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Are social cons really being left behind by the tea party?

Jim Yardley

David Boaz has written a relatively short piece for the Cato Institute, [Social Conservatives Left Behind?](#) It examines the disappointment of many social conservatives with the Tea Party movement because of its concentration on only three things: limited constitutional government, free market capitalism and fiscal responsibility.

So called Social Conservatives have an agenda, with which you may or may not agree, but until Obama-Reid-Pelosi and Co. declare it illegal and monitor the internet and other forms of mass media to insure it is never mentioned, it is a valid point of view. What is telling, however, is how the Tea Party Movement has grown exponentially over the past 19 months or so without needing any part of the Social Conservative agenda to help them along.

The explosive growth of the Tea Party phenomenon has confounded existing pundits, main stream media, agenda driven alternate conservative groups, the United States Congress and the President and his advisors. So confused, in fact, that the language can't keep up with the fluid definitions being used by all and sundry to describe its underlying philosophy.

Keep in mind that Rick Santelli voiced the initial call for a "tea party" just 19 months ago, on February 19th of last year. It was looked at by the overwhelming majority as being amusing, and essentially something that needed to be said, but nothing more than a momentary distraction from our day-to-day lives.

But his words took root and suddenly there were Tea Parties popping up all over the country.

Gandhi's comment beautifully illustrated and predicted the reaction to them:

"First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, then you win."

The first tea parties were ignored. They were ignored by everyone, including the so-called social conservatives.

It appears now that the Tea Parties have progressed to stage four of Mr. Gandhi's statement of the evolution of a political movement, the move is afoot to grab the reins of the Tea Parties to achieve some totally unrelated goal or goals. Establishment Republicans, as well as some social conservatives are shocked that the Tea Parties seem to be resistant to their overtures.

Mr. Boaz's article quotes an NPR interview on this topic:

Bryan Fischer of the American Family Association complained that "the leadership of the Tea Party movement is at a fundamentally different place . . . when it comes to social issues" and demanded that the movement "send a clear note on the culture of conservative issues."

Making demands? Making demands of the group that you ignored initially because it didn't link lower taxes to prohibitions against gay marriage, or abortion or sex education? It seems that the American Family Association is stuck at Gandhi's stage 3: fighting us.

It appears that rather than Mr. Boaz's contention that social conservatives are being left behind, the social conservatives are suffering self-inflicted wounds. By treating the concerns of the Tea Parties as being of less import than their own agenda, by effectively ridiculing it, they excluded themselves, not the other way around.

What social conservatives, and liberals, Democrats and Republicans, the NAACP, La Raza, the New Black Panthers Party

and everyone else need to realize that when the Tea Parties win, so do they. They win the chance to continue the debate, since the first and most important thing that the Tea Partiers are fighting for is a constitutional government. The key word there, for those taking notes, is "constitutional." Absent a strong commitment to the Constitution, none of these groups will enjoy freedom of speech, or assembly or the right to petition the government. That is something that should earn everyone's support.

Unless, of course, your name is Barack Obama.

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