THE SKEPTIC ARENA.COM

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The 800 pound donkey in the GOP debate

by Jon Perr of The Daily Kos

*As a new analysis from Alan Blinder and Mark Zandi showed, the combined federal efforts to rescue the American economy from its greatest collapse since 1929 "dramatically reduced the severity and length of the meltdown that began in 2008; its effects on jobs, unemployment, and budget deficits; and its lasting impact on today's economy." The impact of the measures taken in 2008 and 2009, including the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), the $800 billion Obama stimulus program, Obama's auto bailout and the Federal Reserve's "quantitative easing," is simply staggering. Without those policy responses--almost all of which were opposed by Congressional Republicans*

Jon, here is my first area of confusion. We both know that the modern Republican party works for the rich ... and ONLY for the rich.

(That claim is easily defendable by looking at every bill they propose and every bill they oppose. They don't even make an attempt to hide who they work for; nor do they even bother to occasionally try to help the masses; and if they do anything that hurts the rich - it is only because they have to, and they do everything in their power to minimize the damage to the rich).

So, why were the majority of Republicans against the bailouts?

Was it because they wanted more for the corporations than was being offered?

And why did most Democrats support it? Did they believe that enabling the greatest transfer of wealth in world history from the masses to the rich was the best alternative? And if so, why?

 *The peak-to-trough decline in real gross domestic product (GDP), which was barely over 4%, would have been close to a stunning 14%; The economy would have contracted for more than three years, more than twice as long as it did; More than 17 million jobs would have been lost, about twice the actual number. Unemployment would have peaked at just under 16%, rather than the actual 10%; The budget deficit would have grown to more than 20 percent of GDP, about double its actual peak of 10 percent, topping off at $2.8 trillion in fiscal 2011.*

Jon, regarding the auto bailout

Demand for cars had dropped drastically. Why couldn't the smaller companies have taken up the slack?

Why couldn't skilled GM workers be hired by these smaller companies who would have needed immediate, skilled help?

Why couldn't foreign manufacturers have increased imports?

We know from evolution (specifically extinction studies) that when a vacuum is created (i.e., the dinosaurs) survivors flood in to occupy the vacated space (i.e., mammals).

In the economic recession, there would have been any number of capitalists jumping at the opportunity to start a business or enlarge their existing businesses to replace those that had failed. In fact, isn't that the way capitalism is supposed to work?

Shouldn't the bailout billions have been given as loans to those who had not savaged the American economy?

The bailout solution was the antithesis of capitalism. It was pure socialism. For a nation that prides itself on capitalism and demonizes socialism whenever possible, I find it ironic that when their backs were against the wall, the Big Boys screamed ...

"Socialism, help us!"

Jon, regarding the Wall Street and Big Banks bailout

Since there can be no moral justification for rewarding those who failed, with riches beyond their wildest dreams, the only reason given as to why we should bail out those who decimated the American economy, was that it was in the best interests of the masses. We were threatened with horrible consequences if we did not come up with the money and give it to them.

Jon, why not call extortion what it is?

*Now, this isn't the first time Bill Clinton's former head of the Council of Economic Advisers and John McCain's 2008 economic adviser touted the success of the stimulus. In the summer of 2010 the duo similarly concluded, "We find that its effects on real GDP, jobs, and inflation are huge, and probably averted what could have been called Great Depression 2.0."*

Jon, there are better reasons why we didn't experience

The Great Depression 2.0

The New Deal provided many safety nets to Americans for the first time ever, while simultaneously bringing unfettered capitalism under control. But in the 80 years that followed, the rich never gave up trying to put Humpty-Dumpty back together again.

They only had limited success until the 1970's, culminating with the election of Reagan, under whom, top marginal tax rates on the rich (which had already fallen from 90% down to 70%) were cut more than half (first to 50% and then to 30%). From then on, the dominoes began to fall. Regulations were removed, monopolies returned with a vengeance, and unions were weakened everywhere. Within a generation, economic inequality had returned to pre-depression levels. A better explanation for why we didn't experience 2.0, was because Republicans had only removed half the nets ... half still remained.

But they have made it very clear:

they want social security ... gone

they want welfare ... gone

they want food stamps ... gone

they want unions ... gone

they want affordable healthcare ... gone

they want industry regulations ... gone

they want public prisons ... gone

they want public education ... gone

They are working feverishly to remove the remaining safety nets. If they succeed, what is to prevent the next time being ... 2.0?

*As the Washington Post reported in June 2012, the House Budget Committee heard testimony from the CBO chief answering a simple question: did the $787 billion Obama stimulus work?*

Well Jon, we know it worked out FANTASTIC for the rich; the big corporations; the megabanks; Wall Street; and the giant automakers.

For the rest of us, we are told ... "it could have been a lot worse."

And there are people who think that is a great argument? Why?

*CBO's own analysis found that the package added as many as 3.3 million jobs to the economy during the second quarter of 2010, and may have prevented the nation from lapsing back into recession.*

Jon, even if the recession had continued longer than it did, the replacing of failed businesses and banks by new ones is pretty much what capitalism is supposed to be offering us, isn't it?

Isn't that why monopolies were busted up a century ago - so that we wouldn't be in the dangerous position of having businesses that are "too big to fail?" Businesses that can, and did, hold America hostage until we paid them the ransom?

*As it turns out, the Obama stimulus would have even more effective had it not been offset by draconian spending cuts by state and local government.*

Why didn't we give that trillion dollars to state and local governments then, instead of those filthy bastards who raped America? Why didn't we give it to small businesses and let them take up the slack left by those "too big to fail?" Why didn't we give it to the masses who lost their jobs and their homes?

Why did we have to suffer through draconian spending cuts, while those who put us there dined on champagne and caviar ...

paid for by us?

*By May 2013, the Hamilton Institute estimated those austerity policies cost 2.2 American million jobs and resulted in the slowest recovery since World War II.*

But not for the rich, Jon; not for the megabanks; not for the corporations; not for Wall Street; not for the big automakers.

I remember news stories about the big corporations being told to tone down the wild parties and celebrations as it was raising suspicions and making them look bad. You remember those, don't you Jon?

*Maria Bartiromo said "... my marching orders are ... to help the viewer, help the voter better understand what each candidate's plan is; is it a realistic plan, can it work and how is it different from the next guy or gal, and that's what I plan to focus on."*

Jon, there is only one plan for today's Republican party: increase the wealth of the rich at the expense of the masses. Everything else is designed to distract the masses while their pockets are being picked.

Jon, if you know of an obscure bill proposed by Republicans that contradicts that statement, can you provide a link to it?

*After all, the 800-pound donkey in the room is that Democratic presidents, Barack Obama included, consistently outperform their Republican counterparts.*

Jon, there is only one thing wrong with that last statement:

the Republican party ALWAYS outperforms the Democratic party

when viewed from the perspective of the Plutocrats.

It's all a matter of who is viewing the glass:

The masses say it's 99% empty - the Plutocrats say it is 99% full.

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/11/10/1448387/-The-800-pound-donkey-in-the-GOP-debate>

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Global economic downturn linked with

at least 260,000 excess cancer deaths

The economic crisis of 2008-2010, and the rise in unemployment that accompanied it, was associated with more than 260,000 excess cancer-related deaths within the 35-member nations of the Organization for Economic Development (OECD).

The researchers found that excess cancer burden was mitigated in countries that had universal health coverage and in those that increased public spending on health care. Increased joblessness during the economic crisis may have limited people's access to health care, leading to late-stage diagnoses, and poor or delayed treatment.

Researchers also found that public healthcare spending was tightly associated with cancer mortality, suggesting healthcare cuts could cost lives.

Although previous studies have shown connections between economic changes and rates of suicides, cardiovascular disease, and overall mortality, only a few had examined the relationship between economic downturns and cancer outcomes, especially in countries with underdeveloped social security and health care systems.

The researchers looked at deaths from several "treatable" cancers, for which survival rates exceed 50%--including breast cancer in women, prostate cancer in men, and colorectal cancers in both men and women--and from a few "untreatable" cancers (with five-year survival rates less than 5%), including lung and pancreatic cancers in men and women.

The researchers found that increases in unemployment were associated with increased mortality from all the cancer types. The association was strongest for treatable cancers, suggesting that lack of access to care may have been a factor in these excess deaths.

The study found that adverse health effects persisted for several years after initial increases in unemployment. In addition, excess cancer deaths were a more significant problem in middle-income countries than in high-income countries.

In countries with universal health coverage -- defined in the study as countries that have legislation mandating universal health coverage, more than 90% health care coverage, and more than 90% skilled birth attendance -- the link between unemployment and excess cancer deaths disappeared, suggesting that greater access to health care played a key role in mitigating the problem.

26 OECD countries were listed in the study as having universal health coverage, while 9 did not have it (Barbados, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Uruguay, and the U.S.).

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FAMOUS QUOTES

Oscar Ameringer (1870 – 1943) 73 years

He was a German-American Socialist editor, author, and organizer from the late 1890s until his death in 1943. Ameringer made a name for himself in the Oklahoma Socialist Party as the editor of its newspaper and a prominent organizer for the party. His most famous work, The Life and Deeds of Uncle Sam, was a widely-read satire of American history that sold over half a million copies and was translated into 15 languages.

"Politics is the gentle art

of getting votes from the poor

and campaign funds from the rich,

by promising to protect each from the other."