



Shoveling Fuel for a Runaway Train: Errant Economists, Shameful Spenders, and a Plan to Stop them All

Brian Czech

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Americans have been conditioned to appreciate, cheer, and serve economic growth. Brian Czech argues that, while economic growth was a good thing for much of American history, somewhere along the way it turned bad, depleting resources, polluting the environment, and threatening posterity. Yet growth remains a top priority of the public and polity. In this revolutionary manifesto, Czech knocks economic growth off the pedestal of American ideology. Seeking nothing less than a fundamental change in public opinion, Czech makes a bold plea for castigating society's biggest spenders and sets the stage for the "steady state revolution."

Czech offers a sophisticated yet accessible critique of the principles of economic growth theory and the fallacious extension of these principles into the "pop economics" of Julian Simon and others. He points with hope to the new discipline of ecological economics, which prescribes the steady state economy as a sustainable alternative to economic growth.

Czech explores the psychological underpinnings of our consumer culture by synthesizing theories of Charles Darwin, Thorstein Veblen, and Abraham Maslow. Speaking to ordinary American citizens, he urges us to recognize conspicuous consumers for who they are—bad citizens who are liquidating our grandkids' future. Combining insights from economics, psychology, and ecology with a large dose of common sense, Czech drafts a blueprint for a more satisfying and sustainable society. His ideas reach deeply into our everyday lives as he asks us to re-examine our perspectives on everything from our shopping habits to romance.

From his perspective as a wildlife ecologist, Czech draws revealing parallels between the economy of nature and the human economy. His style is lively, easy to read, humorous, and bound to be controversial. Czech will provoke all of us to ask when we will stop the runaway train of economic growth. His book answers the question, "How do we do it?"

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