UPRISING! October 4, 2012

Presidential Debate Offers No Critique of Capitalism

Education, Artistic Expression, and Activism. It’s Thursday October 4, 2012 and I’m your host Sonali Kolhatkar.

Analyzing last night’s Presidential Debate with our election analysts Roberto Lovato, Adele Stan, and Eric Mann. What issues were explored within the confines of the debate and which candidate offers a better plan for the nation?

This is UPRISING!

Good morning and welcome to Uprising!. The two major party candidates Barack Obama and Mitt Romney faced off against eachother for the first time in this election season last night at the University of Denver in Colorado. The first presidential debate moderated by PBS’s Jim Lehrer, excluded all other party candidate’s from the debate and focused on domestic issues. The candidates sparred over the economy with respect of taxes, Medicare, the Affordable Care Act, financial regulations, domestic energy production, as well as the role of government. Commentators this morning are concluding that Governor Romney appeared to be the better prepared of the two, while President Obama appeared unsure of himself. It is still too soon to tell what impact last night’s debate will have on both major party candidates popularity, particularly in swing states like Ohio and Colorado, but we’ll spend the next 30 minutes of our program this morning getting into the issues discussed and whether some of the facts thrown out by the candidates stand up to scrutiny.

Our guest today are a round table of Uprising’s 2012 election analysts: Roberto Lovato is a writer with New America Media, co-founder of Presente.org. and Adele Stan is a Washington bureau chief for AlterNet.

Sonali: The two of them are on the phone with me, “Welcome to Uprising! Roberto and Adele”

Adele: Thanks so much for having me

Sonali: And in studio with me is Eric Mann, our third guest. He is the host of Voices From the Frontlines, he's also the author of Playbook for Progressives, welcome Eric.

Eric: Good Morning Sonali.

Sonali: Well let me play for the three of you just excerpts from the opening statements of both candidates from last night’s debate. Excerpts of what they say they would do differently from the other.

Excerpts

Obama: ultimately it’s going to be up to the voters, to you. Which path we should take. Are we going to double down on the top down economic policies that helped to get us into this mess or do we embrace a new economic patriotism, that says America does best when the middle class does the best. And I’m looking forward to having that debate.

Romney: Now I’m concerned that the path that we’re on has just been unsuccessful. The president has a view very similar to the view he had when he ran 4 years ago; that a bigger government, spending more, taxing more, regulating more, if you will trickle down government it would work. That’s not the right answer for America. I’ll restore the vitality that gets America working again.

Eric Mann, what were your first impressions of the debate?

Eric: That was pretty pathetic that the debate between President Obama who is not supporting government regulation, who’s not developing a safety net, who’s not used government money to stop the foreclosures, who’s not stood up to the banks, is trying to run as an economic populists using patriotism. I think he crashed on the fact that he couldn’t defend his own record because it’s indefensible. Then you have George Romney who is a really, really dangerous guy who was prepped and had his hair really good and had his one liners but he is even more dangerous; he really does plan to go after Planned Parenthood, he plans to go after Public Television, he plans to go after abortion rights, but in the Age of Packaging [he did well] For the first time I was thinking about it; Obama is used to being a frontrunner and he doesn’t know what to do when he is challenged.

Sonali: Roberto Lovato your brief impressions overall of the debate.

Roberto: I agree with what Eric was saying. We live in an age when the substantive difference between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party has largely been eviscerated. If you go on with that mind you kind of get the dull, insubstantial concierge of the debate and the ruling ending, zero eccentric topic debate that you got. And really you have the mentored by Jim Lehrer, oh my god, I really felt bad that he’s going up cause we will never see him in another debate after this. I feel bad for him because he's actually been known for being very well prepared and he goes out on a debate where Romney is not just trampled over and be this kind of over debater. I thought it was kind of predictable if you look at what both parties had to offer, you know what’s Burger King and what’s McDonald’s. Which is Which.

Sonali: Well, Adele Stan your first impressions overall of the debate.

Adele: Well, I agree that it was pathetic. I mean, honestly, it had to be one of the worst, if not the worst presidential debate of my long career that I had to sit through, just watching in television I wasn’t in Denver. However, I disagree with the other panelists in that, still it could’ve been a much more lively debate, I believe that Obama, he had a narrow lead was, he was playing what he though was safe. And there were a number f challenges he could’ve made to Romney that he did not make, he ever raised the 47% video where Romney claims he has the country just saw themselves as victims and in terms of Jim Lehrer, I wish I could feel sorry for him. I don’t know why he was there, I honestly don’t know; I mean the debate would have gone the same way as it did without him.

Sonali: Let’s take a listen to the two candidates sparring on the issue of deficits and taxes. We’ll hear from both of them and then get our round table’s response.

Obama: This is where there is a difference because Governor Romney’s Central Economic Plan calls for a $5 trillion tax cut, on top of the extension of the Bush Tax Cuts—that’s another trillion dollars. And two trillion dollars in additional military spending that the military hasn’t asked for; that’s $8 trillion, how we pay for that reduce the deficit and make the investments that we need to make--

Romney:---First of all, I don’t have the $5 trillion tax cut, I don’t have a tax cut of the scale that your are talking about. My view is that we have to provide tax relief to the people in middle class but I am not going to reduce the share of taxes paid by high income people. High income people are doing just fine in this economy, they’ll do fine whether you’re president or I am.

Sonali: Perhaps the truest thing said in the debate is wealthy people will do fine no matter who is president, which we really should be parse a little bit more. Eric Mann, a lot of what was said yesterday focused on what’s best fro the middle class and both candidates claimed that they wouldn’t cut taxes in the middle class and that they would in fact make wealthy pay more, what do you think?

Eric: Well again, I think that I do see a difference between Obama and Romney which we’ll discuss at some other point. But at the actual level of the content let’s understand that President Obama had the chance to let the Bush Tax Cuts go, he didn’t do so. So to say that in the next 4 years he’s going to do anything he didn’t do in his first 4 years isn’t believable. He has been the one to push deficit reduction, he's the one who bought into the argument of deficit reduction, never stood up to it, he never defended the social welfare state when he had a chance; so now, his big issue in the middle of [deporting 1.2 million immigrants] and 2.4 million people in prison he wants to tell us that if re-elected he’s going to raise the marginal tax rate on the rich from 35% to 40% and we’re suppose to think this is a major class struggle…I’m sorry, it’s not.

Sonali: Well Adele Stan what do you make of it?

Adele: Well, I take Eric’s point that there’s a whole lot more that Obama could have and should have been doing. Especially on allowing those tax cuts to expire for the wealthiest. I do think that you have to examine, not saying that this is an excuse, it’s a look into Obama’s psychology, the circumstance by which he extended those tax cuts and that was because he felt proud by the Republican Congressmen , he too often has in a situation where America was said to be going defaulting on its debt. So, I think that what we’ve got going on here is a president who has not known quite how to deal with this extremely oppositional Congress (A) and (B) I agree, he’s not a progressive, and he has allowed some very terrible things to happen. But I think that there’s a whole lot going on and I think that on the Liberal and Progressive side we often don’t really look at the pressures that are being brought by the Right wing in al of its organizational and infrastructure that it has going on.

Sonali: Roberto Lovato what do you make of what Adele just said that the President could’ve done better but is facing so much pressure from the Right?

Roberto: It depends how we define the Right. Is the Right a disorganized body of Tea Partiers and think tanks and Washington and other groups? Or is the Right the corporate powers that be?

Adele: Well let’s all see.

Roberto: You could say groups, then yeah Obama has space to maneuver but if it’s the corporations Obama needs both candidates, then what’s the difference

Sonali: Adele would you---

Roberto: It goes back to that, what's the substantive difference when it comes to affecting corporate---I mean Mitt Romney did, did anybody hear last night that Romney hinted that he might even take back some of the tax breaks that the oil companies and gas companies are getting? That was like fascinating that way that Romney kind of just became even more liberal than Obama at some point on someway. And he sounded like it.

Adele: Well, he’s acting that way during election time.

Roberto: The fact that Obama didn’t even mention these taxes. A lot of Obamas Ads have been about taxes. People have been talking about it, he didn’t even bring it up—

Sonali: that’s a really good good point Roberto, and I think Adele you were mentioning that as well. Not only did Obama not bring up taxes, he didn’t bring up the video that showed Romney’s derision for the 47% and there were lots of openings that he didn’t take. Well let’s take a listen to the two candidates talking about small businesses. This is another really interesting issue that is often raised and cuts to the heart of what the definition of what a small business is. Here’s President Obama and Governor Romney.

Obama: We do have a difference though when it comes to the definition of small business. Under my plan, 97% of small businesses would not see their income taxes go up. Governor Romney says “well those top 3% their the job creators they’ll be burdened.” But under Governor Romney’s definition, they're all bunch of millionaires and billionaires who have small businesses. Donald Trump is a small business, and I know Donald Trump doesn’t like to think of himself as small anything, but that’s how you define small businesses if you’re getting business income.

Romney: President you’re absolutely right, with regards to 97% of the businesses are not taxed at the 35% tax, they’re taxed at a lower rate. But those businesses that are in the last 3% in businesses happen to employ half, half of all the people who work in small business. Those are the businesses that employ one quarter of all the workers in America. And your plan is to take their tax rate from 35% to 40%, the National Federation of Independent Businesses has said that will cost 700,000 jobs. I don’t want to cost jobs, and so what I do is bring down the tax rates, lower deductions and exemptions, the same idea behind Bold Simpson by the way; get the rates down, lower deductions and exemptions, to create more jobs because there’s nothing better for getting us to a balanced budget then having more people working, earning more money, paying more taxes—that’s by far the most effective and efficient way to get this budget balanced.

Sonali: Well there are certain things going on in that debate and I’m wondering Eric if you can first of all comment on how interesting it was that Obama referred to the top 3% of small businesses as having to be taxed at higher rate. Romney referred to them as the last 3%, but Romney said that those are the businesses that employ half of all people in small business and one quarter of all American workers. I mean did these facts stand up to scrutiny? Does he really expect us to believe these are small businesses and who is he talking about? Did you get who he was talking about?

Eric: Well, you can slice the number anyway you want but the essence to me again, is that if there is a real debate on abortion rights, I’m interested to say I see a difference. It’s not like I don’t see a difference if there's a difference, but if we’re arguing over again raising from 35% to 40%, c’mon there’s no difference there---

Sonali: --And that’s just for the top 3%

Eric: For the top 3%, now the average person sitting there who’s losing their job, losing their house, you really think that the election is going to hang on the mathematical assessment of what is the top, yes these are companies that have millions and tens of millions but not billions of dollars. So, if you’re interested in the hypothetical difference but the reality is, it’s another non debate. And it’s scary because there are really critical issues to be debated but this isn’t one of them.

Sonali: Adele Stan how do you respond also to this notion but also what Romney was trying to say, which I think he sounded articulate saying was that you don’t necessarily fix the economy unless you get more people working and in his mind the way you do that is by giving tax breaks and somehow, magically corporations will hire more people and those people will earn money and there will be more taxes and revenue into the system.

Adele: Yeah, but you know, I mean if you look at the fact check that CNN did about all of that, I mean, they write that of the top 400 people who got (this is IRS data) who got 19.8 billion in excorporation and partnership net income in 2009, 237 of them count as small business. So, I think that it is a critical, I do think that all those percentage things minor, I think its an important marker and if you look at how these people describe themselves, they do qualify in the small business category depending on how they define their companies. So you know, while I’m not arguing that this is like the end all and be all and this is the way to overall fix the economy, I’m not arguing that at all, but I do think that it is a marker of a difference in the way that the two candidates see job creation.

Sonali: Well Roberto Lovato what would be parameters of the discussion have been if you had been Jim Lehrer? What sort of questions would you have asked in terms of taxing corporations and opening up this discussion to something a little more broader than to what was discussed yesterday?

Roberto: Start talking about big corporations instead of small businesses. Because we are not going to fundamentally alter the direction of our country, the world, unless we deal with not just the taxation of corporations but the role of corporations in our lives, the domination of the most important aspect of our lives whether it’s education and it’s imprisonment, whether it’s culture and its inverse kind of this plastic thing they call culture, whether its jobs and inverse, I mean we can't go without discussing the role of corporations in society, in our lives, tax culture..I mean corporation. I’ve always wanted, I have an obsession with that. I have a question of what makes them wanna go there, what are the talking points and stay.

Adele: What Roberto is saying too, 26 major corporations paid no corporate income tax for the last 4 years..

Sonali: And that was never raised.

Adele: Yes that was not raised.

Sonali: Another thing that wasn’t raised were the words bank capital in the entire discussion, Eric Mann…

Eric: The thing that is scary about disorientation and debate is look, if the President said ‘I believe in the social welfare state not the police state so I plan to cut military spending, I want a surplus, I want more money for social programs, I want this.’ He doesn’t say that, he’s basically saying we both want to reduce the deficit but I would like a little bit of income coming back.

Sonali: In fact on that note let me play the clip that the two of them, when they discuss the specifics of their spending cuts, Obama talked about what he’s already cut and what he would cut.

 Romney: What things would I cut from spending; well first of all I would eliminate all programs by this test if they don’t pass it. Is the program so critical? Is it worth borrowing from China to pay for and if not I’ll get rid of it. Obamacare is on my list, I apologize Mr.. President. I used that term with all respect.

 Obama: I like it.

 Romney: Ok good. So I’ll get rid of that, I’m sorry Jim, I’m going to stop the subsidy to PBS, I’m going to stop it, I like PBS, I love Big Bird, I actually like you too. But I’m not going to keep on spending money on things to borrow from China to pay for; that’s number 1. Number 2 I’ll take programs that are currently good programs but I think they could run more efficiently at the state level. And send them to state. Number three I’ll make government more efficient and cut back the number of employees, combine some agencies and departments, my cut backswill be done through a attrition, by the way.

 Obama: Lets make sure that we are cutting out those things that are not helping us run. So, 77 government programs, everything from aircrafts, that the airforce had ordered but weren’t working very well. 18 government programs for education that were well intentioned but weren’t helping kids learn. We went after medical fraud, in medicare and medicaid, very aggressively, more aggressively than ever before and it saved tens of billions of dollars, 50 billion dollars of waste taken out of the system. And I worked with Democrats And Republicans to cut a trillion dollars out of our discretionary domestic budget. That;s the largest cut in the discretionary domestic budget since Dwight Eisenhower. Now, we all now that we have to do more so I put a forward a specific $4 trillion deficit reduction plan. It's on a website. You can look at all the numbers, what cuts we make and what revenue we raise.

And the way we do it is $2.50 for every cut, we ask for $1 of additional revenue, paid for, as I indicated earlier, by asking those of us who have done very well in this country to contribute a little bit more to reduce the deficit.

Sonali: Eric Mann continue your though now about what you think is the difference between the two in terms on what they would cut in spending. You mentioned the welfare state, as something neither candidate really emphasizes.

Eric: You listen to Romney first and that’s terrifying. Let’ understand that he is talking about, when he says PBS, that’s a big thing. When he says he’s gonna cut Obamacare, that’s a big thing. It is a big difference, so now you go and this guy is going to cut even more, so then when you’re waiting for Obama, okay now here’s your chance, defend social programs, defend the social welfare state, what do you say Obama. And instead of defending social spending, Obama says, “I also agree that deficit reduction is the primary issue but let me tell you the difference…”; but once you start that, you now agree that the deficit reduction not people’s livelihood is the big issue. And now, Obama says, “I got rid of a trillion dollars in discretionary domestic programs.” What does that mean? Look, I work with low income bus riders, I work with low income high school students, you're cutting every single lifeline to families from medical to mental health, you have done it Obama and when given a chance to defend those social programs you really focus on how many more cuts you want to make. And then you want a little bit more discretionary income by taxing a few people a little bit more. It’s not just pathetic, it’s his 4 years and a lot of cruelty has been imposed on people in those 4 years.

Sonali: In that stand Matt Taibbi had this great piece in the Rolling Stones recently how there should be a much greater difference between the candidates in terms of poll numbers but the fact that this election is so close, is really indicative of Obama’s failure to distinguish himself enough from Romney, do you agree with what Eric just said in Taibbi’s analysis?

Adele: I think that the part of it I really do, I think that Obama not Showing the courage to stand for people and being so constantly cowed by the right, but I think the other piece of this Sonali is the Right wing having organized against Obama and we haven’t even talked about the racial subtext there. Which is huge.

Sonali: Well go ahead.

Adele: because you had a lot of white people who voted for Obama reluctantly the last time and the only reason they did was that he wasn’t a Republican. The Republicans that tanked the economy, these people are watching their 401K is sink right? So, those racial concerns, those tropes, those biases, those prejudices, all come back into play with the economy still not being in a great place, (A). (B) the Right has done a brilliant job of playing on all of those fears with all kinds of lies that have deeply polarized the electorate to the point on where you have a much smaller number of undecided, unpersuadable voters in this election that we’ve seen in my lifetime; I mean only 6% or so of the electorate is deemed persuadable. So people, so this game is being turned on the Republicans side is more about turning out their base. If they turn our their base and Obama only turns out half of his Romney wins.

Sonali: Roberto what do you make of what Adele just said?

Roberto: I have in common in the budget cutting part, I would’ve like, instead of hearing “I like PBS, I like Big Bird” I would’ve love both candidates to say “I love China” when Romney says that he will stop borrowing from China he’s lying through his teeth. That won’t happen, we are living in an altered economist life and the American dream for the perceivable truth feature is absolutely dead. We re entering a even more devastating economic moment. And that’s what they're not talking about, Obama would’ve done well in another set of tone, but he’s going to be cutting funds but he's not talking about decreasing the number of ICE agents, decreasing the number of number of police surveillance and decreasing the military because both candidates agreed that on this economy that this is tanking . And they need as many people with guns to surveil the population within the borders of the US to really track down in case there’s another Occupy or some other expression of popular discontent.

Sonali: Right, and that didn’t even enter the conversation, no mention of the mass movement over the past year. Obama didn’t even gain to use the language that he's has referred to in the pas, the 99% versus the 1%. Eric Mann..

Eric: I just want to go back to the racial coding because I think that that’s absolutely right [but I think Obama’s response to it] is a tragedy. I do think that the fight to protect the Black president even if the Black president is going out of his way to not talk about Black people, is a critical dividing line in US history, I do. But while Obama is afraid of a white backlash, what’s being lost is, Black culture is an incredibly attractive culture, a lot of white people understand that Black people who’ve told it like it is, there’s an authenticity, there's a decency, there’s a whole history of Black progressiveness in this country that shaped the whole debate. President Obama has consciously distanced himself from that, so what he’s done is got the worst of both, he’s getting all the racial animus but he doesn’t have the racial pride and identity to just stand up and say “I’m a Black man, I don’t want to put up with this” he doesn’t have to say it in those words but if it’s racially coding, there wasn’t an ounce of anger, there wasn’t an ounce of soul, and if you have a Black president who won’t show his soul running against a white soulless guy, it’s white racism that’s going to win the debate. It’s up to us to put the soul back into the election because the president won’t touch it.

Sonali: Finally, one of the things that keeps coming up is all of the openings that Obama didn’t take and Romney talked about jobs and outsourcing of jobs in this small excerpt from last night’s debate.

Romney: you said you get a deduction for taking a plant overseas. Look, I've been in business for 25 years. I have no idea what you're talking about. I maybe need to get a new accountant. But the idea that you get a break for shipping jobs overseas is simply not the case. What we do have right now is a setting where I'd like to bring money from overseas back to this country.

Amazing that Obama didn’t come back with saying, well Romney as a CEO of Bain capital, that’s exactly what you did was send jobs overseas and if you didn’t have an incentive to do so, why did you do it? Adele Stan.

Adele: Well yeah, he could’ve just said, you should know, you're the expert.

Sonali: Right. But he didn’t say it.

Adele: It was really painful to watch.

Sonali: Do you think that Obama was just unprepared or weak? Or is it part of what Eric was just referring to as Obama having sort of chosen the worst position to be in?

Adele: I think that Eric is right. I think that there was some calculation, of which I think is really bad strategy but somebody decided it was a good strategy for Obama just not to offend anybody. Part of that calculus I believe, and Eric can tell me if he thinks I’m wrong, but if that they are so afraid that sliver of this white suburban vote that is still undecided, might look at Obama and hear that he’s an angry Black man and not vote for him because of that. I think so much driving, of this mess we saw last night.

Sonali: Finally, Roberto Lovato and then I’ll get closing comments from the rest of my panelists as well. Roberto, some of the discussion this morning is that Mitt Romney won the debate, he seemed the best prepared and now the media is itching for the horse race to be up and run again now that there might be a closing of the gap in some of the swing states. How do you react when you see this kind of media coverage? Again, amazing that this race is as close as it is.

Roberto: That shouldn’t surprise us as most media is corporate. You make an something out of this caucus of this debate that we’ve just been exposed to. So, yeah let’s see what the poles say, is it going to fundamentally alter, Marco Rubio is out there, I don’t know. About this whole issue whether not we hold up and they send a Black president. I don’t think when we have a Black president or a purple president who is bombing with impunity, destroying the lives of immigrants, will equal in even more ordeal than any White president. When we have somebody who is fundamentally committed to the corporate agenda like the Republicans have, I don’t need to defend him I need to expose the facts that, I believe personally that he's helped us disarm the civil rights and the black tradition because in the community, my friends tell me that to critic Obama, any Black community, its not like with the Latinos, we’ve been direct and focused on not being silent by Obama and the Democrats and I think that, I feel more urgency about that and maintaining the powerful critique of these devastating bad policies than I do about choosing a Black President. I just don’t feel logic in that.

Sonali: Well, Roberto Lovato and I thank you very much for joining us today, we’ll have you back on before November 6. Thanks so much.

Eric Mann you’re final thoughts on the debate and maybe what you foresee or hope to see in the coming debates.

Eric: Well I want to unite with something Roberto said, that we disagree maybe, on the final tactical decision on who to vote for, but the Latino community has been really playing a great role in standing up to the President, which is very unique. I think the Dream Act students should really be commended for putting it to Obama. We should be clear that his movement on immigration was because of their struggle. Inside the Black community there is a debate going on and there is a critical debate about standing up to the President and that debate has to be won, so I think, hats off to the Occupy kids who broke out of this Democratic party silence, hats off to the people in the Black community who have been taking on the President as well. That is what’s being missed and we can’t spend the next month just talking about what Obama should do because he doesn’t want to do it, he hasn't wanted to do it [stand up to the right] for 4 years so we shouldn’t expect that his behavior yesterday is anything different from the last 4 years of how he’s operated in the face of the Right. I’d like to be his advisor and tell him what to do but the man seems to know what he wants to do.

Sonali: Well Eric Mann thank you so much, you’re going out be staying with us for the rest of the hour. Adele Stan, your final thoughts and maybe what you’d like to see in the next debates.

Adele: My final thoughts, it’d be what Roberto is saying and I hear what he’s saying but as a woman, thinking about the supreme court, I’m sorry there’s a huge difference and that also applies to civil rights law and to all kinds of other things. He may not love Obama the policy maker but he’s also going to be the person who chooses the next Supreme Court justices and I think that’s a huge distinction. For the next debate, what I predict is that Obama will be much more on his game. I think he’s one of these people who may need to be the underdog and come back. However, I’m not sure how much difference the debates are really make, I think they're all being played for the media and that this is going to be an election about turn out. The one last thing I would say is that , I do think it matters that the President is Black because I think that he is regarded by the greater society as a stand-in for all Black people, so I do believe there is a level on which he needs to be defended just for that reason.

Eric: And I completely agree on that.

Sonali: Well Adele Stan I want to thank you so much for joining us as well, hope to have back on between now and November 6 again, thanks so much.

Adele: Thank you for having me Sonali.

Sonali: Adele Stan is the Washington bureau chief for AlterNet and Roberto Lovato and Roberto Lovato is a writer with New America Media, co-founder of Presente.org. Eric Mann host of Voices From the Frontlines heard here on KPFK, is also the author of Playbook for Progressives. This is Uprising! we’re going to take a quick break and when we come back Richard Wolf Stationed.

Fund Drive

Sonali: Now Eric Mann you’re just not a political analyst, you’re a local activist and organizer and you also host your own KPFK, and KPFK means a lot to someone like you.

Eric: It means a whole lot, I mean, on my own show Voices From the Frontlines but also it’s amazing how great UPRISING! is, really and to understand the seriousness of 8 o’clock in the morning to be able to have this show everyday.

Sonali: Thank you.

Eric: I mean that. You there are people at Dorsey High School right now that are fighting reconstruction, reconstitution of their schools, there are people that are losing their homes, there are people who are in struggle against the police state; you know how hard it is to get the LA Times to cover this? Pacifica is the station for me, that all the social movements in this city who are organizing turn to. During the Occupy Los Angeles arrests I was down there as a correspondent for Pacifica. And there was KPFK allowing me to report from the scene to Mark Maxwell’s Show at midnight to call in right from City Hall what the organizers were doing. Was anybody else at midnight giving that coverage while the police were about to lock people up, so this is not sort of a good thing for folks, this is not ‘yeah I think I agree with you’ this is a checkbook/ credit card right now move. Please even if you have given, give in again, the social movements in this city that Black and Latino community, the labor movement, desperately need KPFK. I do love the station and I think we should give a lot of money right now.

Eric: Well, just to say one point that Adele Stan said that I thought was excellent, that I should’ve said better, is she said that regardless of Obama, this election is still a vote about the Black community and he is a stand-in for the Black community. We have to understand why 97% of Black people are going to vote for the president when only 3% or less will vote for Romney because they know what the difference is. So I think that’s really important and yes, we can expect Obama to talk about the New Deal but I think he may come back to realize that the angry Black man may show up for the second debate because I think his advisors are going to push him a little bit. but I think what’s really great, I learned something when I listen to Roberto Lovato, when I listen to Adele Stan, I’m not just commentating, I’m listening, I’m learning from other intelligent people who are saying interesting things that are influencing my thought.

Richard Wolff: We debated our health system, we debate our energy system, should we rely more on solar, on nuclear, non nuclear and solar. We even debate what a marriage is, what sexuality is, pretty heavy stuff. Do we debate our economic system? Hardly Ever. Our Republicans and our Democrats out-do each other to be cheerleaders for capitalism; why it’s the best thing since sliced bread made even better. It’s wonderful! Isn’t it great! Isn’t it the best! Isn’t it the apogee of what humans could achieve, what's this about? If everybody is cheerleading the economic system, then we don’t permit as a nation, and that’s been true for 50 years. We don’t permit a debate.

Sonali: Richard Wolff, we had to cut off early because we just have a minute or two left in the hour and you know Eric, what I love about him is not only does he articulate his views so clearly, he’s real funny too and we need humor and laughter in our lives.

Eric: We need more Jews. I think that Jews have a great political sense of humor. We all figure a lot of stuff that is messed up but we’re good at being funny and being funny about Capitalism and using the role of sarcasm and ridicule not just logical arguments, please listen president Obama, that people operate on many different levels and the role of intellectual ridicule is a great cultural tradition among Jewish people. I’ve learned a lot and I enjoy listening to Richard to his what we call his “shtick.” So c’mon folks we have two minutes, if you like Jewish people give a vote for the Jewish people right now. for Jewish people struggling for Socialism, do it for my grandmother who was a 105 when she died, she helped build the ILGWU. She survived the Pogroms in Russia who taught me so many things. She was probably like Richard’s grandmother as well, c’mon folks, get your credit cards and give us some money.

Sonali: (818) 985-5735 is the phone number to call (818) 985-kpfk. If you have enjoyed Eric Mann’s commentary on the program today, and I really enjoyed it and appreciate everything that you do Eric, please give us a call. Eric Mann Than you very much for joining us today.

Eric: Thanks a lot Sonali.

Sonali: For Sonali’s aversive thought today, Richard Wolff once said “Capitalism is the problem – and the joblessness, homelessness, insecurity, and austerity it now imposes everywhere are the costs we bear. We just need to reorganize our producing units differently, to go beyond a capitalist economic system that no longer serves our needs.”

That’s Richard Wolff, that’s Sonali’s subversive thought for the day.