THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD

Volume 2: Economy and Society

‘THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD’ SERIES

General Editor: Anouar Abdel-Malek

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VOLUME 2

ECONOMY AND
SOCIETY IN
THE TRANSFORMATION
OF THE WORLD

Edited by

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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