

# The Greedy Hand

Review by Bert Anderson,  
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(This is an interpretation of a Wall Street Journal book review by Christopher Lehman-Haupt, entitled, "It's Tax Time: for Some Gorilla Hunting Season." The book by Amity Schlaes, entitled *The Greedy Hand*, is 255 pages, published by Random House, price \$22.95.)

For Georgists--where-ever they are--the book that Mr. Christopher Lehman-Haupt reviews, "not only manages to keep you wide awake, she (Amity Schlaes) also gets your blood to boiling." What initially will infuriate Georgists is Mrs. Schlaes dismissal of Henry George as someone who dreamed of the "single tax" -- delegating him to those who "dreamed up a system based on cowrie shells or maybe bubble gum." Mrs. Schlaes is a youngish mother of three, who is a member of the Wall Street Journal's editorial board. Incidentally, the subtitle is "How taxes drive Americans crazy and what to do about it." Mrs. Schlaes along with other amateur political economists -- have only heard of "Progress & Poverty" third or fourth hand -- and never have taken seriously Henry George (who Professor Jacques Barzun in his pivotal "Darwin, Marx, Wagner," on page 214 describes thus: "George's influence as a speaker and writer on both sides of the Atlantic was far more immediate and widespread than Marx's; it was his frail person and brilliant book that awoke many a man, like Shaw, from rugged individualism, in a sudden and decisive fashion beyond Marx's power.")

Neo-Georgists can forego Mrs. Schlaes' lack of a significant past, because she goes on in her exceptional book to ask what Georgists in England, Australia, Hong Kong and the "United States of the Americas" have been asking and are still asking about the passionate issue of "real tax reform." She concludes that "Luck is on our side. Today the nation is actually in a better position to undertake a tax reform than at any point in living history... Today we have no deficit and no cold war." We need to only look to our history of resisting taxes for "the path to follow."

The question thus arises, If not now, when?

The answer may well be an updated version of Land Value Taxation and a modified single tax for the millennium to come.

*(Bert Anderson, is a consultant in solar architecture, land use planning, and ecological infrastructure.)*