



# The Tea Party Explained: From Crisis to Crusade (Ideas Explained)

*Yuri Maltsev, Roman Skaskiw*

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The Tea Party showed its strength in the 2010 mid-terms. Despite the opposition of leading Republicans like Dick Cheney, Karl Rove, and Lindsey Graham, 140 Tea Party candidates ran for Congress. Of the sixty House seats which moved from Democratic to Republican control, twenty-eight were won by Tea Party candidates. At the movement's height, 29 percent of Americans had "some ties" to the Tea Party, while 2 percent identified themselves as active members.

The Tea Party first attracted the media spotlight with Rick Santelli's televised rant against the government's bailout of mortgage borrowers on February 19, 2009, which instantly went viral as a video. As the authors document, however, "tea parties" associated with the Ron Paul movement had already been gathering momentum for more than a year.

Beginning as a protest against government spending sprees and ballooning deficits, the Tea Party's sudden fame forced it to define itself on many issues where the membership was seriously divided. The Tea Party is a coalition of different outlooks, united only by belief in small, debt-free government and low taxes. Fiscal conservatives, who were usually liberal on social issues and against American military interventions, battled social conservatives, in an uneasy series of maneuvers which continues unresolved and is described in the book.

*The Tea Party Explained*, written by two Tea Party activists who know the movement inside and out, is aimed at the intrigued and curious reader who wants to find out more about this unique phenomenon. The book gives a well-documented account of the Tea Party, its origins, its evolution, the bitter squabbles over its direction, its amazing successes in 2010, and its electoral rebuff in 2012. Maltsev and Skaskiw analyze the demographics of the Tea Party, the many organizations which have tried to represent, appropriate, or infiltrate the movement, and the ideological divisions in its ranks.

The authors evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Tea Party and its likely future impact. A movement with strong local roots in many cities, firmly supported by a quarter of the US population, will not evaporate after one big defeat, and can be counted on to influence events for decades to come.

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