



AZZAM MAHJOUB (Editor)

Adjustment or
Delinking?
The African Experience

Studies in African Political Economy

THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY/THIRD WORLD FORUM

STUDIES IN AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

Adjustment or Delinking?

The African
Experience

Edited by Azzam Mahjoub



United Nations University Press
Tokyo

Zed Books Ltd.
London and New Jersey

THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY/THIRD WORLD FORUM

STUDIES IN AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

General Editor: Samir Amin

The United Nations University's Project on Transnationalization or Nation-Building in Africa (1982-1986) was undertaken by a network of African scholars under the co-ordination of Samir Amin. The purpose of the Project was to study the possibilities of and constraints on national autocentric development of African countries in the context of the world-system into which they have been integrated. Since the 1970s the world-system has been in a crisis of a severity and complexity unprecedented since the end of the Second World War; the Project examines the impact of this contemporary crisis on the political, economic and cultural situation of Africa today. Focusing on the complex relationship between transnationalization (namely, the dynamics of the world-system) and nation-building, which is seen as a precondition for national development, the Project explores a wide range of problems besetting Africa today and outlines possible alternatives to the prevailing development models which have proved to be inadequate.

TITLES IN THIS SERIES

M. L. Gakou

The Crisis in African Agriculture

1987

Peter Anyang' Nyong'o (editor)

Popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa

1987

Samir Amin, Derrick Chitala, Ibbo Mandaza (editors)

SADCC: Prospects for Disengagement and Development in Southern Africa

1987

Faysal Yachir

The World Steel Industry Today

1988

Faysal Yachir

Mining in Africa Today: Strategies and Prospects

1988

Faysal Yachir

The Mediterranean: Between Autonomy and Dependency

1989

Azzam Mahjoub (editor)

Adjustment or Delinking? The African Experience

1990

Hamid Ait Amara, Bernard Founou-Tchuigoua (editors)

African Agriculture: The Critical Choices

1990

Other titles in preparation.

Adjustment or Delinking? The African Experience
was first published in 1990

by:

Zed Books Ltd., 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU, UK, and
171 First Avenue, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 07716, USA
and:

United Nations University Press, Toho Seimei Building,
15-1 Shibuya 2-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150, Japan
in co-operation with

The Third World Forum, B.P. 3501, Dakar, Senegal.

Copyright © The United Nations University, 1990.

Translation by A. M. Berrett.

Cover designed by Andrew Corbett.

Typeset by EMS Photosetters, Rochford, Essex.

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom
at Bookcraft (Bath) Ltd, Midsomer Norton.

All rights reserved.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Adjustment or delinking? : the African experience.

– (Studies in African political economy).

I. Africa. Economic development. Political aspects

I. Mahjoub, Azzam. II. Series

330.960328

ISBN 0-86232-842-X

ISBN 0-86232-843-8 pbk

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Adjustment or Delinking? : the African experience/

edited by Azzam Mahjoub.

p. cm. – (Studies in African political economy)

Translated from the French by A. M. Berrett.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-86232-842-X (Zed Books)

ISBN 0-86232-843-8 (Zed Books : pbk.)

1. Africa – Economic policy. 2. Africa – Economic conditions –
1960–. I. Mahjoub, Azzam. II. United Nations University. III. Series.
HC800.A5526 1989. 89-9027

338.96–dc20

CIP

THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY/THIRD WORLD FORUM

STUDIES IN AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

Adjustment or Delinking?

Preface

Samir Amin*

I am pleased to introduce this book in our Third World Forum–United Nations University African series. It is the product of a working group devoted to examining some present or past African attempts (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe) at a form of development different from that evolved by the world expansion of capitalism.

Africa, of all Third World regions, has seen the largest numbers of such attempts. The governments in twenty of the fifty African states have, at some time, more or less radically, declared the intention to 'break' with the colonial and neocolonial past and embark on a new national and radical path of an independent and socialist development. This socialism is sometimes specifically labelled (Arab or African), at others proclaimed to be scientific, Marxist, or Marxist–Leninist. Depending on the circumstances, this declared break with the past has been made in the heat of the moment, right after the victory of the liberation movement seizing independence: sometimes after a long and bitter war (Algeria, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Zimbabwe); soon after the achievement of independence (Nkrumah's Ghana, Guinea, Modibo Keita's Mali, Tanzania); or following major political and social changes (overthrow of the monarchies in Egypt and Libya); or, again, following popular anti-neocolonial movements (Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Rawlings's Ghana, Madagascar, Uganda). In most if not all cases, the army played an important role in the political shift under discussion.

But in these experiences Africa also has a high proportion of questionable results: some see them as mediocre, others as little different from those obtained by classic neocolonial development. Neither the goal of economic liberation from dependence on the world capitalist system, completing political liberation, nor that of building a new society in sharp contrast to that of the capitalist Third World seem to have advanced sufficiently to have reached the point of no return. Indeed, an effective reversal of the trend and an often noisy return to 'development' as desired by the Western powers has occurred in a number of these countries, either following *coups d'état* or as a result of a gradual shift. Today, almost all are facing the real threat, augmented by the

* Translated by A. M. Berrett

crisis, of being forced to submit to the *diktat* of the West, operating through its 'international agencies' – the World Bank, the IMF etc.

These two facts are worth looking at more closely.

World capitalist expansion has always had and still has a polarizing effect. From the very beginning it produced and perpetuated, in a variety of forms, a contrast between centre and periphery that was immanent in actually existing capitalism. In this sense then, the development of the periphery has always entailed a never-ending 'adjustment' to the demands and constraints of the dominant capital. The centres are 'restructured', the peripheries are 'adjusted' to these restructurings. Never the reverse.

Nevertheless, the violence of the effects of these successive adjustments is not always the same from one phase to another in the history of capitalism. For this worldwide expansion takes the form of a succession of long cycles (20–50 years) in which A phases of 'prosperity' and accelerated growth alternate with B phases of structural crises of the global system. During the A phases of prosperity 'adjustment' seems to be less difficult, sometimes even easy for some countries: the demand for exports grows at high rates, capital is available and looking for outlets, conflicts are attenuated (the period is often a long period of peace – at least relative peace) etc. This adjustment in general growth is of course unequal, because the periphery fulfils various functions in the global system and there are several peripheries rather than a single periphery. There are the 'rich' peripheries, important for the system at the stage under consideration, which provide products whose marketing worldwide is growing faster than others (because they are associated with the technologies in the van of progress), which offer worthwhile markets for the capital and products of the centre.

The ease with which they 'adjust' leads to many illusions, such as those the World Bank and other ideological supporters of capital have fuelled, especially for the newly industrializing countries (NICs): clearly, the external indebtedness produced by their very success had not been foreseen. But there are also those left aside, ones of no interest in the typical structures of the system of the day. These sometimes fulfilled important functions at an earlier stage in the evolution of the global system, but have now lost their place. They constitute the 'fourth world', those delinked whether they like it or not, who passively suffer the fate that the system dishes out to them. For the countries of the 'fourth world', the 'least developed', regarded as something new, are in reality a permanent product of capitalist expansion. An example of this old fourth world is provided by the regions exploited through the use of slaves in the Americas in the mercantilist period: north-east Brazil and the West Indies (Haiti among others). Once these regions were looked upon as 'prosperous' and they formed the core of the periphery corresponding to the system that existed at the time. Subsequently the new structures of capitalist development marginalized the relative importance of these areas, which are today among the most wretched of the Third World. The history of capitalist expansion is not only that of the 'development' it has occasioned. It is also that of the savage destruction on which it was built. There is in capitalism a destructive aspect,

usually glossed over in the flattering image of the system that is produced.

The phases of restructuring (B phases) constitute the moments of truth in the evolution of the system. Illusions vanish. The difficulties – the danger of which had been denied – become the means by which the dominant capital imposes its *diktat*. There is no more any question of dreams of independence; the law of profit reminds the ‘underdeveloped’ of the fate reserved for them: super-exploitation and subjection. ‘Recompradorization’ is the order of the day, by all economic and financial means (such as the use made today of the external debt and the food weapon to exert pressure), but also political and military ones (for example, *coups d’état*, or interventions such as that of Zionism in the Middle East etc.).

But in this long succession of misfortunes that is what the history of capitalist expansion is for the peoples of the periphery, Africa occupies a particularly vulnerable place. Whole regions of the continent, laid waste by the slave trade in the service of mercantilist capitalism, have still not recovered from these early ravages. Later, colonization continued the work of destroying the continent. We have two obvious examples.

First, that of settler colonization in North Africa (above all Algeria) and East and Southern Africa (Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe). Part of the remote origin of the current difficulties of Algerian agriculture – the ‘deruralization’ of the country, accelerated by war – is to be sought in this. In Zimbabwe, the highlands seized by the whites – thus forcing the Africans confined in poor and inadequate reserves to provide cheap labour – owed their apparent ‘prosperity’ only to this workforce that could be made to work and their waste of the country’s natural resources. The liberation of the country finally made it possible to shed light on this alleged ‘success’ of settler agriculture. But it also bequeathed a problem that is not settled.¹

The second example is that of the rape of the land and the super-exploitation of peasant labour that colonization imposed elsewhere, in the areas of the *économie de traite*. Here, as I have written elsewhere, colonization was able to secure a surplus at zero cost: without investments to improve production methods (control of water, implements and mechanization etc.) or agronomic research (other than research into a few export crops, at the expense of food crops). The surplus was doubtless very limited in absolute terms, but was an onerous burden for the peasantry and for the future of the country, through the soil destruction on which the trade system rested. There, too, the current difficulties of African agriculture, reaching the extreme of famine in the Sahel, have their remote origins.²

In reality, Africa, at the height of triumphant colonization, had only a marginal position in the world system. In fact it was its role as a mineral reserve (brought out by the work of our colleague Fayçal Yachir)³ that was the main justification for most of what it did. Later, with independence and neocolonialism, the pillage of agricultural land and mining rent was not challenged, far from it. Neither the agricultural revolution nor industrialization have yet been tackled on the scale required by the demands of our times.

It is the poor prospect offered to Africa through capitalist expansion that

accounts for such frequent rejections and the numerous attempts to 'do something', to escape from the simple logic of capitalism. But simultaneously, the objective conditions created by the legacy of this history make this a peculiarly difficult task. The nature of this difficulty could be formulated by saying that the external factor (here particularly unfavourable) combines with internal factors that themselves are not very favourable because they have been shaped largely by the external factor.

The response to the challenge of our time imposes what I have suggested naming 'delinking'. This concept is, in a way, the other term of the contradiction 'adjustment or delinking'. I shall not here discuss in detail the theory of delinking, which was the subject of a recent work to which the interested reader is referred,⁴ but in order to avoid any misunderstanding, simply state that delinking is not synonymous with autarky, but rather with the subordination of external relations to the logic of internal development. (Adjustment consists precisely in grafting internal development on to the possibilities offered by the world system.) More precisely, delinking consists in refusing to submit to the demands of the globalized law of value, that is, to the alleged 'rationality' of the system of world prices that gives concrete form to the requirements of the reproduction of globalized capital. It thus assumes that society has the capacity to define for itself a different range of criteria of rationality of internal economic choices, in short a 'law of value that is national in scope'.

Which social forces might be the historical subject of this option in favour of breaking with the world capitalist system? The answer, so obvious as to be almost tautological, is that these forces cannot be other than those that are the victims of peripheral capitalist development and not those that are its beneficiaries. But actual capitalist development not only has polarizing effects worldwide (deepening the contrast between centre and periphery) but also within societies in the periphery (while it does not within central capitalist societies). In other words, income distribution is more unequal in the periphery than in the centre, and, although in the centre it is relatively stable over time, with the development of the periphery it tends towards growing inequality.⁵ The result is that the 'privileged classes' have a real interest in pursuing capitalist expansion such as it is, despite the inferior position assigned to them in the system and perhaps sometimes the 'frustration' of their national ambitions. Of course, there are conflicts between them and the dominant capital, and these classes are sometimes capable of crossing swords with imperialism to better their positions in the system. But only so far. That is, in the last analysis they will judge that there is no 'benefit' (they even say no 'possibility' of) in delinking. This is what they express day in and day out when they declare 'interdependence' to be unavoidable ('we are all in the same boat' etc.). The nature of these privileged classes has of course also evolved historically. Formerly, the dominant element in the local bloc allied to imperialism was often made up of the oligarchies of big landowners (in Latin America, India, China, Egypt etc.) or by the 'chieftaincies' (in Africa). The national independence movement was thus forced to rise up against this bloc

and to replace it with a new bloc dominated by new, bourgeois-type classes, (local industrial and financial, rich peasants, and state, bourgeoisies etc.) generally favouring industrialization. This by no means a negligible change of world social alliances, accompanied the global restructuring of the system. This is because the world social alliances by their nature define the structure suitable to the stage of capitalist development reached.

But it is still true that in the societies in the periphery, the privileged classes in question constitute a minority, ranging from a negligible 1% or 2% of the population to a less negligible 10% to 25%. As for the popular classes that are the victims of capitalist expansion, their status varies, and as a result of the very nature of this expansion, tend not to be homogenized and reduced to a single model. Among them there are poor peasantries (in the plural), working classes, urbanized peasants-cum-unemployed in the shantytowns, old *petit bourgeoisies* (artisans) and new ones (junior employees etc.). If we add that peripheral capitalist development, because of its centrifugal character, constitutes an obstacle to the crystallization of the nation and even tends to break up old nations where they existed, we get some idea of how many further causes of division in the camp of the popular forces there are (for example, ethnicity and language, religion, artificial borders bequeathed by colonization and balkanization – particularly marked in Africa).⁶

Delinking thus implies a 'popular', content anti-capitalist in the sense of being in conflict with the dominant capitalism, but permeated with the multiplicity of divergent interests (over and beyond their anti-systemic convergence) of the various fractions that make up the people in question. That is why I advanced the thesis that 'post-capitalism' remains a very long historical stage shot through with a permanent conflict between three poles that define the internal tendencies of society: local capitalism (which responds to the needs expressed by the development of productive forces); socialism (which reflects the anti-capitalist aspirations of the popular masses); and *étatisme* (produced by the autonomy of power from capitalist and socialist forces, which at the same time reflect the aspirations of the new class that controls the state). The conflict-laden balance among these tendencies is itself, of course, variable, depending on the concrete situations and the particular moment.

A social force is necessary to cement the popular alliance, overcome its internal conflicts, formulate the alternative popular national project, direct the popular bloc to enable it to get itself into power, build the new state and arbitrate the conflicts mentioned above peculiar to the popular national transition. This, in my opinion, is the role proper to the revolutionary intelligentsia, the 'organic intellectual' responding to the objective requirement of our times. This is a category peculiar to the situation of the peripheries of the capitalist system, not in the least analogous to the problematic of the *petit bourgeoisie* (a confused class as ever) or with that of the 'single party' born of national liberation, or again with that of the role of intellectuals as channels of expression of the various social classes. Elsewhere I have developed a few reflections on the intelligentsia of the Third World.⁷

Obviously, in these historical conditions, at least two fundamental questions

are posed to the intelligentsia and popular power, that of democracy and that of the cultural content of the societal project. I have also dealt with these questions directly in other writings.⁸ As regards the cultural dimension, I would like to specify here that neither the surface Westernization of the comprador classes peddling the consumption model of the developed world (and this transmission of the consumption model is only the visible part of the cultural iceberg), nor its apparent opposite – in reality its twin brother – the cultural nationalisms on which so-called fundamentalist religious currents feed, measure up to the challenge. The double blockage to which both these options lead is there to testify to the real difficulty of the project.⁹

A mere enumeration of the problems that the option for a popular national delinking would have to face in the conditions of contemporary Africa would be enough, either to excuse failures, or to demoralize. For first of all it must, at the level of necessary material achievements – development of productive forces and improvement of the living standards of the broad masses – carry through a double agricultural and industrial revolution for which I have said colonization did not prepare the region.

It is not fully realized that the European agricultural revolution developed in a world where the population explosion that accompanied it had the safety valve of massive emigration; at the time, Europe peopled the whole of the Americas and several other regions of the globe. Without this safety valve Western and central Europe would have had to support almost three times its present population since, added to the 400 million Europeans living today, there would be 800 million across the Atlantic who are the descendants of immigrants. But today, for the Third World, living through its population explosion, there is not this possibility of external expansion. Furthermore, modern industry is not capable of absorbing internal, rural to urban migration at the speed that was possible at the time of the European industrial revolution. This means that for real progress technological and social formulae need to be invented to ensure that the bulk of the population remained in their rural home areas for a long time to come.

Obviously, the national liberation movement centred initially, and rightly, on the prior conquest of simple political independence, lacked either a real awareness or an accurate assessment of the scale of the challenge. We must not criticize it for that. But we must be aware that the fine page of history that it wrote is over and done with. Harping on the past does not legitimize the present. We must know how to be patient. We must be aware that the first wave of national liberation has now run its course, and that the forces bearing the next one – with a popular national content – are not yet crystallized around an adequate alternative project. We are thus living in the trough of the wave, marked for that reason by too much disarray and intellectual and political capitulation.

The studies brought together in this book illustrate both the scale of the problems to be resolved and the limits of the conceptions the radical-national state has had of them. The group co-ordinator, Azzam Mahjoub, has endeavoured – successfully – to ask the relevant questions in such a way as to

avoid the problematic peculiar to each concrete case studied that would cause us to lose sight of the general lessons we hope to draw from these experiences.

Doubtless, over the last 30 years, there have been other debates as well as the one undertaken by our working group. At least here we should mention the debate on the 'non-capitalist path' which had its moments of glory in the 1960s, when Nasserism was at its height and Nkrumahist pan-Africanism had not yet exhausted itself against the gradual crystallization of new African states. Mention too should be made of what the jargon of progressive African intellectuals calls the 'Dar es Salaam debate' which, in the early 1970s, endeavoured to sort out the question of building socialism in Africa. This is not the place to reopen these arguments which were never closed. Other debates will follow the one whose results are published here. Our programme, among others, has set itself the task of ensuring this.

This work was carried out in the framework of the African Regional Prospects programme conducted jointly by the United Nations University (UNU) and the Third World Forum (TWF). We would like to thank the UNU, the Swedish agency SAREC and UNRISD whose generous support made this work possible. Of course, the opinions expressed are those of their authors alone and do not commit any of the organizations mentioned. We also thank the Office des Presses Universitaires de l'Algérie which, by publishing the work, testified once again to its sense of active African solidarity.

Notes

1. These particular aspects of the agricultural and agrarian problem, like those mentioned below in our reference to the need for an agricultural revolution, have been the subject of another group in the UNU-TWF programme whose work will also be published.

2. See Samir Amin, 'The interlinkage between agricultural revolution and industrialisation'. Paper presented to the OAU-ECA Conference, Abuja, Nigeria, June 1987.

3. Fayçal Yachir, *Les enjeux miniers en Afrique*. Paris, Karthala, 1987. English edition, *Mining in Africa Today: Strategies and Prospects*, in the UNU-TWF series, London, Zed Books Ltd, 1988.

4. Samir Amin, *La déconnexion*, Paris, La Découverte, 1987. See in particular chapter 2, II ('Le modèle de discussion de la loi de la valeur'). (*Delinking*, London, Zed Books, 1990.)

5. *Ibid.*, chapter 3.

6. Samir Amin, 'Nation, ethnie et minorités dans la crise', *Bulletin du FTM* (Dakar), No. 6, 1986.

7. Samir Amin, 'The role of the intelligentsia in the popular national revolution'. Paper, in Arabic, for Conference on the Role of Arab Intellectuals, Cairo, Egypt, 1987; to be published by the Arab Sociological Association.

8. On the question of democracy, see Samir Amin, 'The democratic question in the Arab nation' (Arabic text, in *Al Moustaqbal al Arabi*, No. 4, 1984); Samir Amin,

'Popular national strategy and the democratic question', *Third World Quarterly*, London, 1987.

9. On the cultural question in the Arabo-Islamic world, see Samir Amin, 'Development and the cultural issue: reflections on Arabo-Islamic thought', *Third World Bulletin* (Dakar), No. 7, 1987.

Samir Amin's more detailed publications, in Arabic, are:

The Crisis of Arab Society, Cairo, Egypt, 1985.

Post-capitalism, Beirut, Lebanon, 1987.

'Reflections on the crisis of Arab-Islamic thought' *Al Fike al-Arabi*, No. 45, 1987.

Contents

Preface *Samir Amin*

1. Introduction	<i>Azzam Mahjoub</i>	1
2. Egypt: From the Free Officers' Coup to the <i>Infitah</i>	<i>Azzam Mahjoub and Fawzy Mansour</i>	5
Before the Free Officers' Revolt		5
The Free Officers and the spirit of Bandung		6
The nation-building project		7
Adjustment		9
3. Algeria: The Problem of Nation-building	<i>Rabah Abdoun</i>	14
The problematic of nation-building		14
The Algerian experience of nation-building		17
The 1980s: towards a policy of adjustment		32
Conclusion		43
4. Tanzania: The Debate on Delinking	<i>Issa G. Shivji</i>	49
Introduction		49
Modernization: 1961-67		50
Development and underdevelopment: 1967-76		52
Marxist-Leninist currents		57
Democratic Socialists		59
Issues of the 1980s		60
Problems of the 1980s		65
Conclusion: the crisis of delinking theories		66
5. Ethiopia: The Debate on Delinking	<i>Peter Anyang' Nyong'o</i>	69
Introduction		69
Feudal heritage		71
Agriculture, productivity and the home market		72
Resettlement, productivity and accumulation		74
Industry		76
Foreign Trade		77
Political leadership		77
Conclusion		78

6. Zimbabwe and Uganda: A Contrasting Record	<i>Yash Tandon</i>	80
The experience of the USSR and China		80
Zimbabwe and Uganda: general observations		80
Zimbabwe's role in the international economic division of labour		82
Colonial Rhodesia: political and social structure		84
UDI: was Rhodesia delinked?		84
Independence: elimination of settler political power, continuation of imperialist domination		87
Who controls Zimbabwe's economy?		89
Conclusion		91
Uganda: general observations		92
Uganda's role in the international economic division of labour		92
Obote's first government: efforts to delink		96
The 1969 crisis and the 'Move to the Left' strategy		99
Idi Amin's 'Economic War'		101
The contemporary period		102
How 'delinked' is Uganda?		104
Conclusions		105
7. Burkina Faso: August 1983 – The Beginning of Delinking?		
<i>Talata Kafandi</i>		109
Introduction		109
Political aspects of the delinking process		116
Initial attempts to disengage from the West or the beginnings of Arab-Burkinabe co-operation		120
The fundamental options		121
The Popular Development Programme (PPD) and implementation of the 4 August 1983 fundamental options		125
Burkina Faso's delinking policy: obstacles and prospects		127
8. Ghana Under the PNDC: Delinking or Structural Adjustment?		
<i>Kwame A. Ninsin</i>		131
Introduction		131
Political and economic context		132
Mass mobilization: its politics and ideology		135
Economic crisis and response		138
Economic adjustments		140
The politics of economic adjustment		141
Conclusions: prospects for delinking		144
Epilogue		153
9. Structural Adjustment or Delinking: The Question Posed		
<i>Azzam Mahjoub</i>		157
The law of value and capital		157
Law of value, capitalist world economic system and world capitalist accumulation		160

The controversy over unequal exchange	162
Law of value and building of socialism	165
Conclusion	167
Index	170

Tables

2.1	Egypt: Exports and imports, East and West	10
3.1	Algeria: Economically active population and unemployment rates 1977	25
3.2	Algeria: Distribution of employment by sector 1969–79	26
3.3	Algeria: Movement of principal indicators of the Algerian economy, 1967–78	27
3.4	Algeria: Technical assistance expenditure and amount of contracts 1973–78	28
3.5	Algeria: Movement of workers' purchasing power	30
3.6	Algeria: Prices of certain mass consumption agricultural products	33
3.7	Algeria: Structure and evolution of employment by form of ownership	36
3.8	Algeria: Average annual growth rate of employment by form of ownership 1967–82	37
3.9	Algeria: Movement of certain economic aggregates of private industrial enterprises with 20+ employees	38
3.10	Algeria: Survey of investment projects by the national private sector	39
3.11	Algeria: Distribution of state-owned industrial enterprises after restructuring	40
3.12	Algeria: Number of employees per enterprise before and after restructuring	41
7.1	Burkina Faso: Economic growth 1960–75	114

1. Introduction

Azzam Mahjoub*

This book, the outcome of shared thinking about Africa as a whole, is aimed at an examination of post-colonial African experiences often described as socialist, meaning a more or less explicit ideological reference to socialism under a variety of labels and with varying contents (Arab socialism, African socialism etc.). Over and beyond the underlying rhetoric, these experiences constitute, in varying degrees, attempts – some abortive, others still underway – to challenge the operative principle of adjustment to the capitalist world economic system (CWES), a principle seen as leading to unequal and polarized development worldwide.

Originally, this work belonged in an overall problematic initiated by Samir Amin¹ on the contradictory dynamic of nation-building and subordination to transnationalization, the dynamic at the heart of the evolution of post-colonial Africa. What progress have the new African states been able to make towards nation-building, or are they still subordinated to the imperatives of transnationalization?

The concept of transnationalization here refers to the contemporary form assumed by the process of the globalization of the capitalist system; it expresses the tendency of the CWES to become all-embracing in the direction of the formation of a capitalist world economy governed by the law of value. From this angle, underlying this work is the basic idea that adjustment to the CWES signifies subordination to the logic of the functioning of the law of value worldwide, a logic seen as reproducing unequal development.

Challenging the operative principle of adjustment to the CWES thus leads to the alternative concept of delinking, a key concept of this work to which we shall constantly refer. This topic is highly relevant, especially as the world crisis, particularly as it affects Africa, has given prominence to the operative principle of adjustment to the CWES. Key actors within the CWES, such as the World Bank and the IMF, strongly support the need for permanent adjustment to the CWES. The advocacy of the so-called structural adjustment policies is the current expression of this requirement. The dominant tendency today is therefore towards adjustment, especially as the situation in Africa is marked by collapsing economies,² a deteriorating ecological environment, worsening

* Translated by A. M. Berrett