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Radical Roadmap: Whack the Middle Class

 by **Meteor Blades**

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NPR's Guy Raz **interviewed** Wisconsin Republican Paul Ryan Sunday. It was another softball moment. You could almost see Raz nodding in agreement with the genial Congressman as he plugged his radical **Roadmap for America's Future**. It's this era's **Contract with America**, with Ryan as a more appealing, more narrowly focused Newt Gingrich, pitching a plan for completing the bumpy 30-year-long journey whose destination for middle-class citizens is the bottom of a cliff. A Deadend Plan for America.

Except, of course, for that hunk of the population that decades of upwardly transferring wealth has already fattened to the proportions of **Mr. Creosote**. For that Top Tenth, Ryan's plan offers more of the same smooth ride. Raz asked Ryan if he weren't concerned that the leadership of the GOP has failed to publicly back his plan. That's the line that **Newsweek** and the Cato Institute have taken, too. But why should Ryan worry? The leadership will eventually come around. The Roadmap, after all, would transform their Reaganomic fantasies into reality.

Certainly, Ryan is right about one thing. The United States must get a handle on its taxes and revenues. In spite of supposedly being filled with new ideas, however, the Roadmap for America's Future is, at its core, just another round of the same old, same old plutocratic plan, including a partial privatization of Social Security, chops in spending except for the military, and lower tax rates for, you guessed it, the guys whose taxes get reduced every time a Republican plops himself down in the Oval Office. But this time the plan is more radical than ever. It would: repeal all federal estate and gift taxes; repeal taxes on interest, capital gains, and dividends; repeal the alternative minimum tax; repeal the corporate income tax and replace it with an 8.5% value-added tax on most goods and services.

Three organizations have taken a look at Ryan's radical proposals. They've all come to the same conclusion: Screw-job for the middle class. Bonanza for the wealthy. Would you be surprised to learn that the Heritage Foundation doesn't see eye-to-eye with this assessment?

The **Tax Policy Center** projected the consequences for 2014:

Anybody making less than \$20,000 a year would get a break of about \$100-\$300 on their income taxes. Anybody making \$20,000 to \$200,000 would get taxed more than now. Anybody making \$200,000 to \$1,000,000 would rake in the dough. Above a million dollars, the average benefit would come in over half-a-million a year. Ka-ching!

The **Center for Budget and Policy Priorities** took a look, too:

- The higher one goes up the income scale, the more massive the tax cuts would be. Households with incomes of more than \$1 million would receive an average annual tax cut of \$502,000.
- The richest *one-tenth of 1 percent* of Americans — those whose incomes exceed \$2.9 million a year — would receive an average tax cut of \$1.7 million a year. These tax cuts would be *on top of* those that high-income households would get from making the Bush tax cuts, which are due to expire at the end of 2010, permanent. ...
- The plan would shift tax burdens so substantially from the wealthy to the middle class that people with incomes over \$1 million would face much *lower* effective tax rates than middle-income families would. That is, they would pay much smaller percentages of their income in federal taxes.

The third group, **Citizens for Tax Justice**, concluded:

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It's difficult to design a tax plan that will lose \$2 trillion over a decade even while requiring 90 percent of taxpayers to pay more. But Congressman Paul Ryan has met that daunting challenge. This analysis makes obvious that Congressman Ryan's budget plan has nothing to do with balancing the budget, but has everything to do with creating a system that takes more from the poor and less from the rich.

You can read the CTJ's whole report [here \[pdf\]](#).

Anyone not yet clear on the meaning of class warfare can get the whole gory picture from the Roadmap. Even if the final product is called something else, even if it doesn't have Paul Ryan's name on it, even if it's ultimately presented piecemeal, this monstrosity constitutes the right-wingers' dream agenda. They'll sell it as "facing reality" and "necessary medicine." The alternatives, like progressive taxation, they'll label "unAmerican." Same song, 50th verse.

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h/t to [Sam Pizzigati](#)

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