

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD

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Volume 2

**ECONOMY  
AND SOCIETY**

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Edited by

**MIKE GONZALEZ  
SALUSTIANO del  
CAMPO URBANO  
ROBERTO MESA**



THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY

VOLUME 2

ECONOMY AND  
SOCIETY IN  
THE TRANSFORMATION  
OF THE WORLD

Edited by

Mike Gonzalez  
Salustiano del Campo Urbano  
Roberto Mesa



THE UNITED NATIONS  
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# THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD

Volume 2: Economy and Society

## **'THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD' SERIES**

*General Editor:* Anouar Abdel-Malek

This series is part of the United Nations University's project entitled *Socio-cultural Development Alternatives in a Changing World (SCA)*, directed by Project Co-ordinator Prof Dr Anouar Abdel-Malek, within the Human and Social Development Program of the UNU led by Vice-Rector Prof Dr Kinhide Mushakoji.

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The volumes in the series are:

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|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 : Science and Technology                    | } | <i>published</i>   |
| 2 : Economy and Society                       |   |                    |
| 3 : Culture and Thought                       |   |                    |
| 4 : Religion and Philosophy                   | } | <i>forthcoming</i> |
| 5 : The Making of the New International Order |   |                    |

# Preface

Anouar Abdel-Malek

The process of exploration of The Transformation of the World – one of the three component parts of The United Nations University's Project *Socio-cultural Development Alternatives in a Changing World* (SCA), and, specifically, one of its two sub-projects – started with the study of the dimension of 'Science and Technology', in Belgrade, whose central results have been presented in Volume 1 of this series on *The Transformation of the World*, published in 1982.

The Second International Seminar was devoted to the exploration of 'Economy and Society', as the real-concrete societal mould for the transformation of the world. It was held in conjunction with the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and its Faculty of Political and Sociological Sciences, in Madrid, on 15–19 September 1980, under the joint chairmanship of Professor Salustiano del Campo and Professor Anouar Abdel-Malek, Professor Roberto Mesa, now Vice-Rector of the University, being the Secretary to the International Seminar. Mr Mike Gonzalez, Lecturer in the Department of Hispanic Studies, University of Glasgow, then kindly accepted to edit the complete proceedings manuscript towards its presentation as a Report Volume in this series.

The pace of social, cultural and economic change in the twentieth-century world has been phenomenal. It has seen the capitalist outlook and power system rise to its peak, then meet its nemesis in two major wars and later crises, but again pick up its capacity for reproduction and growth in an apparent long cycle of maintenance, essentially based on the accumulated historical surplus value, which, alone, made possible the transition to the second stage of the industrial revolution, more commonly labelled as the scientific and technological revolution. It has seen the emergence – as a world alternative – of Socialism as a goal of human progress, enlightenment and prosperity, to be diffused and decentralised among the broad masses of mankind. Conflict among socialist and capitalist state systems has, however, tragically limited the prospects and goals to which early socialist internationalists hopefully looked forward. Today there are dangers of nuclear extermination of parts of both camps, as well as many divisions within the international outlook which was once supposed to soon unite the human race.

There has also been the massive release of human liberation through national movements in the previously marginalised Three Continents which have given strength to the concept and structure of the nation-state, the generalised form of social power in different parts of the modern world, whether capitalist, socialist or non-aligned with either. Paradoxically these states have become foci for international conflict, often on a scale that is second only to that of nuclear holocaust.

It is in this context that thinking people have to come together with a global perspective to take stock of the direction in which the different major trends of the world are moving, so that better prospects may emerge for co-operation and peaceful co-existence among the different cultures, peoples and nations of the world, without further disruption of the human and collective identity; without, in sum, any more of the hangover that has accrued from the hegemonism of political economy in the last century.

The Madrid International Seminar *Economy and Society in the Transformation of the World* has been dedicated to a clearer understanding of the essential societal collectivities and identities on which the transformation of the world has to be based. It is in the fitness of things that the bulk of specific case studies deals with current life in Spain, the host country, who explicated the importance of this gathering through the audience granted by HM Juan Carlos, King of Spain, to all the participants to this international seminar. Thus, once again, in a novel manner, Spain is assuming its historic role of mediator between major civilisational and geo-cultural areas: Europe, the African Arab and Islamic World, and Latin America, ample echoes of which will be found in this volume.

Anouar Abdel-Malek,  
Project Co-ordinator

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# Presentation

In the opening presentation, Professor Abdel-Malek restated the main objective of the UNU-SCA project: “to evolve an international cultural and theoretical workshop for the formulation of new, creative positions on the problem of human and social development in the transformation of the world”. What is new and creative about the project is its aim of establishing joint action with key centres of scientific, cultural and intellectual activity to develop alternative perspectives. This has “first, deep roots in and genuine representation of existing prospective alternative potentials at work in different civilisations, cultures and national specificities in our world” as expressed in every arena of scientific and intellectual enquiry. “Secondly, the structural, continuous, dialectical links between concrete reality, ongoing and conflicting practices and the elaboration of concepts, theories and systems.”

Two sub-projects have been established within this general framework. The first, concerned with ‘Endogenous Intellectual Creativity’, is based upon the following formulations:

Starting from the premise that human and social development is fundamentally a process of self-reliance – by whole societies at the macro-level, by groups and individuals at the micro-level – the key is endogenous (self-reliant) creativity, rather than what it is the prevailing fashion to describe as the ‘transfer’ of knowledge – a transfer that will itself be remodelled according to changing goals of development. This creativity, which is opposed to exoticism and Orientalism, lies at the heart of the thought process itself, i.e. it is essentially an intellectual creativity, encompassing science, technology, philosophy and social policy, as well as culture and the arts. (From the Consultant’s Report to the Task Force Meeting, Tokyo, 6–10 June 1977)

The first stage in the implementation of the project is a series of regional symposia in each of the major geo-cultural areas as defined by Unesco.

The second sub-project, on ‘The Transformation of the World’, began from the following assumptions:

The central characteristic of the real world in our times is the transformation (not evolution or transition, for all historical periods are periods of

transition) of all dimensions of the life of human societies. This transformation, acknowledged by all sectors and groups, is neither unilinear nor synchronic. There are major differences in the quality, tempo and impact of transformation processes in different sectors of social life, throughout both the infrastructure and the superstructure of society. More visible and forceful are the distinctions between different types of society or socio-economic formation, with their accompanying political ideologies (basically capitalism, liberal capitalism and monopoly capitalism; and socialism, national progressive socialism and communism). Above all it is in the hitherto neglected dimension of civilisational, cultural and national specificity that we encounter major sets of differences.

Dr Abdel-Malek singled out three areas in which the transformation of the world can be seen. He noted the resurgence to contemporaneity of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where the historical processes of national liberation and independence, coupled with national and social revolution, have been the dominant feature of their contemporary history since 1917, and in particular after 1945. Western specialists have located this vast process of transformation within traditional historical conceptions in which the world is seen as divided between a (Western) centre and a periphery. From “the other side of the river”, however, the process was seen as a renaissance of cultures and civilisations – the Arab-Islamic *Nadah*, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the upsurge of Africanism, the re-emergence of hidden Indian and Indo-African elements within Latin American culture, are all examples.

A second group of factors arise from the response of the bourgeoisie to the revolutions of 1848, and especially to the Russian Revolution of 1917. “Its equanimity was suddenly shaken by the eruption of the working people into power, coupled with a populist world-view which foresaw a more humane life for the have-nots.” Sixty years on, nearly half of mankind lives under socialism. Third, and most recent, the immense progress taking place in science and technology had its own impact. While the advanced West described it as ‘a scientific and technological revolution’, and began to speak of ‘post-industrial society’, the more realistic view from the other side of the river employed more traditional concepts of revolution, development and social transformation “within implacable parameters of geo-politics”. “No one can deny the growing influence of modern technologies in our world . . . the question is how to relate it to the social and human sciences, political and social theory or the philosophical quest”, with all its consequences for human development.

Areas of convergence, where the tasks of scientific and theoretical elaboration can be undertaken, have already been agreed:

First, *cultural identity and socio-political change*, whose starting-point

would be a concept of specificity very different from abstract, essentialist typology. This would lead to a refinement of the positions on problems of development through social dialectics, permanence and renewal, transformation, the renaissance and crisis of human societies.

Second, *new perceptions of the prospects for human civilisation*, which would concern itself particularly with the new international order, assessing different perceptions of global transformation at geopolitical, economic and strategic levels; and of ideas, theories, modes of societal maintenance and evolution arising within each major civilisational and national-cultural area. It will therefore encompass the various social and political philosophies, religions and ideologies as well as the key notion of *civilisational project*. Thirdly, *specificity and universality*; for the problem of specificity is at the heart of every scientific area, requiring the development of a universally valid theory of specificity based on civilisational and national-cultural areas. This would make it possible for us to go on to explore and consolidate the links between specificity and the universality that is our goal.

Finally, the whole project will be approached in a spirit of non-antagonistic, dialectical contradiction, leading to complementarity.

The central concern of the present seminar would be the scientific field of the 'transformation of the world', whose sub-themes would be divided not according to a segregation of 'disciplines', but rather by area of discussion. Dr Abdel-Malek pointed out that the symposium was not merely an agglomeration of particular analyses, nor a forum for detached theoretical or epistemological pronouncements. As the Charter of the United Nations University expressed it, the University's work should be devoted to "research into the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare, that are the concern of the UN and its agencies with due attention to social science and the humanities as well as the natural sciences, pure and applied" (Art. 1, Point 2, UNU Charter). Thus the University's research programmes included: "co-existence between peoples having different cultures, languages and social systems; peaceful relations between States and the maintenance of peace and security; human rights; economic and social change and development; the environment and the proper use of resources; basic scientific research and the application of the results of science and technology in the interests of development; and universal human values related to the improvement of the quality of life" (Article 1, Point 33).

The introductory section, on 'Changing Patterns in World Economy', should address itself to (a) the problem of the world economy and the world market. The analysis should be conducted in a comparative, prospective manner, locating the formative factors within the transforma-

tion of the current patterns of world economy, and cutting across the distinctions between different socio-economic systems. (b) The study of the interaction between actual and potential developments in self-reliance (national, religious, etc.) in the face of the major forces in the world economy. This is a crucial area as far as the dialectics of emerging patterns, national and international, are concerned. (c) Particular attention should be given to the hitherto marginal forces – Asia, Africa, Latin America – to the problem of oil, raw materials and food, and to the interplay of forces that will determine the future of the world economy.

Section II, on the ‘Scientific and Technological Revolution’, should provide a prospective on current debates in the area. Is it a revolution, or simply a second, higher stage of the industrial revolution?

This ‘revolution’ will be considered principally in terms of its impact on urban and rural society in both developed and developing world. The following problems will be considered: (a) the relation between scientific and technological and national and social revolutions; (b) the threats implicit in the ‘Promethean’ approach – problems of nuclear energy, the finite availability of resources, etc.; (c) the conditions for mankind in the context of this process, and the consequent technological control of personal and social life, mass media and popular culture, affluence and its spiritual dimensions; (d) the question of the technocrats, the organic intellectuals of the new systems; (e) attitudes towards the process in the countryside, especially among the peasantry of underdeveloped countries, and means of mobilising their hidden potential; and (f) a prospective view of urban problems, the control of space and power, the quality of life in urban geo-areas.

The contradictions have their explicit manifestation in ‘The Forms of Social power and the State’, which is the brief of Section III. It therefore represents a ‘point of convergence’ around issues amenable to analysis, criticism and reshaping:

(a) the traditional problematic of the State, a study of the modern content of social power in the State and its new functions, and a consideration of its openness to restructuring. Here the question of the ‘withering-away of the State’ will be set against the strengthening of State power; (b) the transformation and future functions of the urban working class, rural labourers, white-collar workers and intellectuals. Perhaps a wider category – working people – might arise to embrace working peasants and urban workers; (c) the question of alliances for working people in different socio-political contexts, approached through actual or potential scenarios; (d) the question of the hegemonic class, posed in the broadest

- terms to include hegemony, social hegemony, etc. as the internal dimension of social dialectics; (e) the armed forces and the social order.

○ In dealing with the pivotal questions of human continuity, Section IV, ‘The Quest for New Life Units’, will approach the biological, psychological and affective aspects of human relations, and consider:

- (a) changing forms of family, sex life, affective relations and their institutionalisation; (b) the interplay between the nuclear family and wider circles of social cohesion, maintenance and change, i.e. professional and social groups, classes, schools of thought and action, spiritual groups, political and national organisations; (c) an exploration of the subtle, yet fundamental, links between images of man, the spiritual–philosophical dimension of the human condition in society, and the most intimate areas of life in relation to broader socio-economic constraints; (d) the emergence of youth as a major social actor, cutting across all economic, political, sexual and social categories and typologies.

In seeking a form of debate that would avoid repetition or formalism, the project set out to “mobilise the creative potential of the international intellectual, cultural and scientific communities, hopefully producing and putting before policy-makers and the general public new ideas and alternative models – new thoughts about our shared future”.

# Opening Addresses

Salustiano del Campo, *Inaugural remarks*

Anouar Abdel-Malek, *From Developmentalism to the Civilisational Quest*

The seminar was opened by Professor Salustiano del Campo, who recalled the founding principles of the United Nations University: “to understand the causes and provide solutions for the world’s principal problems, increasing the practical impact of research in every country and raising the level of collaboration between scholars and scientists across the world”. He introduced the work of the UNU to scholars present.

The Madrid Seminar followed on from the Belgrade Seminar on *Science and Society in the Transformation of the World* – part of the *Socio-cultural Development, Alternatives in a Changing World* project co-ordinated by Dr Anouar Abdel-Malek.

The general purpose of the seminar is to demonstrate the interrelationship of economy and society, though in the clear understanding that those relations allow of no simple explanation – as Spain’s socio-economic transformation which began in 1960 amply demonstrates. In our country, the macroeconomic dimension was quickly transformed, due in no small part to the spontaneous mobilisations of the population that have ensured that the social changes of the last fifteen years in Spain have been more far-reaching than at any other time during the previous three centuries. Mass emigration to Western Europe, the educational explosion, the mass media and the new patterns of consumption are elements in a process that brought Spain face to face with democracy after Franco’s death in an already quite modern society.

Democracy has advanced considerably in Spain since 1975; yet today, a vast economic crisis that has brought minimum growth in 1980, a 12 per cent unemployment level, a large budget deficit, etc. threaten the legitimacy of that democratic process, as well as its possibilities for survival. These were the questions that would be discussed in a global context by people from all over the world in this “university whose campus has no frontiers”. For “the UNU is a new type of university for a new kind of world, acting through

associated institutions that co-operate in its programmes". To date, the only such institution in Spain was the Universidad Complutense, co-sponsor of the Second International Seminar.

The UNU was highly regarded in Spain, as evidenced by the King of Spain's agreement to receive the members of the seminar. "I hope, therefore" he concluded "that the seminar will be intellectually fruitful, and that the delegates will feel at their ease amongst us."

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In his contribution, *From developmentalism to the civilisational quest*, Dr Anouar Abdel-Malek set out the tasks of the seminar in terms of the "mission of the UNU". And he felt it particularly propitious that the Second International Seminar on the Transformation of the World should take place at the very beginning of the UN's third development decade, and simultaneously with the important second Meeting on European Security. It was precisely the dimension of economy and society that concerned the seminar – "the challenges and promises of a historical period whose turning point came between 1949 and 1973".

There was, it appeared, a measure of consensus on the potential disasters that the future held in store. The Brandt Commission, for example, had called for a massive transfer of resources from rich to poor, in anticipation of the 1981 North-South summit. On 24 July 1980, the conclusions of a three-year report commissioned by the US Presidency – *The Global 2000 Report* – indicated that:

Time is running out for international action to prevent the world from becoming a starving, overcrowded, polluted, resource-poor planet . . . The potential for global problems of alarming proportions by the year 2000 – environmental, resource and population stresses – is growing, and will increasingly determine the quality of human life . . . If present trends continue, the world in 2000 will be more crowded, more polluted, less ecologically stable and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now.

The World Bank's third Annual World Development Report predicted five years of sluggish growth which would bring greater suffering to the eight hundred million people already experiencing poverty and hardship. The Report hinted that the non-affluent societies should not seek to imitate the Western model of growth. But, then, what was the alternative? For thirty-five years after Yalta and Hiroshima, and on the eve of the third development decade, the problems remain unsolved – despite the great national and social revolutions and transformations that have marked the epoch. "It is a time for anxiety and despair, when the negative mind is deep



at work in the fabric of large sectors of hegemonic cultures and the mass media – apocalypse now!” In this light, growing numbers of intellectuals, citizens of different countries, cultures and civilisations, are seeking ways of identifying the endogenous potentials and resources of their society, in search of different paths of social evolution.

The debate around liberation and development since 1945 provides some clue to current ambiguities. The first post-war phase – 1945–60 – was characterised by the “primacy of the political”, whose formative features were the fall of fascism, the wave of national liberation movements and the array of new independent States that arose out of them, the formation of socialist countries in the West, and the organic interrelation of liberation and socialism in China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and Algeria, which coincided with the national progressive direction taken by the Bandung group, one of whose leading linkages was with Nasserism. “The Promethean vision was similarly encouraged by the sheer scope of material and infrastructural reconstruction after 1945.” Historicist-dialectical orientation stressed the interrelations between national movements and imperialism, dependence and independence, and acknowledged the factor of national-cultural identity as a constant. The second, structuralist-functional approach, “centred on concepts of ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’, and the semantics and theology of economism and productivism. Given the existing balance of forces in the political and the intellectual sphere, it was obviously the latter that dominated the human and social science after Yalta.” Yet the historical moment demanded the recognition of the primacy of the political as well as of “the necessity to go beyond and seek the hidden part of the iceberg in the civilisational and cultural formative dimensions of social dialectics”.

At the time, however, the crystallisation of a new world imperium around the USA, the resurgence of China and its civilisation, the amazing reconstruction of Germany and Western Europe, the rise of Japan from Hiroshima to the position of the world’s second industrial and technological power, the upsurge of the USSR and the socialist countries, the strengthening of national States in meaningful States in Asia, Africa and Latin America, all seemed to point to the primacy of economics, and in particular, of technology.

This was the atmosphere that produced the ethos of “stages of development” and the talk of “scientific and technological revolution and of the post-industrial electronic age in the advanced societies”.

From the early 1960s, the developmentalist notion sanctified productivism, consumerism and boundless hedonism; this was the Golden Age of the Experts, the professional technocrats, the self-styled Saviours of Mankind. For “there was now a ‘Third’ world to prospect and save, while on the other hand the elites of the three marginalised continents could gain