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opposing extremes of groups or interests formerly ranged on a continuum

po-lar-ize \pə-lə-'rīz\ *vb* -ized; -iz-ing [F *polariser*, fr. NL *polaris* polar] *vt* (1811) 1: to cause (as light waves) to vibrate in a definite pattern 2: to give physical polarity to 3: to break up into opposing factions or groupings <a campaign that polarized the electorate> 4: CONCENTRATE 1 <recreate a cohesive rock community by polarizing... an amorphous, fragmented audience—Ellen Willis> ~ *vi*: to become polarized — **po-lar-iz-abil-i-ty** \pə-lə-'rī-zə-'bi-lə-tē\ *n* — **po-lar-iz-able** \pə-lə-'rī-zə-bəl\ *adj*

po-lar-nuc-leus *n* (1882): either of the two nuclei of a seed plant embryo sac that are destined to form endosperm

po-lar-og-ra-phy \pə-lə-'rā-grə-fē\ *n* [SV, fr. *polarization*] (1936): a method of qualitative or quantitative analysis based on current-voltage curves obtained during electrolysis of a solution with a steadily increasing electromotive force — **po-lar-o-graph-ic** \pə-lar-ə-'gra-fik\ *adj* — **po-lar-o-graph-i-cal-ly** \-fi-k(ə)-lē\ *adv*

po-lar-oid \pə-lə-'rōid\ *trademark* — used esp. for a light-polarizing material used esp. in eyeglasses and lamps to prevent glare or for a camera that develops pictures instantly

po-lar-on \pə-lə-'rān\ *n* [SV *polar* + *-on*] (1946): a conducting electron in an ionic crystal together with the induced polarization of the surrounding lattice

po-ler \pə-lər\ *n* [D] (1604): a tract of low land (as in the Netherlands) reclaimed from a body of water (as the sea)

po-le \pə-lē\ *n* [ME, fr. OE *pāl* stake, pole, fr. L *palus* stake; akin to L *pangere* to fix — more at *FACT*] (bef. 12c) 1 *a*: a long slender usu. cylindrical object (as a length of wood) *b*: a shaft which extends from the front axle of a wagon between wheelhorses and by which the wagon is drawn: TONGUE *c*: a long staff of wood, metal, or fiberglass used in the pole vault 2 *a*: a varying unit of length; esp: one measuring 16½ feet (5.03 meters) *b*: a unit of area equal to a square rod (25.293 square meters) 3: a tree with a breast-high diameter of from 4 to 12 inches (10 to 30 centimeters) 4: the inside front row position on the starting line for a race

po-le *vb* **poled**; **po-ling** *vr* (1573) 1: to act upon with a pole 2: to impel or push with a pole ~ *vi* 1: to propel a boat with a pole 2: to use ski poles to gain speed

po-le *n* [ME, fr. L *polus*, fr. Gk *polos* pivot, pole; akin to Gk *pelesthai* to become, Skt *carati* he moves, wanders — more at *WHEEL*] (14c) 1: either extremity of an axis of a sphere and esp. of the earth's axis 2 *a*: either of two related opposites *b*: a point of guidance or attraction 3 *a*: either of the two terminals of an electric cell, battery, generator, or motor *b*: one of two or more regions in a magnetized body at which the magnetic flux density is concentrated 4: either of two morphologically or physiologically differentiated areas at opposite ends of an axis in an organism or cell — see *BLASTULA* illustration 5 *a*: the fixed point in a system of polar coordinates that serves as the origin *b*: the point of origin of two tangents to a conic section that determine a polar — **poles apart**: as diametrically opposed as possible

Pole \pə-lē\ *n* [G, of Slavic origin; akin to Pol *polak* Pole] (1535) 1: a native or inhabitant of Poland 2: a person of Polish descent

po-le-ax \pə-'laks\ *n* [ME *polax*, *pollax*, fr. *pol*, *polle* poll + *ax*] (14c) 1: a battle-ax with a short handle and often a hook or spike opposite the blade; also: one with a long handle used as an ornamental weapon 2: an ax used in slaughtering cattle

po-le-ax *vr* (1882): to attack, strike, or fell with or as if with a poleax

po-le-bean *n* (ca. 1770): a cultivated bean that is usu. trained to grow upright on supports

po-le-cat \pə-lē-'kāt\ *n*, *pl* **po-le-cats** or **po-le-cat** [ME *polcat*, prob. fr. MF *poul*, *pol* cock + ME *cat*; prob. fr. its preying on poultry — more at *PULLET*] (14c) 1: any of several carnivorous mammals (as of the genera *Mustela* or *Vormela*) of the weasel family; esp: a brown to black European mammal (*M. putorius*) from which the domesticated ferret is derived 2: SKUNK

po-le-ic *pl* of **POLIS**

po-le-less \pə-lē-'ləs\ *adj* (1647): having no pole

po-le-mi-c \pə-lē-'mīk\ *n* [F *polemique*, fr. MF, fr. *polemique* controversial, fr. Gk *polemos* warlike, hostile, fr. *polemos* war; perh. akin to Gk *pelemizein* to shake, OE *eafelo* baleful] (1638) 1 *a*: an aggressive attack on or refutation of the opinions or principles of another *b*: the art or practice of disputation or controversy — usu. used in *pl*. but sing. or *pl*. in constr. 2: an aggressive controversialist: DISPUTANT — **po-le-mi-cist** \-lē-mə-'sīst\ *n*

po-le-mi-cal \-mī-kəl\ *also* **po-le-mi-c** \-mīk\ *adj* (1640) 1: of, relating to, or being a polemic: CONTROVERSIAL 2: engaged in or addicted to polemics: DISPUTATIOUS — **po-le-mi-cal-ly** \-mī-k(ə)-lē\ *adv*

po-le-mi-cize \-lē-mə-'sīz\ *vi* -cized; -ciz-ing (1950): to engage in controversy: deliver a polemic

po-le-mist \pə-lē-'mīst, 'pā-lə-'mīst\ *n* (1825): one skilled in or given to polemics

po-le-mize \pə-lə-'mīz\ *vi* -mized; -miz-ing (1828): **POLEMICIZE**

po-le-mo-ni-um \pə-lə-'mō-nē-əm\ *n* [NL, fr. Gk *polemonion*, a plant] (1900): JACOB'S LADDER 1

po-len-ta \pə-'lən-tə, pə-, -tā\ *n* [It, fr. L, crushed and hulled barley; akin to L *pollen* fine flour] (1764): mush made of chestnut meal, cornmeal, semolina, or farina

po-ler \pə-lər\ *n* (1848): one that poles; esp: one that poles a boat

po-le-star \pə-lē-'stār\ *n* 1: NORTH STAR 2 *a*: a directing principle: GUIDE *b*: a center of attraction

po-le-vault *n* (ca. 1890): a vault with the aid of a pole; *specif*: a field event consisting of a vault for height over a crossbar — **po-le-vaulter** *vi* — **po-le-vaulter** *n*

po-le-ward \pə-lə-'wərd\ *adv* or *adj* (1875): toward or in the direction of a pole of the earth (as the sun moves ~) <~ variation in temperature>

po-lice \pə-'lēs\ *vt* **po-liced**; **po-lic-ing** [in sense 1, fr. MF *policier*, fr. *police* conduct of public affairs; in other senses, fr. *police*] (1589) 1 *archaic*: GOVERN 2: to control, regulate, or keep in order by use of police 3: to make clean and put in order 4 *a*: to supervise the operation, execution, or administration of to prevent or detect and prosecute violations of rules and regulations *b*: to exercise such supervision over the policies and activities of 5: to perform the functions of a police force in or over

po-lice *n*, *pl* **po-lice** *often attrib* [F, fr. LL *politia* government, administration, fr. Gk *politia*, fr. *polites* citizen, fr. *polis* city, state; akin to Skt *pramartap*, Lith *plis* castle] (1716) 1 *a*: the internal organization or regulation of a political unit through exercise of governmental power esp. with respect to general comfort, health, morals, safety, or prosperity *b*: control and regulation of affairs affecting the general order and welfare of any unit or area *c*: the system of laws for effecting such control 2 *a*: the department of government concerned primarily with maintenance of public order, safety, and health and enforcement of laws and possessing executive, judicial, and legislative powers *b*: the department of government charged with prevention, detection, and prosecution of public nuisances and crimes 3 *a*: POLICE FORCE (3 *b*) : POLICE OFFICERS 4 *a*: a private organization resembling a police force <campus ~> *b* *pl*: the members of a private police organization 5 *a*: the action or process of cleaning and putting in order *b*: military personnel detailed to perform this function

po-lice ac-tion *n* (1933): a localized military action undertaken without formal declaration of war by regular armed forces against persons (as guerrillas or aggressors) held to be violators of international peace and order

po-lice court *n* (1823): a court of record that has jurisdiction over various minor offenses (as breach of the peace) and the power to bind over for trial in a superior court or for a grand jury persons accused of more serious offenses

po-lice dog *n* (1908) 1: a dog trained to assist police (as in drug detection) 2: GERMAN SHEPHERD

po-lice force *n* (1838): a body of trained officers entrusted by a government with maintenance of public peace and order, enforcement of laws, and prevention and detection of crime

po-lice-man \pə-'lēs-mən\ *n* (1801) 1: a member of a police force 2: one held to resemble a policeman <making the United States the ~ for the whole wide world—R. B. Long>

po-lice offi-cer *n* (1800): a member of a police force

po-lice power *n* (1827): the inherent power of a government to exercise reasonable control over persons and property within its jurisdiction in the interest of the general security, health, safety, morals, and welfare except where legally prohibited

po-lice pro-cedural *n*, *pl* **po-lice pro-cedurals** (1967): a mystery story written from the point of view of the police investigating the crime

po-lice re-porter *n* (1834): a reporter regularly assigned to cover police news (as crimes and arrests)

po-lice state *n* (1865): a political unit characterized by repressive governmental control of political, economic, and social life usu. by an arbitrary exercise of power by police and esp. secret police in place of regular operation of administrative and judicial organs of the government according to publicly known legal procedures

po-lice sta-tion *n* (1846): the headquarters of the police for a locality

po-lice-wom-an \pə-'lēs-wū-mən\ *n* (1853): a woman who is a member of a police force

po-li-cy \pə-'lī-sē\ *n*, *pl* **-cies** *often attrib* [ME *policie* government, policy, fr. MF, government, regulation, fr. LL *politia*] (15c) 1 *a*: prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs *b*: management or procedure based primarily on material interest 2 *a*: a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions *b*: a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures esp. of a governmental body

po-li-cy *pl* **-cies** [alter. of earlier *police*, fr. MF, certificate, fr. Old *polizza*, modif. of ML *apodixa* receipt, fr. MGK *apodexis*, fr. Gk, prob. fr. *apodeiknynai* to demonstrate — more at *APODICTIC*] (1565) 1: a writing whereby a contract of insurance is made 2 *a*: a daily lottery in which participants bet that certain numbers will be drawn from a lottery wheel *b*: NUMBER 7 *a*

po-li-cy-hold-er \pə-'lī-sē-'hōl-dər\ *n* (1851): the owner of an insurance policy

po-licy sci-ence *n* (1950): a social science dealing with the making of high-level policy (as in a government or business)

po-li-o \pə-'lī-ō\ *n* (1931): POLIOMYELITIS

po-li-o-my-el-i-tis \pə-'lī-ō-'mī-ə-'lī-tīs\ *n* [NL, fr. Gk *polios* gray + *myelos* marrow — more at *FALLOW*, *MYEL-*] (1878): an acute infectious disease caused by the poliovirus and characterized by fever, motor paralysis, and atrophy of skeletal muscles often with permanent disability and deformity and marked by inflammation of nerve cells in the anterior, or gray matter in each lateral half of the spinal cord — called also *n*. *infantile paralysis*

po-li-o-vi-rus \pə-'lī-ō-'vī-rəs\ *n* [NL, fr. *poliomyelitis* + *virus*] (1951): an enterovirus that occurs in several antigenically distinct strains of which one is the most frequent cause of human poliomyelitis

po-lis \pə-'līs\ *n*, *pl* **po-leis** \pə-'lās\ [Gk — more at *POLICE*] (1839): a Greek city-state; broadly: a state or society esp. when characterized by a sense of community

-polis *n* *comb form* [LL, fr. Gk, fr. *polis*]: city <megalopolis>

po-lish \pə-'līsh\ *vb* [ME *polishen*, fr. MF *poliss-*, stem of *polir*, fr. L *polire*] *vt* (14c) 1: to make smooth and glossy usu. by friction: to bring to 2: to smooth, soften, or refine in manners or condition 3: to bring to a highly developed, finished, or refined state: PERFECT ~ *vi*: to become smooth or glossy by or as if by friction — **po-lish-er** *n*

po-lish *n* (1704) 1 *a*: a smooth glossy surface: LUSTER *b*: freedom from rudeness or coarseness: CULTURE *c*: a state of high development or refinement 2: the action or process of polishing 3: a preparation that is used to produce a gloss and often a color for the protection and decoration of a surface (furniture ~) (nail ~)

Pol-ish \pə-'līsh\ *adj* [*Pol*] (1674): of, relating to, or characteristic of Poland, the Poles, or Polish

Pol-ish (1784): the Slavic language of the Poles

po-lish off *vt* (1829): to finish off or dispose of rapidly or completely

po-lit-bu-ro \pə-'līt-,byu-rə-, 'pə-līt-, 'pə-'līt-\ *n* [Russ *politbyuro*, fr. *politicheskoe byuro* political bureau] (1925): the principal policymaking and executive committee of a Communist party

po-lite \pə-'līt\ *adj* **po-lit-er**; **-est** [L *politus*, fr. pp. of *polire*] (1501) 1: of, relating to, or having the characteristics of advanced culture: marked by refined cultural interests and pursuits esp. in arts and belles lettres 2 *a*: showing or characterized by correct social usage: marked by an appearance of consideration, tact, deference, or com-