

# **Organizational Address by IP Chairman Rachel Bayefsky**

January, 2008

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and many thanks to Mr. Palmer for coming to the YPU. My name is Rachel Bayefsky, and I am the Chairman of the Independent Party.

The Independent Party is a party of independent thinkers – people who seek to build and test their beliefs in an environment that values questioning over conformity and argument over assumption. The IP welcomes members from across the political spectrum – both those who fit into a time-honored category like “libertarian” or “socialist,” and those who wish that the drop-down political views menu on Facebook had just a little more space.

Yet more important than the specific positions we take is the attitude with which we take them. IP members come to debates ready to “hear all sides”: to listen carefully to different opinions and to give them the respect of a thoughtful response. Our broad-minded, dignified outlook allows us to explore our ideas thoroughly and honestly.

IP members will challenge your premises, make you think about where your beliefs come from, and expose you to points of view you had never seriously considered. And in our open, welcoming environment, you will be encouraged to search for meaning and truth.

For the Independent Party seeks to provide its members with the opportunity to develop personally, to examine their deepest views of the world and their place in it. For some, this means trying to justifying a holistic view of human life. For others it means uniting unconventional positions on different issues into a coherent political philosophy. But for all, it means defining our beliefs according to our own intellects and our own consciences.

What allows IP members to appreciate and challenge one another in the same breath is the phenomenal social bond among us – one that emphasizes irreverence and hilarity alongside discussion and debate. Members of the IP will inspire you with their passionate dedication for anything from small Nordic countries to cute pictures of fuzzy cats. We hold games nights, Mory’s toasting, Sunday dinners, a spring alumni event, and much more. Every semester we go down to New York to meet fascinating guests such as the host of CNBC’s Mad Money, Jim Cramer, Nobel Prize winner Harold Varmus, and former UN ambassador John Bolton, and former presidential candidate Pat Schroeder. The New York trip also features intensely competitive piggyback races and highly impressive theatrical productions.

Most importantly, we'd love for you to participate. We welcome members with varying levels of involvement, recognizing that trying out diverse activities on campus tremendously enriches the Yale experience. In fact, we enjoy joining our efforts with those of other politically-minded groups. We've cosponsored a few debates on topics such as activism, racism, and Connecticut elections with other organizations. At the same time, we provide an opportunity for people to immerse themselves deeply in our warm, lively, and always interesting community.

I urge all of you to explore each party's culture and debating style. But I believe there is something uniquely valuable about debating those who disagree on the fundamentals but who are tied together by bonds even deeper.

I hope our debate tonight will whet your appetite for a discussion of the relationship between American identity and our country's foreign policy. So I encourage you to experience the Independent Party first-hand tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. at St. Anthony Hall, when we debate the topic "Resolved: Export American Values." The debate will be preceded by a party with apple-pie and hot chocolate at 6:30. And you can already start getting excited about our debate next Tuesday on "Resolved: Make Voting Mandatory."

Thank you.