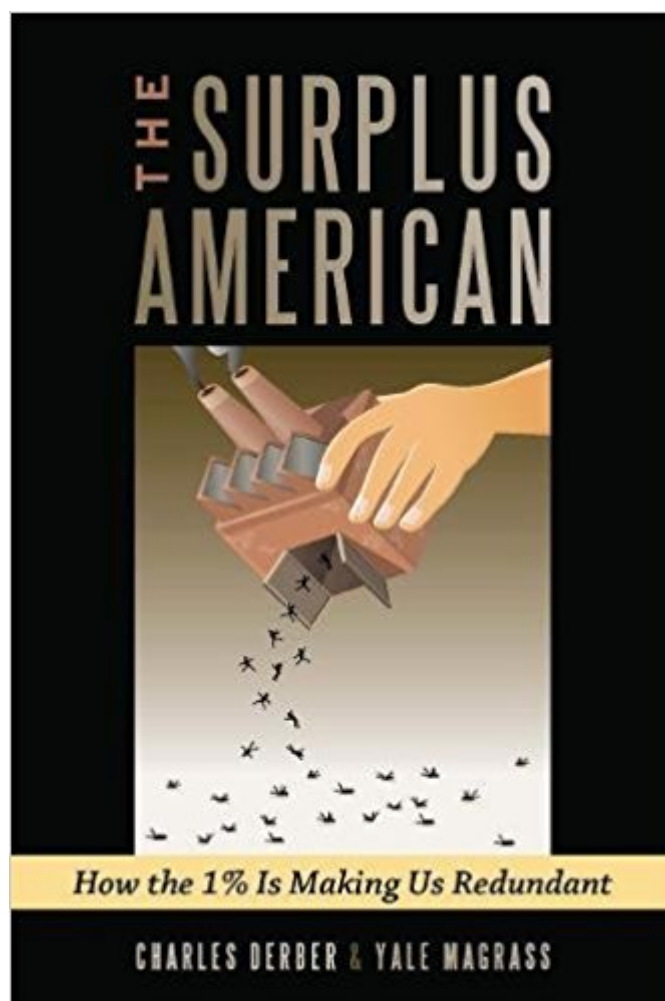


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# Surplus American: How The 1% Is Making Us Redundant



## Synopsis

The Surplus American considers a future where increasing numbers of Americans will be rendered jobless and redundant. Exploring the ongoing crisis of 'surplus people' today, authors Charles Derber and Yale Magrass show that the jobless are merely the tip of the iceberg. Drawing on the work of economists and highlighting new trends, the book identifies a number of primary groups within the category of 'surplus' including the underemployed, people forcibly removed or induced to leave the labour force and retirees. Derber and Magrass argue that a majority of the US public is now part of the surplus population constituting an integral part of the economy. The authors conclude that these movements will be essential to solving the crisis of surplus people and redirecting the economy in a more positive direction.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A lucid and informative analysis of how our increasingly dysfunctional socioeconomic system is intensifying the process of turning America into a land of surplus people, decaying infrastructure, and shredded formal democracy—and of what we can do about it.”  
—Noam Chomsky  
“Derber and Magrass’s crisp book dramatizes the powerful forces undermining job security and rendering most of us surplus, not just economically but in almost every way. An essential read for anyone who wants to understand the history and future of work, politics, and social movements in America—with a hopeful roadmap to creating an economy and a society that work for everyone.”  
—Chuck Collins, Institute for Policy

studies, and author of 99 to 1: How Wealth Inequality is Wrecking the World and What We Can Do About It. “This is a wonderfully imaginative but disturbing prophecy of where corporate outsourcing of American jobs and other, often hidden trends in government policies for education, youth, the elderly, the military, and the imprisoned could lead by 2020. The dystopia which they outline in the book and in its concluding play is all too believable unless Americans adopt the new forms of democratic resistance that their encouraging final chapters advocate.” Jonathan Steele, International affairs columnist for the Guardian “Derber and Magrass have produced a double-header for the agitating mind: a people’s history and a people’s theatre. For action, you take it from there, where you live.” Ralph Nader “Written in a very accessible style, the book elicits both lay and professional readers’ curiosity, and leaves a decided impression that the author is an engaging, insightful teacher well worth talking to. Highly recommended.” Choice “Derber and Magrass have done a masterful job in explaining the major issues of political economy facing us today. The analysis is complemented brilliantly with a play, ready to be acted out in classrooms, religious groups, and book groups, to better help illustrate the absurd tragedy of the masses of people being cast aside and to show how America’s majority can band together to reclaim our democracy.” Jonathan White, co-author of The Engaged Sociologist and of Sociologists in Action

Charles Derber, Professor of Sociology at Boston College, has written twenty books, including bestsellers with multiple translations and editions. He has also written opinion pieces for the New York Times, the Boston Globe, the Christian Science Monitor, Newsday, and other newspapers and magazines. His most recent book is Capitalism: Should You Buy It? An Invitation to Political Economy (Paradigm 2014). Yale R. Magrass is a Chancellor Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, where he teaches social theory, political sociology, and the social impact of science and technology. He is the author of three other books and more than thirty articles, including encyclopedia entries, served on the board of six journals, has been a recipient of several grants, and participated in numerous international forums.

A long essay rather than a book, with two versions of the same mediocre play included to fatten the package and the publisher’s profits---ironic, given its radical subject matter. The title in any case tells it all.

They put too much faith in the "Occupy" movement and obviously, have little faith in capitalism. This is a book that could only be written by a couple of tenured academicians. They very well may be "Surplus Americans" themselves shortly since college students aren't lining up to major in their field, sociology.

In their book *You're Fired*, authors Yale Magrass and Charles Derber present an accessible and articulate explanation of the evolution of inequalities worldwide. These inequalities, they argue, have the potential of leading to the creation of a large class of "surplus people," who have been made obsolete by the American system. As more and more people face the reality of leaving their offices with a pink slip in hand, the relevancy of this discussion, which unpacks the ways the American institutional system normalizes the process of creating surplus people, becomes increasingly apparent. Case studies from periods of world history in the past 300 years helps frame the argument, and provide proof of a consistent pattern of surplus-making. The authors use a unique and innovative strategy to communicate their message: the book is divided into an essay portion and a play portion. While the essay offers a more intellectual recount, the play presents a witty and satirical analysis that is appropriate for many audiences and ages. The play has the potential to be an influential resource in the current social movements as a source of important knowledge and insight into the past, present, and future of surplus people.

The history of surplus people provides an interesting analysis of the direction the US economy is heading. Through uses of multiple narrative forms, Derber and Magrass provide an in-depth cultural and economic analysis tracing the path of surplus people throughout history. With a hint of comedy and the occasional appearance of intellectual ghost, the beginning play provides an accessible way to engage readers with the subject matter. The remaining section of the book elaborates on aspects and themes within the play, allowing for a more thorough understanding. As engaging as the narrative style seems, don't assume you're in for a light read. Many books today have plenty of sizzle, but not much steak. I recommend that you sink your teeth into this big, juicy T-bone of a book, a rare treat for intellectual readers searching for economic understanding and substantive history of surplus people. *The Surplus America* is a must read to understand how Western capitalism became what it is today and what path it is on for tomorrow.

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