

Unjust Deserts: How the Rich Are Taking Our Common Inheritance

By Gar Alperovitz, Lew Daly

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Warren Buffett is worth nearly \$50 billion. Does he “deserve” all this money? Buffett himself will tell you that “society is responsible for a very significant percentage of what I’ve earned.”

Unjust Deserts offers an entirely new approach to the wealth question. In a lively synthesis of modern economic, technological, and cultural research, Gar Alperovitz and Lew Daly demonstrate that up to 90 percent (and perhaps more) of current economic output derives not from individual ingenuity, effort, or investment but from our collective inheritance of scientific and technological knowledge: an inheritance we all receive as a “free lunch.”

Alperovitz and Daly then pursue the implications of this research, persuasively arguing that there is no reason any one person should be entitled to that inheritance. Recognizing the true dimensions of our unearned inheritance leads inevitably to a new and powerful moral case for wealth redistribution—and to a series of practical policies to achieve it in an era when the disparities have become untenable.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Riddled with references to economists John Stuart Mill and Adam Smith, this book reads more like an academic treatise than an appeal aimed at the general public. Alperovitz (*America Beyond Capitalism*) and Daly (*God and the Welfare State*) make the provocative argument that if today's worker is more productive and his methods are more extensive, it's due to the accumulation of hundreds of years of work done by previous generations. Modern engineers, for example, are only more productive because they build on the design problems solved during the past century. Since a society shares a history, the authors contend, we should all reap the benefits of this progress and the wealth accumulated by it; the reality, of course, is a grave disparity in wealth and resources. Alperovitz has written several works used as textbooks in economics courses (*Atomic Diplomacy*), but this work lacks the readability necessary for mainstream audiences—the very audience that the author should have appealed to.

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Review

...convincingly demonstrates that knowledge is the primary source of our national wealth - Bill Moyers

Unjust Deserts reveals the untold story of wealth creation in our time. - Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Nickel and Dimed*; and Chuck Collins, Director of Inequality and the Common Good

The viewpoint presented in this important and provocative book should alter the current public discourse on income distribution. - Kenneth Arrow, Nobel Prize Winner in Economics, 1972

Their timely, deftly argued book redefines our vision of the common good. - Jacob S. Hacker, Professor of Political Science, Yale University

This is one of the most original and most intelligent works on economic justice I have read in many years. - Michael Kazin, author of *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan* and Professor of History, Georgetown University

...deeply informed and carefully argued study of the social and historical factors that enter into creative achievement... - Noam Chomsky

Unjust Deserts is an elegant work of moral philosophy... - James K. Galbraith, Professor of Government, The University of Texas at Austin

Agree or disagree, you will see the world differently after you have read this book. - William A. Galston, Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

The moral conclusion is unmistakable: society itself is the source of wealth, and all of us deserve an equal share. - Howard Zinn

...authors strike upon a vital topic when they highlight the need for the benefits from productivity gains to be shared... (Mark Engler - *The Nation*)

Deliciously subversive. The authors lace their narrative with fascinating asides... and statistics that give their story plenty of dramatic oomph. (*Too Much*)

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From reader reviews:

Eleanor Rowe:

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Arthur Pineda:

The book untitled Unjust Deserts: How the Rich Are Taking Our Common Inheritance contain a lot of information on the idea. The writer explains the woman idea with easy approach. The language is very clear to see all the people, so do not really worry, you can easy to read it. The book was compiled by famous author. The author brings you in the new period of literary works. You can read this book because you can keep reading your smart phone, or gadget, so you can read the book throughout anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site and order it. Have a nice go through.

Juanita Geil:

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