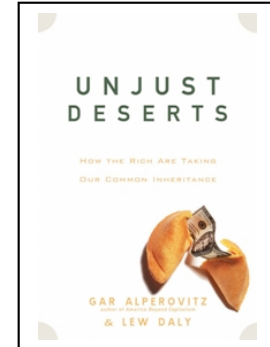




*UNJUST DESERTS: How the Rich Are Taking Our Common Inheritance and Why We Should Take It Back* by Gar Alperovitz and Lew Daly, to be published by The New Press in November 2008. \$24.95.

For those of us who think we are solely responsible for every dollar we've earned, *Unjust Deserts* will be a shocking revelation. In a compelling synthesis of historical, economic, and technological research, Alperovitz and Daly explain how our current economic system has changed the way wealth is distributed—and why it is utterly indefensible for the top 1 percent of American households to earn more than the bottom 120 million Americans combined.



At the center of their convincing argument is knowledge. As people have solved numerous problems that bewildered and plagued those before us, we have accumulated an immense "stock of knowledge" from which we now rely on, developing new ideas and technology, allowing us to grow our economies many times over. This stock of knowledge, Alperovitz and Daly argue, is a social inheritance, nurtured by governments, institutions, and culture, and created by many generations of people.

Yet, most of the wealth—the fruits of this inherited knowledge—has come to be controlled by a small fraction of the population, with roughly 50% of the productive assets of our country owned by the top 1% percent of households. In a rebuke to those who claim such earnings are reasonable rewards for hard work and ingenuity, Alperovitz and Daly draw on the work of leading economists such as Robert Solow and Kenneth Arrow, and meticulously walk us through the evidence and break down the studies. They demonstrate why it is economically—and morally—unjust to allow such inequalities when in fact 90% of what people have comes from our common stock of knowledge. Praised by economists, political scientists, and philosophers alike, *Unjust Deserts* is a clarion call for income redistribution. It is a book that will radically change the way you think about wealth and knowledge.

To pre-order your own copy, please visit the New Press website at:

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#### **ADVANCE PRAISE FOR UNJUST DESERTS**

“Rarely do the facts of the matter so illuminate a moral truth as they do in *Unjust Deserts*. Quite simply, this book changes the fundamental terms of reference for future debates about inequality. It convincingly demonstrates that knowledge is the primary source of our national wealth, with or without the elites at the top who claim the lion's share. In a surprising yet persuasive way, Alperovitz and Daly help us understand what this reality means, and the values at stake, in a nation growing more unequal with each passing day. This book opens an extraordinary new vista on the moral bankruptcy of our second Gilded Age.”

— Bill Moyers

“The viewpoint presented in this important and provocative book by Alperovitz and Daly should alter the current public discourse on income distribution. Present incomes are largely derived from past accumulations of knowledge, the common property of mankind, so that there is no justification for large income differences. They show how this position has many precedents among leading thinkers of the past and present and is thoroughly grounded in the evidence. They draw upon impeccable sources and use them with full understanding. No reader will fail to learn from this work.”

— Kenneth J. Arrow, Nobel Laureate, Stanford University

“This is one of the most original and most intelligent works on economic justice I have read in many years. In clear and compelling prose, the authors update a truth that progressives should take for granted and all Americans should embrace: we are interdependent beings whose well-being depends on pursuing the common good.”

— Michael Kazin, Author of *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan* and Professor of History, Georgetown University

“*Unjust Deserts* reveals the untold story of wealth creation in our time. Our celebrated entrepreneurs and money men are hoisting a cherry to the top of an already existing sundae—and then laying claim to the entire ice cream parlor. There may be individual effort and even genius involved with the cherry placement, but their individual rewards fail to recognize the contributions of other actors—workers, nature, taxpayers, community infrastructure, and our technological inheritance—as the real stars of the show.”

— Barbara Ehrenreich, Author of *Nickel and Dimed*; and  
Chuck Collins, Director of Inequality and the Common Good

"A brilliant and wonderfully timely book—the perfect gift for people who were born on third base and thought they'd hit a triple."

— Robert H. Frank, H.J. Louis Professor of Economics, Cornell University

“Alperovitz and Daly drive a stake through the heart of the strongest and most enduring argument against income and wealth redistribution: the idea that each of us alone—or mostly alone—is responsible for what we earn and accumulate. Instead, they show that "our" individual rewards are overwhelmingly social products, grounded in the accumulation of knowledge and innovation over long spans of time and in the public institutions that sponsor and spread this knowledge and innovation. Their timely, deftly argued book redefines our vision of the common good.”

— Jacob S. Hacker, Professor of Political Science and Co-Director, Center for Health, Economic, and Family Security, U.C. Berkeley, and author of *The Great Risk Shift*

“This deeply informed and carefully argued study of the social and historical factors that enter into creative achievement formulates issues of entitlement in ways that have far-reaching implications for a just social order. It merits careful study and reflection, and should be a call for constructive action.”

— Noam Chomsky

“*Unjust Deserts* trenchantly challenges not only the current distribution of wealth and income, but also the moral theory of individual, contribution-based desert so often used to justify it. Agree or disagree, you will see the world differently after you have read this book.”

— William A. Galston, Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

“A fascinating and erudite treatment of a central question of our time: if much of our economy’s wealth is the result of ever-increasing accumulated knowledge, why is the distribution of income becoming more unequal and by what right are our billionaires “entitled” to their fabulous wealth? A liberal manifesto for the 21st century, written with verve and compassion.”

— Joel Mokyr, Robert H. Strotz Professor of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Economics and History, Northwestern University

“*Unjust Deserts* is an elegant work of moral philosophy, a reflection on science, technology, cumulative causation and the collective character of the common wealth. It is work with deep implications for structures of pay, ownership and taxation, perfectly timed for the end of the grab-what-you-can era.”

— James K. Galbraith, Lloyd M. Bentsen Jr. Chair in Government/Business Relations and Professor of Government, The University of Texas at Austin

“Gar Alperovitz and Lew Daly are opening important new ground in the struggle to re-imagine America and redeem our deepest values. The inherited wealth created by our forebears in their efforts to develop our country is the “great gift” and it ultimately belongs to all of us and to the future. By reviving this insight, Alperovitz and Daly give modern Americans a key to understanding how we can create the society of justice and equality that earlier generations sought.”

— William Greider, Author of *The Soul of Capitalism*

“Gar Alperovitz joins his considerable knowledge of economics and his admirable moral sensibility to ask a troubling but profound question: do the super-rich and the rest of us “deserve” our wildly different economic situations because of our different contributions to the wealth of society? His research points to the falsity of this assumption. He finds instead that the wealth of society is created not by individual entrepreneurs but by the historical accumulation of knowledge. The moral conclusion is provocative but unmistakable: society itself is the source of wealth, and all of us deserve an equal share.”

— Howard Zinn, Author of *A People’s History of the United States*

“The authors’ many interesting and important insights and observations make this a work that deserves to be widely read.”

— Robert A. Dahl, Sterling Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Yale University

“Apologists for inequality assert that the rich are entitled to their property or deserve extravagant rewards because of their contributions to the general welfare. Egalitarians have challenged such claims, but with *Unjust Deserts* they finally have the ammunition to prove just how specious these assumptions really are. Alperovitz and Daly show in painstaking detail how wealth derives largely from the accumulated efforts of earlier thinkers and doers and from public, institutional support. Because individuals cannot take nearly as much credit for their accomplishments as inegalitarians assume, the extreme inequality we find in the United States and in the world today lacks any moral justification.”

— Judith Lichtenberg, Professor of Philosophy, Georgetown University

“A fresh and original analysis of how a modern economy progresses through the cumulative results of invention, discovery, communication and learning... A genuine work of scholarship.”

— Thomas Schelling, Nobel Laureate, University of Maryland