



The Greedy Hand: How Taxes Drive Americans Crazy and What to Do About It

Amity Shlaes

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The Greedy Hand is an illuminating examination of the culture of tax and a persuasive call for reform, written by one of the nation's leading policy makers, Amity Shlaes of *The Wall Street Journal*.

The father of the modern American state was an obscure Macy's department store executive named Beardsley Ruml. During World War II, he devised the plan for withholding taxes from your paycheck, thereby laying in place a system that allows the hand of government to reach into your wallet and take what it wants.

Today, taxes make up more than a third of our economy, the highest level in history outside war. We live in the nation revolutionary father Thomas Paine foresaw when he wrote of "the Greedy Hand of government thrusting itself into every corner of industry." This book is a cultural examination of the way taxes influence our behavior, how they force us into an arbitrary system that punishes families and individual enterprise.

Amity Shlaes unveils the hidden perversities of our lifelong tax experience: how family tax breaks do little to help the family, and can even hurt it. She demonstrates how married women pay a special women's tax rate, higher than anybody else's. She shows how problems that engage and enrage us--Social Security problems, or the things we don't like about schools--are, at heart, tax problems. And she explains why the solutions Washington offers merely accelerate a vicious cycle.

Finally, Amity Shlaes shows us a way out of this madness, endorsing a number of common-sense reforms that will give all Americans a fairer and simpler tax system. Written with eloquent compassion for working Americans and their families, *The Greedy Hand* makes the best case yet for rethinking our tax code. It is a book no tax-paying citizen can afford to ignore.

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William Leone:

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