

## The Same Old Deal:

Well, it sure is painful to admit it, but here I am feeling a tad disillusioned by the economic fixes instituted by the Obama administration. I know it's still early and it took a long time to create the mess that we're in and there are plenty of interest groups who want to perpetuate the mess. But even so, I was looking forward to a new New Deal. I was hoping that a great many new jobs would be created in the alternative energy sector. I was thinking that millions of skilled and unskilled workers would be arrayed against our crumbling infrastructure. I was hoping for, gasp, government ventures and government subsidies of private ventures especially in those two fields. Instead the employment picture continues to be very bleak and by a lot of reports it is getting bleaker.

Wall Street is doing great though. I guess that's supposed to make us feel better. I see where stocks are at their high for the year and that this fact has made billions of dollars for the bankers and brokers. These are the same men and women who crashed their firms in the first place. These are the same astute men and women who were given stock options when shares in their firms were trading at record lows. Now, a year or so later, those same shares have risen astronomically and the top level bankers and brokers are a whole lot richer. The administration is not putting people to work in underserved sectors. They are putting millions of dollars into the same pockets over and over and over. This government is doing a whole lot better at creating wealth on Wall Street than it is at creating jobs everywhere else.

Let me see if I've got this right. Wise guys create wealth out of nothing by packaging and reselling junk. The bubble grows and grows until too many people realize, "Hey this stuff is worthless". Then it all falls down, trillions lost, tens of thousands of foreclosures, businesses ruined. Then the Banks that are "too big to let fail" are given trillions to stabilize their businesses. Then exactly the same folks who pushed us off the ledge are back at it, conjuring up more schemes by which they create the next bubble to sell the world. The rest of working America is in really rough shape while the top few thousand folks in the financial powerhouses have been made wealthier. Even harder to swallow, they have been given immunity and the funds to do it all again. They wrecked it. They are in charge of fixing it. They will wreck it again. They will be even richer when they are done.

This is not the New Deal that I was imagining. This looks very much like the Same Old Deal, the same old sweet deal for the already wealthy which has been a Republican trademark for years. In fact, until something tells me otherwise, that's what I'm going to start calling it, the Same Old Deal. We are in the first year of an incredibly disappointing program, carefully crafted by the best and brightest economists and sold by the Obama administration and it is called the Same Old Deal. Welcome to the first milestone of post Bushian optimism. Welcome to the single biggest initiative, by far, of the new administration. The Same Old Deal. Ouch.

Apparently the argument for this approach to healing our nation's economy is based on the notion that if you keep cash loose (in supply) and keep lenders lending (more cash) and keep those talented, greedy people on the job at the top financial houses (more cash) you grow a Hypothetical Economy that creates jobs. If the Economy (more cash) is bigger at the top, the jobs will follow. The fat cats will create new jobs with all that money rather than simply getting a fat return on their investments. Sounds like Reagan's screwball "Trickle Down" economics to me, all over again

Why not create jobs instead of dividends? Why not put people to work creating things apart from investment schemes? Yup, that's right, why doesn't the Government put engineers and scientists and clerks and drivers and plumbers and laborers to work directly? Go fix that school building, here's ten million. Go invent a real battery powered car, here's a hundred million. Build a market savvy solar industry, here's ten billion.

Instead, the Deal is as follows: Go find new ways to package nothing, pay your investors a dividend and give yourselves the bonuses you've come to expect, here's a trillion. If you're a banker or a broker or a wizard of Wall Street it's great. You woke up this morning and found yourself right where you want to be, smack dab in the middle of the Same Old Deal.