

## President proves history repeats

[By Tibor Machan: Freedom New Mexico columnist](#)

2009-08-06 15:16:05

Although I am no historian, I do have an interest in what happened and why, especially involving big economic events of the past.

One such event is The Great Depression.

I just attended a superb weeklong conference at Cato University, where not only did I present a couple of lectures in the field of political philosophy but listened to quite a few others mainly about history.

Usually I am surrounded by writings and broadcasts that fawn over President Obama's policies and the philosophical and economic ideas surrounding them, but this time I spent an entire week during which extremely knowledgeable people presented carefully reasoned analyses about some other periods of American history.

These were periods in which the American and indeed the world economy was going through various gyrations and people were, as usual, blaming it all on "greed" and freedom — just as many mainstream, Obama-supporting commentators do today.

I will not attempt to reproduce what I heard and learned, but I do wish to recommend at least one piece of reading material that could set the record straight about how America got into its various economic messes.

I have in mind professor Robert Higgs' path-breaking "Crisis and Leviathan." This book is a real gem. It shows with extensive research and analysis that those running governments repeatedly — and often deliberately — take advantage of economic troubles so as to amass power. And once the troubles have subsided, they rarely return the power to their populations. Instead they hoard it.

Some of the lectures I heard included PowerPoint presentations, and it was fascinating to see direct quotations and sometimes video and audio records of major government officials being openly gleeful about how the current economic fiasco provides them with the chance to grab power.

They didn't even think of disguising their opinions but declared unabashedly that this is a great time to take advantage, for all those who like meddling government.

Something else clear from many of the lectures — a great many people in American government, both at the time of the New Deal and now, reject completely the ideas and ideals of the major American Founders. They believe that America should be a top-down political system, a monarchy.

What was especially fascinating about the historical lectures at Cato University is they showed that the same kind of prevarications dominated previous episodes of economic crises even though in every case the cause of them was widely known to be earlier government malpractice.

Despite this, the lies are now repeated by some of the most prestigious academic cheerleaders of Obama's policies.

I only wish everyone in this country could attend such an event. It might contribute to the rescue of the country from the control exercised by people such as President Obama, who are nearly certain to cause more mischief than produce anything sound and useful.

**Tibor Machan advises Freedom Communications, parent company of this newspaper. E-mail him at: [TMachan@link.freedom.com](mailto:TMachan@link.freedom.com)**