

Final Assignment: You must do number 1 and choose one between 2 and 3 and one between 4 and 5. You must do 3 altogether. There is an extra credit questions you take a crack at if you like.

I. Historical transformation in capitalism can be analyzed in terms of changes in the social structures of accumulation.

- A. How does the notion of social structures of accumulation relate to the notion of long swings in economic activity? What makes it different than just business cycles?
- B. Explain the criteria by which social structures of accumulation evaluates one period from another?
- C. It is said by some social analysts that the seeds of economic decline are planted in the period of rapid accumulation and growth. Explain how this statement relates to the notion of social structures of accumulation? Illustrate it with an example from Monopoly Period of U.S. capitalist development covered in class. That is the period from 1900 to the Great Depression what elements of the growth in the upswing 1900 to 1929 played important roles in the downswing known as the Great Depression?

DO ONE BETWEEN 2 AND 3

2. Railroads were the leading sector of the Competitive Capitalist period in the United States.

- A. What was the importance of investment banks in the development of the railroads?
- B. Why did the railroad network grow so rapidly after the Civil War? What are some of the factors?
- C. What are some of the important contributions Railroad Corporations and the industry provided for U.S. economic development?
- D. How did the RR expansion contribute to a period of profit squeeze both in terms of revenues and costs and the period of decay for Competitive Capitalism after 1870s?

3. In decades after the Civil War the article/chapter from The American Yawp Capital and Labor the author makes the case that both farmers and laborers were resisting the changes occurring in the U.S. economy.

- A. What were the particular issues farmers in the Midwest were struggling with during these decades?
- B. Labor was also pushing back against the rise of capital what were their particular grievances?
- C. How did the Presidential race 1896 between William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan embody these struggles?

DO ONE BETWEEN 4 AND 5

4. While competition between capitalist asserted downward pressures on prices contributing to falling profits in the homogenization of labor article it is argued that the systems of labor control also needed to be addressed to increase profitability.

- A. What is and how did the drive system alter the labor process and provide greater leverage for the employers over labor?
- B. Briefly explain the corporate policies that were implemented to discourage the worker unity created by the implementation of the drive system.
- C. How did these innovations provide another avenue for the capitalist to increase profitability?

5. Bluestone argues in the Great U-Turn that the 1970s marked the end of the America Dream. Bluestone argues there was a U-Turn in the American Dream over the past several decades. What evidence does he offer?

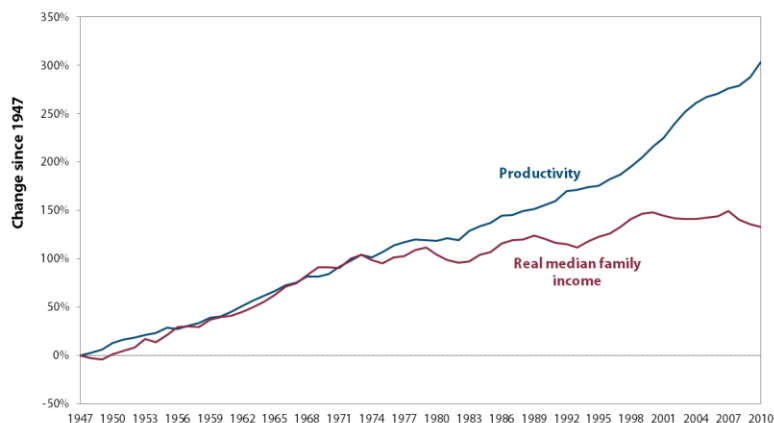
- A. By 1970s capitalists were confronted with a falling rate of profit. What are the causes of the profit squeeze of the late 60s and 1970s according to Bluestone?
- B. Bluestone and Harrison argue that there were several responses to the profit squeeze, briefly explain them and what role did the government play?

Extra Credit: No Penalty if you choose not to do it

6. One important trend in the U.S. that has continued in the last quarter of the 20th century and continues today is the disconnection between productivity and workers' incomes as displayed in the graph below.

- A. What do you think has changed in the social structures of accumulation that has allowed this to happen and how can this be a problem for the economy?
- B. Can you draw any parallels between the expansion of the railroads and growth of the national economy and today's technological innovations globalization?

**The benefits of increased productivity
over the last 35 years have not gone to the middle class**
Productivity and real median family income growth, 1947–2010



Source: EPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010* – Historical Income Tables, Table F 5: Race and Hispanic Origin of Householder – Families by Median and Mean Income, Excel spreadsheet accessed November 23, 2011.
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Productivity – Major Sector Productivity and Costs Database*, Accessed November 23, 2011.