

## 1 **The World of the Tea Party**

2 original at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jul/31/observer-editorial-us-economy>

3 The reason the US was recently so close to economic calamity is that  
4 some of its politicians have an extremist worldview.

5 For the representatives of the Tea Party movement, the cause of the US's  
6 problems is the federal government, federal spending and federal debt.  
7 For them, taxation is not merely coercive, it takes money from efficient  
8 taxpayers and transfers it to inefficient government. To raise taxes in any  
9 circumstances is immoral and undermines the US economy, hence the Tea  
10 Party's desire to cut spending now.

11 Economically, the Tea Party argument is feeble. Countries' debts are not  
12 like individual households; they can be serviced over generations. In the  
13 aftermath of a credit crunch, a country that tries simultaneously to cut  
14 public and private debt will suffer prolonged economic stagnation or  
15 depression. The cost in lost opportunity, broken lives and bust businesses  
16 is too high to slash public debt; indeed, the right action may be to  
17 increase it.

18 Nor is tax in essence different from any other fee: it is the cost of services  
19 rendered, and some services such as defence, security, healthcare and  
20 investment in innovative technology are best rendered by society as a  
21 whole, hence taxation.

22 All the US's great advances – the internet, computers, aerospace, space,  
23 the internal combustion engine, drugs, optics – have had the federal  
24 government as their sponsor. Yet such propositions are simply false to the  
25 Tea Partiers. For them, the government undermines US self-reliance and  
26 individualism and obstruct America's road back to greatness.

## Questions

- 1) What is the Tea Party?
- 2) Is the article approving of the Tea Party?
- 3) What are, according to the Tea Party, the root causes of the current American problems?
- 4) Why is taxation bad in the eyes of the Tea Party?
- 5) What solution does the Tea Party propose?
- 6) Why does the article consider the arguments of the Tea Party 'feeble' (line 11)? (Note: 'credit crunch' (line 13) is just a different word for a *financial crisis*)
- 7) What is, according to the article, the purpose of taxation? (Hint: 'rendered' (lines 19 and 20) is just a different word for *provided*)
- 8) Why does the article list some of the great US advances in the last paragraph?
- 9) Do you think that political radicalism is on the rise in the world and in the Czech Republic? Do you think that radical ideas may be justifiable sometimes?

## Vocabulary

**coercive** (line 7) – oppressive, tyrannical, violent

**hence** (line 9) – therefore, for this reason, consequently

**circumstances** (line 9) – specific conditions or a situation or position

**slash** (line 16) – cut, reduce, bring down, lower

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> or <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

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