

The Conservative Planning Meeting on the Wall Street Bailout

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The Supreme Conservative (banging the gavel): I am calling this emergency meeting of the Supreme Conservative Steering Committee to order. Gentlemen, we are faced with a dire threat to our movement. We must take immediate decisive and patriotic action to solve this problem.

The Young Republican: Sir, I don't understand the problem.

The Supreme Conservative: We have discovered a major flaw in the ideology that we have been publicly promoting, one that threatens the very fabric of American society. The free market actually penalizes stupidity by the giant companies that sponsor our institutes.

The Free Market Fanatic: I have been claiming that for years. See, I was right. I'm a genius.

The Supreme Conservative: No, no, no. This is bad news. We need to revise our ideology to enable massive government bailouts of corporate stupidity.

The Amoral Yoda: Sounds good to me!

The Supreme Conservative: I have had my staff of sniveling yes men conduct a thorough search for a new ideology that we can start to promote as conservatism without this dangerous flaw.

The Social Conservative: It has to respect and promote traditional family values.

The Supreme Conservative: Well, er,... just hear me out.

The Fiscal Conservative: I'm in favor of it so long as it results in a balanced budget.

The Supreme Conservative: Well, er,... just hear me out.

The Nutty Neoconservative: We must never repeat Neville Chamberlain's craven appeasement of Hitler at Munich.

The Supreme Conservative: Well, er, ... just hear me out.

The Titanic Transformer (fiddling with his Blackberry): So long as it is cool and high tech, I'm for it.

The Supreme Conservative: Well, er, ... just hear me out.

The Amoral Yoda: So long as my polls indicate the public will buy it, I'm for it.

The Supreme Conservative: Well, er, ... just hear me out.

The Pompous Conservative: This entire mess is the public, the Liberal Democrats, and the government's fault. So long as that principle is maintained, I'm for it.

The Supreme Conservative: Feudalism. We replace the free market with feudalism. We make CEO's of giant companies and top Wall Street executives into a hereditary nobility: Dukes, Counts, Viscounts, Earls, the whole bit, straight from the 14th century complete with the droit de seigneur. It's traditional.

The Young Republican: What is the droit de seigneur?

The Academic Conservative: In the traditional feudal system, the nobleman had the right to sleep with the wives or daughters of his serfs.

The Young Republican (smiling): That sounds great if you are a nobleman. I get to be a nobleman, right?

The Social Conservative: I'm not sure that is consistent with family values.

The Amoral Yoda: My detailed studies of human nature indicate that most males in the US population have a negative attitude toward other men sleeping with their wife, significant other, or daughter. As a general rule. This sounds like a non-starter from my point of view.

The Supreme Conservative (scowling): All right, we'll drop the droit de seigneur part. At least for now.

The Fiscal Conservative: Will it balance the budget?

The Academic Conservative: Actually, feudal systems were often heavily in debt despite heavy taxes and frequent wars to plunder other nations.

The Fiscal Conservative: Well, that doesn't sound so good...

The Supreme Conservative: Ahem. Our position is that the wars pay for themselves.

The Young Republican: Just like Iraq!

The Supreme Conservative: Exactly!

The Amoral Yoda (nudging and whispering to the Young Republican): Way to go kid! You told him what he wants to hear. You got a brownie point.

The Supreme Conservative: Our new position will be that companies have a right to their profits. If they screw up, the government will impose taxes on other people who didn't screw up and make sure the badly run companies are profitable.

The Free Market Fanatic: My *Free Market Institute* has already had 10% of our members quit or cancel their subscription to our *The Infallible Market* magazine and associated web site. I'm not sure I can sell that.

The Amoral Yoda: Look, I don't think we can use the "feudalism" name for this. According to my polling data, "feudalism" has a 73% disapproval rating among registered voters.

The Pompous Conservative: Why? What is their problem with it?

The Amoral Yoda (tapping on his laptop's keyboard): Well, most people learned in school that feudalism involved the exploitation and oppression of serfs – yes, that was the word, serf – by a useless spoiled aristocracy. According to polls, 58% of registered voters think that the American Revolution was about overthrowing feudalism.

The Pompous Conservative: Marxism! It's those pinko union teachers again. Look, we need to adopt vouchers for education as soon as possible to break the stranglehold of Marxist union teachers on American public schooling.

The Young Republican: Well, can we make it sound like the Founding Fathers were in favor of feudalism? You know, they fought the Revolution to restore feudalism against George III's diabolical attempt to impose the free market on the conservative colonists who had emigrated to America to live an idyllic agrarian life as serfs?

The Supreme Conservative: Excellent thinking!

The Amoral Yoda: That could be a hard sell. I am working on some catchy buzzwords to sell that!

The Academic Conservative: That could be difficult from a factual point of view.

The Pompous Conservative: Why? Can't we trot out Alexander Hamilton in behalf of our elitist schemes like we always do?

The Academic Conservative: Well, Hamilton was a lifelong opponent of hereditary aristocracy.

The Pompous Conservative (incredulous): He was?

The Academic Conservative: Yes. Hamilton was raised as a radical Calvinist. The Calvinists believe that the monarchy, hereditary aristocracy, and slavery should be abolished.

The Pompous Conservative (shocked): No! You're kidding! That must be Marxists propaganda.

The Academic Conservative (looking stern): I wrote a book on Hamilton. *Alexander Hamilton: Not Really a Conservative*. You can order it on Amazon.

The Supreme Conservative: He was opposed to slavery?

The Academic Conservative: Yes.

The Supreme Conservative: Would he be opposed to serfdom?

The Academic Conservative: Well, probably.

The Pompous Conservative (still shocked): He was opposed to slavery?

The Academic Conservative: Yes. He led the anti-slavery movement in the US. Arranged for George Washington to free thousands of slaves who fought for the Revolution. He came from a small island in the Caribbean where almost everyone was a slave. He thought it was a bad idea. There were widespread suspicions that his mother was of partially African descent.

The Pompous Conservative (aghast): You mean like that radical Obama guy?

The Academic Conservative: Well, in his time, Hamilton was far more radical than Obama.

The Supreme Conservative: We are getting off topic here. Let's forget about Hamilton. What about Tom Paine?

The Young Republican: I know this one. Tom Paine was a ruthless pirate who made a small fortune as a young man raping and pillaging!

The Academic Conservative (surprised): You're right.

The Supreme Conservative: That's our kind of guy.

The Academic Conservative (frowning): Well, not really.

The Pompous Conservative (scowling): Why not? Everybody reads about Tom Paine and *Common Sense* in school. If we can wrap our new feudalism in Tom Paine, we've got it made.

The Academic Conservative (taking a deep breath): Well, that's where it gets difficult. Tom Paine also opposed monarchy, hereditary aristocracy, and slavery. He also ...um... advocated... land reform... and caps on incomes and wealth for the super-rich.

The Pompous Conservative (aghast): My God! What was he doing involved with the American Revolution?

The Academic Conservative: Well, he wrote dozens of pamphlets attacking British tyranny, attacked Robert Morris and Silas Deane for stealing millions of dollars from the Revolution's finances, worked with Morris to finance the Revolution, and risked his life on dangerous missions to France to get the money for the Revolution. Then, he tried to start a Revolution in England, helped lead the French Revolution, and nearly died trying to stop the Jacobins from turning the French

Revolution into a bloodbath. It's all in my book *Tom Paine: Definitely not a Conservative*. You can buy it on Amazon too.

The Pompous Conservative (absolutely stunned): He was a communist!

The Academic Conservative: Well, not really. He was a wealthy businessman. He died rich.

The Supreme Conservative: Now we are getting somewhere.

The Academic Conservative (sighing): But, he felt there should be limits to the power and wealth of ... well, rich people.

The Supreme Conservative: Enough. We can't use Tom Paine.

The Social Conservative: No Tom Paine.

The Fiscal Conservative: Tom Paine, No.

The Young Republican: Absolutely not!

The Amoral Yoda: I agree with you.

The Supreme Conservative: What about George Washington. He was a huge landowner, had hundreds of slaves, sounds like a conservative guy.

The Pompous Conservative: Yes. George Washington, Champion of Feudalism.

The Amoral Yoda: Feudalism is just a non-starter. Try something like "New Capitalism" or "Social Capitalism".

The Young Republican: "Bailout for Mainstreet"

The Amoral Yoda: They didn't buy that.

The Young Republican (crestfallen): Oh.

The Supreme Conservative: George Washington.

The Academic Conservative: That might not work either.

The Supreme Conservative (glaring at the Academic Conservative): Why not? He owned slaves!

The Academic Conservative: Well, he felt guilty about it and often indicated that he thought slavery was a bad thing.

The Supreme Conservative: Talk is cheap. He didn't actually do anything did he?

The Academic Conservative: Well, see, that's the problem. In his will, he arranged for his slaves to be freed on the death of his wife. I admit not as dramatic a gesture as the handful of plantation owners in Virginia who freed their slaves at the end of the Revolution.

The Pompous Conservative: Somebody *actually* did that?

The Academic Conservative: Well, only two. Anyway, Washington also arranged to ban slavery from what is now Ohio. He owned millions of acres of land in Ohio along with other members of the Cincinnati. They had this sort of questionable land development scheme that became the state of Ohio. The Cincinnati felt that slavery would undermine the moral character of the new state. The Cincinnati were a secret society of former officers from the Revolutionary Army who were accused of plotting to establish a monarchy with George as King.

The Pompous Conservative: King! That sounds good.

The Academic Conservative: Well, they modelled themselves on Cincinnatus, the great patriot and leader of the Roman Republic who refused the crown after saving Rome from invasion, restoring the Roman Republic and returning to his farm as a private citizen.

The Pompous Conservative (shaking his head): George Washington is out.

The Supreme Conservative (gritting his teeth): What about Thomas Jefferson?

The Academic Conservative: Well, you may be getting closer there.

The Amoral Yoda: Still sounds like a hard sell according to my polling data. Jefferson is associated with liberal causes in the public mind thanks to years of Democratic Party propaganda.

The Supreme Conservative: I don't care about that. We need a Founding Father to endorse feudalism.

The Academic Conservative: Well, Jefferson did have a lot of land, hundreds of slaves, talked about opposing slavery but probably gave a green light to Napoleon to invade Haiti and restore slavery.

The Pompous Conservative: Now we are talking!

The Academic Conservative (screwing up his face): The problem is trying to sell Jefferson as a supporter of feudalism will probably bring up that Sally Hemming thing.

The Social Conservative: That is liberal left-wing propaganda to discredit America.

The Academic Conservative: Well, see, it is kind of complicated. Jefferson was heavily in debt when he died so he probably could not have freed all his slaves like Washington. He wrote often in opposition to slavery. Anyway, he freed Sally Hemming's children. She was with him when he died. It could get sticky.

The Supreme Conservative: No Jefferson.

The Social Conservative: Absolutely no Jefferson.

The Fiscal Conservative: No Jefferson.

The Young Republican: Down with Jefferson!

The Amoral Yoda: I agree with you!

The Supreme Conservative: We are off topic with this Founding Fathers concept.

The Titanic Transformer (still fiddling with his Blackberry): Look, feudalism just doesn't sound high tech to me. They didn't have the Internet back then did they?

The Academic Conservative: No. It was mostly message by horseback over unsafe trails. Most of the Roman roads had decayed into mud and dust.

The Titanic Transformer (still fiddling with his Blackberry): They used

swords to fight, didn't they?

The Academic Conservative: Swords, spears, knives. The catapult was high tech in the 14th century.

The Titanic Transformer (still fiddling with his Blackberry): I am working on a plan to upgrade the entire Air Force to ray guns! Just like Buck Rogers.

The Pompous Conservative: Look, the knights in our new feudalism will have rayguns instead of lances and swords. We can make it like Star Wars with the Jedi Knights and light sabers.

The Titanic Transformer (still fiddling with his Blackberry): Wow! I can support that.

The Pompous Conservative: That's it. We'll market it as like that movie *Star Wars*.

The Amoral Yoda (tapping and clicking frantically on his laptop): No, no, no. Have any of you actually seen *Star Wars*?

The Titanic Transformer (actually putting down his Blackberry): Forty-five times! It's so cool. The brave Luke Skywalker. The diabolical Darth Vader. The Evil Emperor. Everybody loves Star Wars! Especially the first movie, it was so cool!

The Pompous Conservative: I don't watch popular trash like science fiction.

The Social Conservative: Popular movies are full of sex and violence. I never watch them, except for smarmy family movies from the 1930's.

The Fiscal Conservative: I'm too busy trying to balance the budget.

The Young Republican: I've seen it!

The Nutty Neoconservative: Darth Vader and the Empire are like Hitler in the 1930's. We must never repeat Neville Chamberlain's craven appeasement at Munich! Never again!

The Amoral Yoda: Look, Star Wars is about how the oppressed little guys rise up against the corrupt and evil Empire – that's the Emperor and Darth Vader – winning against incredible odds due to their

courage and ... this thing called the Force. Darth Vader ultimately realizes he has been wrong and dies saving his son and the revolution. They restore a democratic Republic after years of tyranny and oppression.

The Pompous Conservative: The... little guys. That sounds like communism!

The Supreme Conservative: No Star Wars!

The Free Market Fanatic: Sir, couldn't we just stick with our principles and let our incompetent sponsors fail? Try to raise money from the surviving businesses that didn't screw up?

The Supreme Conservative (glaring): What?

The Free Market Fanatic: Well, I've been thinking about this for a while and it seems to me that the world should not be run by incompetent bozos who lost \$700 billion.

The Academic Conservative: At least. According to my own research and detailed financial analysis, the true cost of the mortgage backed securities fiasco will be several trillions of dollars.

The Supreme Conservative: *You are proposing change. We are conservatives! We oppose change!*

The Titanic Transformer (fiddling with his Blackberry): I'm in favor of cool new gadgets!

The Supreme Conservative (sternly): Look, this is a team. You are not being a team player. If you can't get with the program, leave now and kiss your donations from Wall Street goodbye!

The Free Market Fanatic: Well, er, if you put it that way. Um, er, er,...I think feudalism is a great idea.

The Supreme Conservative: That's better. Anyone else trying to think for themselves?

The Social Conservative: No.

The Fiscal Conservative: No, sir.

The Nutty Neoconservative: I don't want another Hitler. I'm sure this will prevent another Hitler!

The Amoral Yoda: I agree with you.

The Young Republican: I really want to be a nobleman. Can we work that droit de seigneur thing in somehow, maybe sneak it in the fine print that no one reads?

The Academic Conservative (gathering up his notes): Well, I have tenure. Screw you.

The Supreme Conservative (shouting as the Academic Conservative leaves): We're going to abolish tenure in the new feudalism!

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