in proposing a new law or policy. More precisely, the degree of precision must be determined in the context of the degree to which a team needs to prove the topic. It was explained earlier that, in most topics, the Proposition team needs only to show that the topic is *generally* true, or true as a *general proposition*. So it is with the model; the model must be sufficiently specific to enable the Proposition team to show that the topic is true as a general proposition. However, the model does *not* need to be any more specific than this.

Take, for example, the topic "THAT WE SHOULD SUPPORT THE DEATH PENALTY". The Proposition team cannot really show this topic to be true as a general proposition without specifying who is to be executed and in what manner. As explained earlier, there is such a wide divergence in criminals and means of execution that we could not support capital punishment, even as a general proposition, without knowing more detail. However, the Proposition team does not need to specify, for example, how long a criminal will be given to appeal his or her sentence, nor the extent to which appeal options will be available. If a *government* were to implement capital punishment, it would be required to specify these details. However, the *Proposition team* does not need to; the length and precise nature of a capital appeal process is not directly relevant to the general question of whether or not we should support capital punishment. *Unlike a government, the Proposition team does not need to write the legislation.*

> The Proposition's model must be completely outlined during the first Proposition speech and completely described before the end of the second Proposition speech. When proposing a counter model, the Opposition must describe the entire counter model in the first Opposition speech.

THERE ARE MANY EXAMPLES OF COUNTRIES THAT HAVE BANNED EXTREMIST PARTIES THAT CAN BE USED AS MODELS:

European Policy on Banning Extremist Parties

Curbing or banning the activity of political parties is the norm in Europe. The postwar specters of Nazism and fascism gave resonance to the need to rein in political parties that incite violence, especially when based on ethnicity or religious affiliation. European states have increasingly enacted and upheld laws that limit or ban the actions of groups that wish to participate in elections.

Belgium. In November 2004, Belgium's highest court ruled that the xenophobic Vlaams Blok (Flemish Bloc) party was guilty of "permanent incitement to segregation and racism," depriving the party of state funding and media access. Vlaams Blok was not an insignificant party, but rather was the most popular party in Flanders, the country's largest region, with 24 percent of the vote there. The ruling was based on Belgium's 1981 Anti-Racism Act, which calls for imprisoning and fining anyone who "incites to discrimination, segregation, hatred, or violence against a person, society, or the members thereof, on the grounds of so called race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin of these members or some of them." Individuals are liable for equal punishment for belonging to a "group" advocating the banned principles.

Spain. On August 13, 2002, the Spanish parliament voted overwhelmingly to ban the Batasuna Party, said to serve as the political arm of the militant Basque separatist group ETA. Batasuna was also not a marginal party, having won 18 percent of the popular vote in 1998 Basque regional elections. The ban on Batasuna was consistent with the June 2002 Implementing Act on Political Parties, which prohibits parties that instigate and promote terrorism. In Article 9, the act bans parties that are "promoting or justifying attacks causing death or bodily injury," "encouraging or legitimizing violence as a political principle," "providing political support for terrorism," or "collaborating with terrorist groups or groups supporting terrorist action." The Batasuna ban was upheld by Spain's highest court in March 2003.

France. In 2002, France dissolved Unite Radicale, an extremist neo-Nazi party, after a member attempted to kill French president Jacques Chirac. In 2005, then interior minister Dominique de Villepin broke up twenty neo-Nazi parties in Alsace, Paris, and southern France. The groups were reportedly involved in sixty-five violent attacks in 2004. A 1936 law enables the government to dissolve any movement "that incites to armed demonstrations in the street," "that resembles, in its form and military organization, a combat group or private militia," or "whose aim is to undermine the integrity of national territory or use force to attack republican government." A ban was added in 1972 on groups that incite to "discrimination against, hatred of, or violence toward a person or group of people on the grounds of origin or membership of a particular ethnic group, nation, race, or religion, or propagate ideas or theories seeking to justify or encourage such discrimination, hatred, or violence." The law was expanded in 1986 to dissolve parties that "take steps in France to perpetrate acts of terrorism in France or abroad."

Netherlands. In 1998, the Amsterdam District Court ruled in favor of dissolving and banning the Nationale Volkspartij (National Peoples Party) for inciting hatred, racial discrimination, and xenophobia. Article 2 of the Dutch civil code states, "Organizations that aim to promote violence or the support of violence, either in the Netherlands or a foreign country, cannot be public-benefit organizations, and in fact, are forbidden under Dutch law."

Germany. It is not surprising that in the postwar years, Germany enacted legislation in reaction to the racist political parties that dominated the country during World War II. Article 21 of Germany's constitution declares "unconstitutional" those parties "which by reason of their aims or the behavior of their adherents, seek to impair or abolish the free democratic basic order or to endanger the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany." Under Article 21, Germany banned a neo-Nazi party in 1952 and a communist party in 1956.

Italy. Similarly to Germany, Italy wrote into its 1948 constitution a clause prohibiting the reformation of a fascist party "under any form whatsoever." This prohibition was later expanded; under Article 3 of the 1993 Mancino Law, individuals and organizations can be prosecuted and banned if they incite violence or hate crimes.

The Council of Europe. In 2002, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe passed Resolution 1308, which examined the question of "the banning of democratically elected political parties" in member states. In trying to balance freedom of expression with human rights, the assembly concluded that, while civil sanctions are preferable, the dissolution of a political party might be necessary if it "uses violence or threatens civil peace and the democratic constitutional order of the country."

OPPOSITION TEAM

The job of the Opposition is to be disagreeable! Whatever the Proposition believes, generally, the Opposition counters. The more you disagree, the better! The Opposition has to convince the judges not to accept the Proposition resolution.

> The Proposition wants to convince the judges that their proposal should be adopted.

> The Opposition wants to convince you that the Proposition proposal should not be accepted for one or more reasons.

The steps that the Opposition should use are:

1) Either agree with the Proposition definition or propose a definition of your own.
2) Rebut the Proposition arguments in favor of the resolution.
3) Attack the Proposition Model and sometimes propose a counter model
4) Present reasons (arguments) to oppose the resolution.
5) Refute Proposition attacks on the Opposition case (show why the Proposition is wrong and Opposition is right).

Owing to time restrictions, the Opposition duties are divided between the first and second opposition speakers.

It is the custom for the First Opposition Speaker to present two arguments and the second opposition speaker to present the final argument.

AN EXAMPLE OF AN OPPOSITION STATEMENT

I would say that banning parties may be pointless, because if they are banned, they would still meet in secret. Their cause would be highlighted and they would gain sympathy from some quarters (as the IRA does from the USA) and by being forced underground, they would inevitably turn towards more violence. While they are not banned, they will at least feel answerable to the public. To ban these parties may be to over-estimate their importance (and create more martyrs, as with Bobby Sands and other H-block hungerstrikers).

Moreover, it could be said that the existence of extreme parties helps galvanize the political process and makes aware the voters about their political and voting rights. For example, until the BNP won the local by-election, the voters of Millwall ward were disinterested about their voting rights and their turn-out on election day was very low. When the BNP won the by-election the cohesiveness of the voters has rapidly grown up and they united to turn up in the next election to remove the BNP from the local office. And eventually they did so!

Finally, extreme parties, with few exceptions, have long been tolerated in Britain. Their continued existence, over several decades, has not led to the creation of an authoritarian state, although in times of depression or civil unrest – such as the 1930's – they tended to become more influential. In the main, extreme parties of whatever persuasion have rarely made any electoral impact. The First Past the Post System presents a formidable barrier to any minor party, extreme or not. Thus, extreme parties have rarely been seen as a threat to British politics. For reasons that lie deeply embedded in its history and political culture the British people remain immune from political extremism. Thus, I would argue that extreme political parties need not be banned.

Some of the arguments that the Opposition can use in developing their case that **we should NOT ban extremist Political Parties**

- **The very strength and weakness of a democracy is in allowing anyone to challenge it and mold it:** If the system regulates itself by declaring who cannot challenge it then it is not pure and it is a betrayal of the very system.
- **It is difficult to categorize a party as 'extremist' or 'far-right':** There is a wide difference in policy between groups such the BNP and Front Nationale, and the List Pym Fortuyn. Alongside repellent views on race there may be policies on topics such as immigration, devolution and policing which challenge the status quo and are worthy of serious political debate.
- **As long as extremist parties do promote physical harm to others, they should be given freedom to engage in politics:** Although politicians in extremist parties may promote intolerance and discriminatory policies, very rarely do they directly call for violent action, so what impact are we seeking to restrain? We already have laws that regulate the conduct of free speech - slander, libel etc. Yet the basic premise of free speech in a democracy must be protected at all cost, or else we risk turning into the kind of society that these extremist groups support. Again, this is unless a clear physical harm can be demonstrated.
- **"Harm" to society is an overly subjective criteria for the banning of extremist groups from politics:** What "harm" are we talking about? If it violent harm, that is one thing. But other forms of harm risk being arbitrary. Non-extremist political parties may claim, for example, that the policies of other political parties are doing society "harm".
- **The difference between public and private speech is hard to distinguish, and so extremists should be given more flexibility:** Such a difference is misleading and dangerous. If one is invited into someone's home, does this make what would be public speech now private?
- **There is no rise in extremism:** The BNP threat was localised in the extreme and all candidates in the general election of 2002 lost their deposits. The success of Le Pen was ironically in moderating his extremist message, couple with the fracturing of the Left in French politics, and the Front Nationale didn't win any French Assembly seats. Likewise, Pim Fortuyn's party was socially liberal, having the same line on immigration as the Britain's Labour Party! Such a draconian law as proposed would be a disproportionate response to a limited threat.
- **Extremist views need to be defeated in open public debates:** No one is disputing the fact that extremist views are repellent. Yet they are often shallow and not logically thought out. Meeting their views and combating them in open and honest debate is the most effective way of highlighting the flaws in the ideology, rather than have them transmitted in a one-sided manner that gives no chance to counter. It gives the impression that there is some validity to the message.
- **Extremist parties may benefit from being banned, as they may be more effective in the "underground":** Such parties benefit from going underground. They can play themselves as martyrs and against the establishment, being denied their chance to have a say. Witness Nick Griffin (BNP leader) and his notorious 'gagged' campaign, and Le Pen's similar ploys in France. Such anti-state rebellious sentiment will be very attractive to a cross section of the dispossessed and dispirited in society - what New Labour have identified as the 'angry young men' - who provide a fertile ground for votes and support.

Counter Models

A counter model is when the opposition team agrees with the goal of the resolution but believes that the goal can be reached or met in a more effective way. **The Opposition team's job is to fully outline this model in the first Opposition speech.** In the resolution concerning a carbon tax, the opposition could present a counter model and propose the use of a cap and trade system for carbon emission. This would be fully acceptable.

AN ALTERNATIVE FROM THE NEGATIVE

What about the Opposition team? Thus far, we have examined the situation where the *Proposition* team proposes a model. However, the *Opposition* team must often counter with a model of its own: an *alternative.* This is particularly true when the current situation is very hard to defend. Of course, in debates about a proposed change, it is *usually* the case that the Proposition team proposes a change to the status quo, whereas the Opposition team defends the status quo. An alternative from the Opposition is most strategic when the status quo is largely indefensible.

For example, suppose that the topic is "THAT WE SHOULD INTERVENE MILITARILY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS", and you are on the Opposition team. The Proposition team has defined 'we' to mean 'the international community, acting either through international or regional organizations', and has set out a model that supports air-strikes against regimes and armies that are committing widespread acts of genocide or torture. The primary example that they use as support is the NATO bombing of Kosovo. In that case, your team will no doubt raise a number of arguments against military intervention, such as:
1. Military intervention is an unjustifiably brutal response which often involves massive 'collateral damage' (that is, incorrect targets are hit);
2. Military intervention damages infrastructure such as water and power facilities, punishing average civilians further for the crimes of their leaders;
3. Military intervention only hastens whatever human rights abuses were occurring previously;
4. Military intervention provides the oppressive local leadership with an obvious opponent against whom to play the 'nationalist card', increasing leaders' domestic support.

These may (or may not) be good arguments, but they will inevitably be met with a very simple and effective response from the Proposition team: "Sure, there are problems with military intervention, but at least we propose doing *something.* Our opposition can complain all they like, but they haven't provided us with *any alternative solution* to what is clearly a serious problem." This is the kind of simple but effective line that a good Proposition team would pursue relentlessly throughout the debate. The reply speaker, for example, could be expected to start his or her reply by saying something like, "Ladies and gentlemen, the issue of this debate has been how best to deal with the serious problems of genocide and torture. We have proposed military intervention. It may not be perfect, but we have showed that it is effective nonetheless. The Opposition team, however, have proposed nothing." Therefore, the simple answer for the Opposition team is to propose an alternative. In this case, for example, the Opposition team could argue in favour of economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure, the continued prosecution of war criminals in supra-national tribunals, or some other alternative, or some specified combination of these alternatives. This strategy allows the Opposition team to criticize military intervention, but to be proactive about the possible alternatives.

Is the alternative really necessary?

In the previous example, it was clearly necessary for the Opposition team to provide an alternative, for two reasons:
1. The nature of the problem (genocide and torture) was sufficiently emotive that it seemed to demand some response, or at least a strong statement that any response would further exacerbate the problem.
2. The alternative would have *simplified* rather than *complicated* the Opposition team's approach. That is, if the Opposition team had *not* provided an alternative, it would have been left arguing a very convoluted case indeed: "Military intervention is wrong…but we can't really tell you what, if anything, is preferable!".

In many debates, however, the Opposition team does not need an alternative at all. This is because:
1. The problem under discussion is not particularly emotive, so the Proposition team can gain little by

complaining that the Opposition have provided no clear response;
3. An alternative from the Opposition would *complicate* rather than *simplify* the Opposition team's approach; or
4. An alternative from the Opposition would simply become an easier target for the Proposition team to hit.

For example, consider the topic "THAT WE SHOULD SUPPORT AMERICAN MISSILE DEFENCE". In this case, the Proposition team will probably need a reasonably intricate model, explaining what a 'missile defence' shield is, and how it would work. The Opposition team is then faced with an important question: is an alternative necessary? The Opposition team *could* develop an intricate alternative model. For example, it could argue in favour of an aggressive series of undercover operations to topple those regimes most likely to fire intercontinental missiles at the USA. It could explain in intricate detail how opposition forces within those countries would be assisted in taking control, thus providing regimes friendly to the United States and removing any need for missile defence. However, there are problems with this approach:

- The debate will be unclear enough without an Opposition model. It would be more strategic for the Opposition team to sit back and gleefully pick holes in the Proposition's model, rather than provide an equally complicated model of its own.
- By presenting a model in this case, the Opposition team only gives the Proposition team a clearer target to hit.
- Aside from this easy attack on the Opposition team for proposing a rather novel approach, the Proposition team now gains a significant strategic advantage.

Specifically, it is no longer the only team in the debate bearing the burden of properly explaining and defending its model. Had the Opposition team *not* presented a model, the adjudicator might have thought, "The Proposition team never really explained their model and didn't show that it would work. Therefore, the Opposition team should win." Now, the adjudicator may think, "True, the Proposition team never really explained their model, and didn't really show that it would work. *But neither did the Opposition team with its model.*" Ultimately, there are sound strategic reasons both for and against developed alternative models from the Opposition team. Whether the Opposition actually uses a model in a particular debate will obviously depend on the specifics of the topic. The important point is not that every Opposition team needs an alternative model, but that every Opposition team needs to think carefully and strategically about whether it should present an alternative.

Counter model (if one is used)

The COUNTER MODEL involves the Opposition agreeing with the proposition, and then presenting a model that is *significantly different* from the Proposition's model. Remember, it must be very different, or it will sound like you are agreeing with the Proposition, which you must not do on any account if you wish to keep your dignity as an Opposition team member! If you run this strategy, make sure you explain what you are doing to the judges. The counter model must be within the resolution. **This strategy is only used when it is conducive to do so.**

There are problems with the counter model strategy. In agreeing with the proposition you give away half of the debate leaving an uphill fight. We do not recommend it!

If a counter model is presented, it must be done entirely by the 1st Opposition speaker.

German government moves to ban neo-Nazi party

On Wednesday, November 8 the German federal government passed a resolution calling on the nation's supreme court to ban the extreme right-wing National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD).

Democracy and the banning of parties

The banning of political parties by the capitalist state, even extreme right-wing parties, constitutes a fundamental infringement on democratic rights. The Constitutional Court, whose judges are not elected and thus lack the slightest democratic legitimacy, simply usurp the population's right to decide which parties they have access to and which they don't.

The fact that Article 21/2 of the German Constitution empowers the Constitutional Court to ban parties is, in itself, a clear indication of how deeply the political elite fears and distrusts the population, and what a long history this fear and distrust has. Article 20, paragraph 2 of the Constitution states: "All executive power emanates from the people." But in the very next Article, this principle is abrogated and the decision as to which parties are allowed and which are not is entrusted to an unelected body.

Even the liberal constitutional law expert Ingo von Münch writes in his commentary on the German Constitution: "The banning of a party is alien to the system of a free democracy. Judging the value or lack of value of political parties should be left up to the political decision of the electorate, and not to the judicial decision of a court."

To this very day the political elite of this country have not even managed to submit the Constitution—the significance of which they constantly invoke—to the population for approval by popular vote.

As a rule, the Constitution's provision for banning parties is justified with the concept of "vigilant democracy", meaning that never again should democracy stand by defenceless as it is destroyed by its enemies, as in Germany in the early 1930s.

Quite apart from the fact that the theory that a more resolute stance by the Weimar Republic would have prevented Hitler from coming to power is, to say the least, historically dubious, it should be clear that the practical application of the constitutional power to ban parties is profoundly undemocratic.

Leaving aside the banning of the small extreme right-wing Socialist Reich Party (SRP) in the early 1950s, which was essentially a trial run for banning the Communist Party, the prohibition of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in 1956 has so far been the only precedent in the Federal Republic of Germany. Even though the KPD was not using illegal methods at the time and no proof of it committing politically motivated acts of violence could be substantiated, the West German government under Konrad Adenauer pushed through the ban and thus the dissolution of the party.

The banning of the KPD was aimed at suppressing a movement by the working class against German capitalism. Although the KPD, under the influence of Stalinism, had long since given up any revolutionary orientation, many workers hoped that, with the aid of the party, they could achieve their demand for socialisation of key industries, such as mining and steel. The KPD ban was the beginning of a state witch-hunt against socialists, which included a wave of dismissals and the setting up of a blacklist to bar left-wing professionals from the civil service, that helped secure the political control of the SPD over the labour movement.

As opposed to the KPD, the NPD is an extreme right-wing party that is regarded by the population as being all but synonymous with neo-fascism and right-wing violence. Although it is the smallest of the three right-wing extremist parties in Germany, with fewer members than the Republicans (Reps) and the German People's Union (DVU), it is also the oldest. Established in 1964 as an amalgamation of numerous right-wing mini-parties and associations, it was represented in seven state assemblies in the mid-1960s and received nearly 10 percent of the vote in the 1968 state elections in Baden-Württemberg. But as the old Nazis died out and with the anti-fascist campaigns of the student protest movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the NPD almost entirely lost its political influence.

Only after the reunification of Germany did the NPD re-emerge, establishing strong local branches mainly in the east of Germany. To do this, the NPD made a point of exploiting the high level of unemployment and channelling social discontent into racism. Since the mid-1990s it has gathered in its midst and on its periphery neo-Nazi thugs and skinheads who have carried out brutal and murderous attacks against immigrants. There is much evidence indicating that the NPD functions as a political cover for violent rightists, providing them with funds and logistical support.

But despite the fact that it is, for the moment, directed against the extreme right wing, an NPD ban would also set the precedent for restricting the political rights of the population and strengthening state authority and control. In the future such bans will be used to criminalise and suppress any opposition to the existing social and political conditions.

This trajectory has already become clearly evident in the course of the current debate. The speaker of Saxony's state assembly, Erich Iltgen (CDU), expressed his doubts about the effectiveness of an NPD ban to the ddp press agency, saying that the goal of the federal authorities should be to "proscribe both left-wing and right-wing extremism". According to Iltgen, the current ban petition was not sweeping enough.

It is a basic lesson of history that any restriction of democratic rights ultimately strengthens the right-wing and conservative elements of society and weakens the workers movement.

Right-wing violence

Heribert Prantl of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* writes, "If it were only a matter of Nazi ideology, German democracy would have to put up with the NPD. An argumentative democracy uses arguments as long as it can, not bans." And yet Prantl is vehemently in favour of banning the NPD. He justifies this by stating that what is involved in this case is the protection of people who are beaten, hounded and killed by right-wing extremists. "The NPD must be banned to protect victims from thugs, not to protect democracy from crackpots."

This argument doesn't hold water. For one thing, the dividing line between opinion and violence is by no means as clear-cut as Prantl would have us believe. This was amply shown by the legal disputes over whether sit-in blockades in front of nuclear power plants or missile bases were peaceful demonstrations or instances of coercion.

The German Criminal Code is quite sufficient to prosecute illegal acts of violence and physical attacks on people; banning a party is not required for this. But if a party is made liable as a whole for acts of violence committed by individual members or local branches, then this throws the door wide open for provocations and manipulation. Even in the case of the NPD, it was proved in several instances that undercover agents of the *Verfassungsschutz*, Germany's domestic intelligence service, had incited NPD members to commit such acts. These methods of provocation have been used against left-wing organisations for decades as well.

Also, there is not the slightest indication that a ban of the NPD will result in a decline of right-wing violence. Anyone who makes an effort to examine the issue more closely will discover that, in its current form, the NPD itself is the result of previous bans on organisations. In addition to the German Alternative (DA), the Viking Youth and the Free German Workers Party (FAP), no fewer than 13 extreme right-wing organisations (none of which, however, had party status) have been banned by the federal interior minister or individual state interior ministers since 1992. To a large extent, the NPD has accumulated the members of these prohibited organisations.

So the fact that the NPD has become a rallying point for violent right-wing extremists does not substantiate the necessity of banning it, but rather proves the uselessness of such a ban. This will neither intimidate the neo-Nazi thugs nor cause them to disappear. They will merely find a new political haven.

State subsidies

Another argument used to justify banning the NPD is that it would prevent it from getting any more money from state sources. No small amount of money is involved here. In 1998, the NPD received 587,000 marks in subsidies from the state funding system for political parties. One year later, the amount had already leaped to

1.16 million marks, despite the fact that only 0.1 percent of the electorate had voted for the NPD in the national parliamentary elections. So, while the voters had clearly rejected the NPD, the amount of subsidies it received was twice as high.

This absurd situation has its origins in the peculiarities of the German funding system for political parties. The deeper the chasm between parties and the population, the more generously the parties are financed by the state. As a result of numerous affairs and scandals, the legal requirements for the funding of parties have been changed time and time again and have assumed increasingly grotesque forms. In addition to generous payments to parliament members and factions, huge amounts of money for foundations affiliated to the parties and election expenditure subsidies based on the number of votes, the parties have also been receiving subsidies on top of donations for some time. Up to a certain maximum amount, the state adds 0.50 marks to every 1 mark received as a donation. This enabled the three extreme right-wing parties—NPD, Reps and DVU—to pocket a total of 10 million marks in state subsidies in 1998 alone, with the NPD getting the smallest amount of the three.

To claim that a ban could stop this insane financing of right-wing parties is to turn the truth upside down. Instead of banning parties to stop them being subsidised by the state, the continuously increased state subsidising of parties should be abolished. But that is the one thing the governing parties do not want to do, because it would make it even more obvious how little support they themselves enjoy amongst the population.

The balance sheet

In summary, it is clear that banning the NPD is completely useless as a means of combating right-wing violence. Instead, it creates a dangerous precedent for the suppression of democratic rights. The growing influence of the extreme right wing and its aggressive stance have two sources: the continuing intensification of the crisis of society and the lack of a viable perspective for the future that provides a serious response to the huge social problems. It is precisely because all of the democratic parties are towing the same line in all essential political issues and have completely subordinated themselves to the interests of a rich elite that the extreme right wing is able to channel growing social discontent down a racist path.

The most important step towards combating the NPD and all other extreme right-wing organisations is to build a new workers party that gives priority to the interests of the broadest layers of the population, instead of the rich and influential, i.e., one that is based on a socialist perspective. It is precisely this perspective that is opposed by all those pushing for a ban of the NPD.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the self-proclaimed crusaders for democracy and freedom in the CDU/CSU are at this very moment placing a sharp reduction in immigration at the centre of their platforms for the next national elections, as well as a demand that every foreigner who dares to settle in Germany must accept a "German guideline culture". There is much that indicates that banning the NPD will above all serve to create more space at the right-wing outer limits of the political spectrum, because sectors of the CDU and the CSU wish to establish themselves there

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Resources

Sites that researchers found useful in preparing this package:

- http://www.iheu.org/node/2300
- http://www.iheu.org/node/2447
- http://www.thereisnogod.info/English/english.html
- http://www.israelnewsagency.com/livniisraelununitednationsdemocracyterrorismiran48100507.html
- Http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4280614.stm
- http://pierretristam.com/Bobst/07/bb012907b.htm
- http://www.timeonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/minette_marrin/article4407173.ece...
- http://conservablogs.com/publiusforum/2008/07/28/timeonline-overreacts-if-islam-extr
- http://www.proctectourborders.org/pc.html
- http://www.melaniephillips.com/articles/archives/001453.html
- http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/dealing_extremists
- http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/extremists
- http:website.lineone.net/~easternvoice/Page20.pdf
- http://wiki.idebate.org/index.php/Debate:Extremist_Political_Parties%2C_Banning_of
- http://www.idebate.org/debatabase/topic_details.php?topicID=163
- http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/aug2000/nazi-a11.shtml
- http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2369
- http://law.bepress.com/expresso/eps/349/
  - Anti-Nazi League
  - European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
  - Searchlight (international Anti-Fascist magazine)
  - Freedom House
  - Front Nationale (France)
  - Danish People's Party
  - Freedom Party (Austria)
  - Northern League (Italy)
  - National Alliance (Italy)
  - List Pim Fortuyn (Netherlands, in Dutch)
  - British National Party

Useful Books / Articles:

- Extremist Groups : Opposing Viewpoints
  By: Tamara Roleff
- The Voice of Modern Hatred : Tracing the Rise of Neo-Fascism in Europe
  By: Nicholas Fraser