

“Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves.” Because I agree with Abraham Lincoln, I must affirm today’s resolution: On balance, violent revolution is a just response to political oppression. To clarify, I’d like to offer two observations. Observation one explains the evaluative terms: The qualifier “on balance” requires an evaluation of general principles. In addition, in the phrase a just response, “A” according to the *Random House Dictionary* means “not any particular one.” Given these operational terms, the question for today’s debate is if violent revolution should theoretically be included among the legitimate responses to oppression, not if it is the correct response in an isolated situation or categorically the best option.

Observation two explains the nature of political oppression.

Oppression is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as the “prolonged cruel exercise of authority.” The modifier “political” makes the agent of oppression a government. Political oppression goes beyond the restriction of rights because even just states must restrict some degree of autonomy for social welfare. Additionally, all societies can pass bad laws, but if the people have avenues to fix these mistakes, then the system isn’t politically oppressive since citizens ultimately have control. Politically oppressed people are denied political rights and thus do not have legal recourse. So oppression has two components: A) it is arbitrary, and B) it is without checks.

Finally, Ted Honderich, philosophy professor at University College London, defines violent revolution as an act of “considerable or destroying force [which is] prohibited by law and directed to change the system of government.”

I value justice as it is the ultimate good implied by the resolution. While there are different conceptions of justice, all are centrally based on the notion of fairness, in that people should be treated as their actions merit. So justice is defined as giving each their due.

The criterion is respecting human dignity, which is the innate worth that separates people from objects. Dignity makes justice meaningful because only beings with worth are due something. For example, it would be absurd to discuss what my water bottle is due. To respect human worth, citizens must be allowed to exercise their fundamental rights. My case will prove that making the choice to violently revolt is one of these fundamental rights, and as such, an affirmation is required to validate people’s dignity and recognize this due course of action.

Contention One: People have an inherent right to violently rebel. Subpoint A: An oppressive government has lost the authority to demand allegiance. Governments are formed to protect innate rights, and in return, people grant states a monopoly on coercive force. All social contract theories which explain the existence of the state are founded upon this idea.

An oppressive government not only fails to fulfill its obligations but proactively uses the rule of law to abuse its people, turning the social contract on its head. The power