

Africa Confronted with the Ravages of Neo-liberalism

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Résumé: Dans cet article, l'auteur présente une introduction générale des textes contenus dans ce numéro. Il parle des ravages de l'ajustement néolibéral en Afrique. Il met l'accent sur les facteurs qui ont conduit l'Europe à opter pour un ordre mondial néolibéral dont il affirme que les résultats catastrophiques étaient prévisibles et même prévus. Il stipule que les pays développés ont eu recours au néolibéralisme dans le but de freiner la «nouvelle industrialisation» qui s'opérait dans le tiers monde à la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale. Après avoir donné une large perspective théorique pour la compréhension de l'impact du néolibéralisme sur les tendances actuelles du développement en Afrique, il a examiné brièvement chacun des 15 cas analysés par pays ou par région dans ce numéro spécial. La conclusion de cette analyse est d'appuyer le besoin d'aller au-delà des stratégies et chemins néolibéraux actuels.

The African version of the multi-dimensional global crisis has been brought about primarily by its economic structure which has remained agrarian, with low (at times declining) productivity, and which specialises in agro-mineral exports. Neo-liberal adjustment, which has lasted for nearly two decades, is managing this crisis instead of offering an alternative to the mediocre developmentalism that preceded it. It has been such a total 'failure' that the World Bank (hereafter the Bank) is no longer pointing out the good students, embarked on a path of stable — even sustainable — growth, thanks to the neo-liberal recipes that have been applied. Naturally the Bank refuses to assume any blame for adjustment's catastrophic consequences. It refuses to take responsibility for the tragedies like those in Somalia and Rwanda.

However, the authors of this special issue of *Africa Development* highlight the coincidence between the application of neo-liberal recipes, the deterioration of economic and social conditions, and, consequently, the deadlock reached by 'democratic experiments' in Africa and propose alternatives. In this introduction, we would like to emphasise the factors that drove the West to opt for a neo-liberal world order, whose catastrophic results were predictable and even expected. We take a global approach and situate the analysis of the African crisis as well as proposals for an alternative in the general context of North-South relations and of regional dynamics. The geo-strategic dimension will receive particular attention.

We maintain that developed countries — the United States at the fore — deliberately turned to neo-liberalism in a move to block the ‘new industrialisation’ taking root in the Third World after the Second World War; and that in as much as the crystallising State, referred to in the Bandung Plan, had been the principal agent to plant this seed, their (the Western) plan sought to compromise this fledgling State by returning it to its comprador status.

**Theoretical Stakes in the Debate on Post Neo-liberalism:
The Political Dimension**

The Limitations of Neo-liberal Responses to the Problems that Capitalistic Accumulation puts on the Agenda

- a) *Pure market or capital theory is simply to maximise profit for the capitalist enterprise.* Neo-liberal theory alleges that if the State is satisfied carrying out the functions that Adam Smith accorded it, globalised markets (except for labour!) will self-regulate ‘in the long term’ through cycles of adjustment and this will lead to an infinite raise in the net production and income per inhabitant, discounting the destruction of nature and forces. In this thesis the phases of crisis and stable and sustainable growth alternate like biological or astronomical cycles, according to the internal laws of ‘the market economy’.

Economists’ criticism focuses on the fact that in reality, conditions for the pure and perfect concurrence of factors (the small merchants’ means of production) are never fulfilled. By taking a step back and using the global approach, three non-market philosophies are discernible; the offspring of capitalism that shows how limited market theory’s domination is in the reproduction of capital.

- b) *The logic behind nationalist claims in response to polarisation.* Market logic cannot explain North-South polarisation, and unequal development in the South. Theories of unequal exchange and money transfers provoked by global-scale balancing of the profit margin do not disclose the essential truth. A global analysis centring on class alliances and taking external factors, notably geo-political ones, into consideration permitted Samir Amin to demonstrate how capitalism is a polarising force from inception.

Polarisation incites the development of radical nationalist movements whose central claim is the right to imitate the centres, at the economic and technological levels (although generally not at the political and/or cultural levels). For these movements to bow to the logic of transnationalisation (market theory) and let capital determine the overriding directions in investment means renouncing complete primitive accumulation and hence

dealing with polarisation rather than questioning it. They are afraid that the national private bourgeoisie will cease to be compradorised.

Since 1880, a policy of complete primitive accumulation in one country or one region must overcome obstacles that its predecessors along that route had never encountered. Ever since, the power structure should have been in a position to subjugate pure capitalist theory in favour of an auto-centric accumulation one. In reality, if left to the whims of market logic, capitalism is by nature more a speculator rather than an entrepreneur as the classic economists, Marx and Shumpeter thought. Its quest is for monetary surplus and not necessarily productive activity. This observation can be extended to the public sector in cases where the State has eliminated the market through bureaucratic planning instead of enlisting it in the need to build a coherent and dynamic economic system. The definition of priority sectors and what proportions to respect between the different sectors depends not just on a combination of institutions and experience, but especially on the administration's capacity to develop synergical relations using both public and private enterprises. In any case, mastering the balance of payments has proved essential. So much so that when it comes to collection and savings strategies, the State prefer banks as their agents (German and Japanese model) as opposed to the stock market (Anglo-Saxon model).

c) *Outline of the responses to environmental over-exploitation and pollution*

The logic of pure capital inevitably leads to the over-exploitation of nature. Marx set this out clearly in *Capital*, even if he did not grasp the implications for the theory of labour value. Undoubtedly the essential point does not lie there, for with him, the notion of value was more useful in organising criticism of the capitalist system than in proposing political and ideological solutions to save it. Also, calculating net production is not as significant for him as for the neo-classical theorists. Moreover, Marx was more concerned with pollution in the work place, and with the housing conditions which directly affected the health of the worker, than by environmental deterioration and pollution per se. These factors should never be overlooked in the ecological debate. Thus progressive ecological thought and movements accentuate the need and urgency of introducing a global price system which encompasses and reflects profit diverted for improving the environment, the means of production of farmers, fishermen, and animal herders.

In this, as in others, neo-liberalism is proposing its 'theory' of adjustment—through cycles of international specialisation—and keeps quiet on the most important pollution risks. It claims that 'in the long term' a profitable anti-pollution investment cycle will emerge. Has it not already been assessed that in Germany one quarter of the GDP goes to fighting the effects of pollution, while relying upon the co-operation of profitable businesses? The

same thought process serves to legitimise the international toxic waste trade directed towards the South, and the move to locate polluting industries there under the pretext that the pollution rate is much less than in the industrialised North.

Basically, neo-liberalism is obscuring two major facts:

- (i) In the long term interdependence is irreversible; an alternative model of global development is paramount because it is now clear that our planet cannot tolerate economies like the G7 countries, producing and throwing away so many products and so much waste per person.
- (ii) The leading powers disagree on this score. This was conveyed by the negative position of the United States at the 1992 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Neo-liberal silence concerns a crucial aspect of pollution risks: the manufacturing and storage of nuclear arms. It is true that in this domain, the self-regulating market theory is not applicable.
- d) *Confusion in the face of the law of the over-exploited work force* Marx showed that the logic of pure capital always forces two fractions to coexist: the active proletariat and the pool of reserves. He demonstrated that market logic engenders relative and absolute pauperisation. For him, pauperisation cannot be solved under capitalism. For some, the evolution of the Welfare State in developed countries after the Second World War would have refuted Marx's predictions. However, in an analysis that encompasses the centres and peripheries in the same philosophical system, Marx is right. Pauperisation has developed in practically all the peripheries, aggravated by the self-regulating market logic which is back with a vengeance and has nothing to propose except reducing the salaries of the 'active proletarian army' in order to avoid the drift of capital towards countries without taxes or legislation about labour.

Pauperism in the midst of abundance is harmful to the aspirations of social justice and equity, which exist in all societies. Granted that these aspirations only found a voice with the evolution of the social sciences in 19th century Europe, socialist theoreticians, especially Marxists, demonstrated that building a world without poverty and without political exclusion was not only necessary, but possible. At least for a while, progressives believed that the Bolshevik and Maoist revolutions opened the way for transition to communism.

The fact that it failed does not mean that market logic is the solution. The important point to remember is that the weakening of the socialist movement is a factor that serves to aggravate the crisis of accumulation in the West. As the bourgeoisies now rely more on depoliticisation to perpetuate pauperisation by offering certain countries in the South that would threaten their interests, a destabilising democratisation and a

stabilising version for 'friends'. To achieve this objective, they are ready to use as many confounding forces as possible, such as religious or 'ethnic' 'fundamentalisms', and fight against progressive forces. Today the latter are in a state of disarray.

e) *Political Democracy: Crisis in the North, uncertainty about its implementation in the South.* Attempts to theorise the relations between the capitalist economy (market economy) and political regimes have not yielded any conclusive results. To compound the matter, history lets it be said that resistance to oppression and domination, and the aspiration towards political participation — which date back to the first societies to organise States — triumphed definitively with the declarations of the Republic of the United States and especially of the French Revolution. Until the end of the Second World War, the heart of the debate focused on voting eligibility and expressed the ruling classes' fear of seeing universal suffrage bring anti-capitalist majorities to power. Even the conception of civil society was very limited.

The consolidation of political democracy in Western Europe can be traced to the creation of the welfare State that the workers demanded. With an increasing standard of living and decreasing work time, the majority of them then abandoned the socialist project in keeping with the times. Democracy thus lost its potentially revolutionary dimension.

Today the crisis of the welfare State in Europe is entwined with democracy's own crisis, forced to evolve along the lines of the American model characterised by the exclusion of poor people from politics. De-politicisation reduces the rate of participation in political life, including elections. Meanwhile the media has taken on the two-fold job of demonising the Third World which threatens Western security (Islamic fundamentalism, drug production), and will be responsible for dismantling the welfare State (social dumping, 'clandestine' immigration); and legitimising their governments' decisions against the South.

In the developing periphery, the ruling classes claim that democracy endangers the positions of the 'nation' on the world market; they brandish the potential of modern repression that industry grants them against the forces of socialism. But, once social struggle has mandated liberal democracy, its material power base effectively opens the door for concessions (Taiwan, South Korea). In the Fourth World in general, the time has come for 'democratic openness'; the low level of industrialisation makes political alliances very fragile. In Africa, the significant 'democratic openness' and popular mobilisation it engenders can be explained to a large extent by the weakness of local bourgeoisie. The low level of industrialisation does not allow the ruling classes to crystallise and transcend ethnic, religious, or regional divisions. In addition, the crisis has meant a

drastic reduction in available surplus for strengthening State apparatuses and social development. The result is that 'democratic openness' does not eliminate clientelism, and that it could just as easily lead to anarchy, to a power monopoly by a numerically dominating 'ethnic group', or to a kind of consensus between the 'political parties' to preserve the economic and social status quo. The claim that a democracy devoid of a strong social make up is a factor to growth and development in Africa cannot be backed up by any convincing historical experience. For the African Left which expresses itself from within the Third World Forum, as we will see in the part devoted to Africa, the democratisation of our societies and not only of our political regimes — is inseparable from auto-centric development and a socialist perspective in a world-wide socialist system.

In sum, the crises will be overcome by socialism. We will see further along the difficulties raised today by its definition. It is important to remember here only that the logic behind the call for socialism is inherent in the capitalist system and operates within it in the form of movements with set progressive objectives: political parties, unions, feminist, ecological, and other movements.

In the light of the theoretical framework outlined here we will re-examine the North-South economic stakes, particularly as they appear to the ruling classes of the centres, in view of the rising tide of 'dragons', Asian 'tigers', and 'oil powers'.

The North-South Economic Stakes of the 1970s

By the late 1960s, the ruling bourgeoisies had lost their economic and social regulating power and were confronted with 'new industrialisation' in the South. Large transnational corporations were becoming the principal players in the international economic game and they shattered the monetary system that was based on the dollar and set exchange rates. Thus they removed the central State's regulatory capability, that it had exercised since the mercantile era, to manage conflicting interests. But more importantly, they accentuated the tendency towards over-production due to the weakening socialist political movement and unions, which remained national.

After the second world war, the ruling forces thought they could keep a tight rein on Southern industrialisation, i.e., in the final analysis, prevent the crystallisation of the nationalist and socialist movement. But certain large countries went from an industrialisation founded on the notion of deepening and broadening the internal market in stages to competitive integration in the new global production system.

Bourgeoisies all over the Third World believed in the possibility of a new international economic order (NIEO) in which rules concerning the exploitation and commercialisation of local products, the reorganisation of the international monetary and financial system, the unconditional opening

of central markets, and the circulation of scientific and technological information, would be put at the Southern economic revolution's disposal. Their optimism was justified by the success of the decision of OPEC's member countries to unilaterally increase petroleum profits, and by the prospect of certain Latin American and Asian countries getting out of the industrial crisis by substituting imports with competitive integration in the global production system.

These claims were rejected outright by the ruling alliances. In opposition to the global Keynesian model — without a corresponding State — they set up the neo-liberal globalisation plan. We will define it as the sum of economic doctrines and conservative practices by which the ruling forces of central capitalism have been trying to recompradorise Third World States in order to preserve polarisation since the 1970s. Their main target is efficient economic nationalism which could crystallise in a class that is capable of orchestrating an economic revolution (primitive accumulation). Debt deficits and 'aid' are their principal weapons and multinational and national financial institutions are their most visible agents.

Asia and Africa up Against the Implementation of the Neo-liberal Plan to Block Economic Nationalism

The responses of Southern countries have varied according to the degree of vulnerability of the States and the ruling classes, as defined by the levels and organisation of industry and the debt.

A Variety of Responses

In the context of the developmentalist project, also known as the Bandung Project, the will to overcome the shortcomings inherent in the colonial pact was expressed throughout the Third World by the place reserved for industrialisation in all the 'development plans' up until the debt crisis in the early 1980s. This was the case even when the disparity between the objectives and the actual outcomes was sometimes very great and reduced 'planning to a ritual' of legitimising power. Even in Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa), the average growth rate of manufacturing industry was 4.3 per cent per year during the 1970s — a period nonetheless marked by drought — in other words, a comparable rate to that of Southern Asia (4.3 per cent), though less than that of Latin America (6.2 per cent), and far behind that of Eastern Asia (11.3 per cent).

Although Asian Pacific Ring countries adhere to the Bandung industrialisation plan and adjust themselves to economic globalisation, Africa has been regressing ever since it was subjected to the neo-liberal adjustment programmes (SAP). From 1980 to 1993, the growth rate in the manufacturing sector was only 0.9 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 6.3 per cent in South Asia (India 6.3 per cent) and 10.6 per cent in

Eastern Asia (China 11.3 per cent). Even a succinct comparative analysis allows us to better grasp the contours of the African crisis.

Self-adjustment

In Eastern and South-east Asia, and even in the subcontinent, the ruling classes adhere to the Bandung plan or to capitalist auto-centric development in the face of renewed interdependence. Five series of factors underlie this success.

- a) They do not suffer from complexes with regard to the West. The collective memory is aware for example that Chinese civilisation and the Chinese State are among the oldest in the world; that Japan managed to escape capitalist domination and instead sacrificed its feudal society to save its identity and independence; that Vietnam achieved some great military victories over the French and American expeditionary forces; that Korea and Taiwan had the savvy to take advantage of their strategic positions in relation to the United States in order to become new industrialised countries; etc.
- b) The region harbours markets with an exceptional capacity for expansion. The region is home to more than half of the earth's population, three of the most heavily populated countries on earth, and five of more than 100 million inhabitants. The population density per kilometre is one of the highest in the world.
- c) All of the region's countries have free access to the sea, or are even islands or archipelagos. This considerably lessens the costs of transportation and international exchange.
- d) Both external and internal conditions remain favourable for industrialisation.

Under the direction of the Chinese Communist Party which, it maintains, practices market socialism, the People's Republic of China can rely on direct investment from some great powers, Taiwan and the Chinese diaspora, to accelerate economic growth and increase its technological capability.

To preserve their military and economic influence in the Pacific, the United States must keep supporting the industrialisation of South Korea, Taiwan, and Indonesia, i.e., Vietnam, if it wants to hold Chinese ambitions in check.

Japan, whose interests are the same as the United States', can only guarantee its supply of raw materials and find outlets for its surplus capital by supporting the movement towards industrialisation in the region.

From an internal standpoint, all the countries benefit from stable power structures, pro-democracy movements having been stifled in China and Indonesia, the two principal countries in the region.

- e) Having realised before the neo-liberal globalisation of agricultural and social reforms that are crucial for growth and industrialisation, the States of the region managed to avoid the trap of the debt deficit. Thus they were able to escape having Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) imposed and nonetheless adjust themselves without subjecting themselves to the economic and political 'conditional clauses'. This ability to conduct large-scale reforms with autonomy is at the heart of the 'Asian Miracle', and not submission to the law of the market as the World Bank claimed for a long time during its anti-industrialisation campaign in Africa and the Arab world.

Africa is a Testing Ground for the Neo-liberal Plan

The Neo-Liberal Plan has been imposed in Africa in its entirety and has produced the predicted disastrous results. The people of all the demographically sizeable countries face the impossibility of possessing power and/or an administration that orchestrates the economic revolution and the appropriate social reforms.

The Success of the Neo-Liberal Project is Rooted in History

In mercantilist Western Europe, foreign trade relations, particularly those related to the triangular trade, served to consolidate the nation-states born of the decomposition of feudalism and emancipation from Papal control. The centralisation of powers was accompanied by the constitution of bureaucracies that were implicated in auto-centric economic development, and of defence systems based on firearms, factories and navies. In Black Africa, its implication in the 'triangular trade' by the slave trade, predatory by nature, did not encourage the formation of nation-states, but rather the cultural and ethnic polarisation and the lineagisation of political and economic relationships.

In North Africa, the ruling classes were involved in the unequal exchange imposed on the Ottoman Empire by Europe (the famous capitulation), and keeping alive the nostalgia for centuries of splendour and the dream of a united Islamic Umma while Europe was laying the foundation of the secular State. This secularity was to permit the development of the liberal democracy.

Once Europe was industrialised and endowed with national bourgeoisies, it put Africa in an impossible position: to imitate it. The slave trade continued and colonisation completed the destruction of societies. The intention of industrial Europe to annihilate Africa can be read in the decisions of the Berlin Conference which clearly show that even if the

African is recognised as a human being, he or she does not have the right to a nation-state. It is this conception that legitimises the cultural assassination effected by the slicing up of territories — according to an absurd plan — from industrialisation's point of view. Thus the irony of fate: the dismemberment of Africa is the offspring of the struggles which resulted in the formation of the Italian and German nation-states, two historic processes that undoubtedly changed the course of European history, and in the same blow, Africa's as well. It is therefore a truism to say that the colonial economic project, founded on the over-exploitation of people and natural resources and governed by the colonial pact, did not permit local industrial bourgeoisies to form. With their capital and capitalists from the metropolises, the central State and the local administration tended to the direct control of industrial activities. This is why the embryos of industrial or agrarian bourgeoisies were only formed in settler colonies (the Maghreb, South Africa, Zimbabwe).

Under these conditions, the radical liberation movements' auto-centric development plans under-estimated the importance of the political, geo-strategical, geo-economic, and demo-geographic dimensions to the dilemmas.

- a) Basically, their vehicle was segments of the petite bourgeoisie that were not even much involved in the administration of the territories: members of liberal professions, primary and secondary school teachers, etc. They were by nature voluntarists and popularists. The balkanisation of the continent is also a detracting factor for an auto-centric development plan. Basically even if it has doubled since 1960, the population of Africa is still lower than India's. More than twenty of the fifty-three countries have less than 10 million inhabitants and six have less than one million. The continent has only three countries with more than 50 million inhabitants (whereas Vietnam has 78 million) and only one with more than 100 million. We should add that fourteen countries are totally landlocked: Zaire, upon whom Central Africa depends, has only a slim corridor its access to the sea, and Ethiopia has been landlocked by Eritrea since the latter's independence.
- b) On the other hand, the neo-colonial project of only forging strategic alliances with the ruling strata of society and with comprador States did not necessitate any social reordering because it excluded voluntarist industrialisation. The West had force to fall back on to foil its adversaries. In this respect, we should remember that the United States contributed to 'decolonisation' in as much as they were persuaded that the European colonial powers did not have the means to impose the neo-colonial plan in view of the upsurge in nationalist radicalism world-wide that was supported by the world military power that the

Soviet Union had become. In addition, it was and is to this day a matter of being able to exercise complete control over the Middle East's petroleum resources and over Africa's mineral resources. In other words, the industrialisation of North Africa (especially Egypt) and of Ethiopia is felt as a threat to the security of oil supply centres. Likewise, the emergence of an industrial power in North Africa undermined the foundation of the racist anti-Black ideology in the West. These reasons explain the unquestionable unanimity about keeping the continent in submission and poverty with the unfaltering support of neocolonialists. The ACP-European relations are founded upon them.

The Fourth World

The lowest stratum which forms the Fourth World, in the strictest sense of the term, describes a category into which falls almost all the other economies of the continent. Their system of production is characterised by the absence of an industrial network and often by such an extensive agriculture, low productivity, and limited surplus that with a population that is 70 per cent agrarian, dependency on food aid remains an essential given their relations with the centres, even for a country like Kenya.

In the majority of these countries the neo-liberal objective has been set up under the direct supervision of agents of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with bilateral agencies acting more discreetly. Certain economies are totally disorganised by the speed of the 'reforms' which turn the notion of human life into a complete abstraction. Thus the 'New Agricultural Policies' (NAP) require that in the space of a few years pure capitalist conditions (mythical though they be) be created in agriculture (liberalising imports and disengaging the State), whereas the United States and the European Union have excluded agriculture from the GATT agreements for forty years. Neo-liberalism is thus preparing for future famines and beyond that the delinquency of States and societies. The case of Rwanda is an illustration. In 1993, i.e. one year before the process of decline exploded so dramatically, the value of agricultural production was at the same level as in 1980, while the population had increased by 2.9 per cent. Likewise, the debt went from 13.6 per cent to 28.8 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product and from 209 per cent to 362 per cent of exports. The ration of consumption to production increased from 3 per cent in 1970 to 9 per cent in 1990, while exports fell from 12 per cent to 7 per cent of the GDP! What alternatives to genocidal power could the Hutu majority mobilise in these conditions? What fringe did the new regime call upon to define a new democracy to fit the conditions if the pressure from abroad was so heavy and the economy so fragile?

The Seven Semi-industrial Countries

Some seven countries, which we will call semi-industrial, have broken from the pack, with South Africa at the forefront. It's the only country on the continent which has a diversified industrial base comparable to that of large Latin American countries. Undoubtedly this is because it was less of a victim to neo-liberals than other countries. It produced 50 per cent of the continent's manufacturing output in 1990 as opposed to 40 per cent twenty years earlier. In a kind of war economy stemming from apartheid, this country has been able to build the atomic bomb and other sophisticated arms adapted to 'low intensity' armed conflicts. But it was unable to cross the threshold of competition because of the impossibility of enlarging internal and sub-regional demand. The other semi-industrial countries, four in North Africa (in decreasing order of industrial activity, Algeria and Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco), and two in sub-Saharan Africa (Zimbabwe and Mauritius), lag behind.

In Algeria, resistance to the neo-liberal de-industrialisation plan proved to be the most tenacious, undoubtedly because of the long armed liberation struggle that brought to power social forces dedicated to enforcing a large auto-centric industrialisation programme. But unfortunately they counted too heavily on petroleum profits to finance the importation of equipment, technology, consumer goods, and especially staple food products. They consequently employed a systematic agricultural development policy without looking for outlets abroad for their industries. The debt deficit induced by the model itself forced those in power to renounce self-structuring, in favour of adjustment determined by destabilising external and internal forces.

In Egypt, just as the 1956 victory over forces opposed to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal reinforced economic nationalism and allowed for the foundation of industrialisation to be laid, so did the 1967 defeat mark the beginning of the triumphant offensive of neo-liberal recompradorisation.

In Tunisia, the struggle between the populist and conservative currents in society that sharpened after Algeria's independence and the ensuing self-determination movement, ended in victory for the latter current. Ever since, turning its back on concerns about a united, Maghreb-wide industrialisation, the ruling class plays up tourism and delocalisation linked to cheap labour. Social conservatism — more than political — acts as a brake on Moroccan industrialisation. Zimbabwe inherited from the white State an extremely protected industrialisation, surprising in a country without direct access to the sea.

Mauritius is perhaps the African country that cleanly escapes the freeze on industrialisation. The document published in this issue discusses its conditions and limitations.

From this comparative presentation, we will not jump to the conclusion that Africa should imitate the 'Asian model' of industrialisation in order to actively participate in the construction of an alternative version of globalisation than the one proposed by neo-liberalism. This model is not interesting because of the authoritarianism that blocks the expression of socialist forces and the democratisation of societies in the name of competition; but Africans must study and draw lessons from it. An African path of transition to a global system built on the principles of solidarity within humanity should be explored.

How to Socialise Development in a Global System of Sub-Regional Interdependence

For the majority of the authors of this volume, capitalism as it operated in Africa since the mercantile period, marginalises Africa, refuses its people a dignified identity and pauperises all while making them responsible for environmental deterioration. For Mbaya, socialised development is henceforth a necessity. This view is shared just as well by Marais and his team as by Fadahunsi and team. But what does it mean to be socialist, and what does socialism mean in this day and age? In spite of the Soviet experiment, and collapse, and China's reintegration as a dynamic partner in the global capitalist system, the demand for socialism is still felt. However, it needs to be reconceptualised.

I will only dwell here on certain questions regarding twenty first century socialism and the relations between Africa and Europe in the construction of a multi-polar world.

Theses on Post-Soviet Socialism

There has never been one single definition of socialism to be accepted by all the currents of thought that draw their inspiration from it. We are restricting ourselves here to a very synthesised formulation of the conclusions we, as members of this current, have reached. Some of them were reached before the collapse of the Soviet system. In the Marxist tradition, socialism is a post-capitalist stage in the evolution of societies; a qualitatively superior stage in all the essential areas, as much on an internal level as in relations between societies.

- a) For us, communism is nothing more than the concept of socialism and not a superior stage. It is a classless 'mode of production', qualitatively superior to the 'capitalist mode of production', even when this latter has substantially improved people's material living conditions and meant political democracy. Just as the 'capitalist mode of production' cannot be substituted for real capitalism, 'communism cannot be substituted for socialism as a historic process'.

- b) Under socialism, parliamentary democracy must be accompanied by other formulas that fit in with the larger plan to democratise societies. On a cultural and ideological level, socialism is incompatible with the 'one thought' and its corollary, 'one party' ideology. One must admit that ideological differences and even contradictions are as old as humanity and certainly preceded the formation of social classes. From the beginning about thirty-five millennia ago, there have been contradictory visions about what constitutes an 'ideal society.' Their written expression dates much more recently of course, but this has not eliminated the forms of expression that leave neither a written trace nor milestones in the collective memory. These conflicts will not end under socialism. Even capitalist and bureaucratic criticism will continue to express themselves, but within a general framework dominated by the logic of socialism in a democracy.
- c) The aspirations towards and struggles for socialism are permanent aspects in all capitalistic structures, regardless of their level of economic development. But for the transition to succeed, socialist forces must insist upon the domination of their logic in the centres and put an end to North-South polarisation.
- d) The theses of socialism in a single country or of socialism beginning with a 'technically and economically weak link' have been outdated from a historical standpoint. The debate focuses on the theoretical frameworks and political practices that they inspire. Countries that severed themselves off from developed capitalism, based on privatising the means of production, indeed had undergone social transformations which limited or even eliminated absolute poverty, but they did not build the political and cultural foundations of socialism. Today, the majority are forced to call their social achievements into question without being sure of escaping compradorisation which necessarily accompanies the permanent economic crisis.
- e) As Leninist and Maoist techniques for acquiring power are no longer on the agenda, the alliances between socialist, democratic, and nationalist movements should win the elections against the comprador alliances for whom 'democratic openness' is only an instrument for managing the crisis. These alliances should fill their programme with economic and social components and not simply denounce governments' authoritarianism and corruption.
- f) In Africa, which social base can one turn to for support these days? The fraction of popular classes that have been integrated through sufficiently paid steady jobs is tending to disappear while the volume of social classes that are marginalised — even excluded — from the system of

production and consumption, is rising so fast that the 'informal sector' is saturated. Poverty becomes institutionalised. In the popular classes, socialism will be more and more aligned with ethnic and religious integration, whose leaders denounce or support — depending on the situation — comprador alliances. The objectives of these retrospective movements is essentially to replace standard authoritarianism with the most barbaric forms of socio-political organisation possible. For them, oppression of women is natural. They do not aim to orchestrate an economic revolution nor help socialist and democratic forces progress.

Towards Non-polarising Euro-African Relations

Is it utopian to think that it is possible to reorient Euro-African relations in a positive direction to reduce polarisation?

Before and since the neo-liberal economic globalisation, Euro-African relations have been characterised by unilaterally subjugating Africa to European (and American) decisions in economic, cultural, and political domains, outside of European boundaries and the ruling alliances. Within the European Union, relations are defined by the two principal colonial powers and Germany, which turns more to the East than to Africa. The accepted hegemony of the United States and neo-colonial interests keep Africa locked in agro-mineral specialisation.

A redefinition of Euro-African relations must be founded on the creation of a 'Euro-African space' that is autonomous in relation to the United States and Japan.

The formation of large political federations in Africa and Arab States is necessary for the construction of a Euro-African space which prioritises auto-centric industrialisation. As this must be couched in a socialist perspective, it will avoid the social and ecological dumping that the centres seem to fear in an industrialisation that obeys the law of 'primitive accumulation', as Marx defined it. This construction is necessarily situated outside of the neo-liberal conception of North-South relations.

The fragility of African ruling classes prevents them from mounting any real debate on the construction of this space. They accord immeasurable importance to the rifts between 'anglophone', 'francophone', 'lusophone', and 'arabophone', or between 'revolutionaries and moderates'. In the 'negotiations' and the way relations operate within the EU, the bourgeoisies accept 'aid' as the central concept. The debt crisis forces them to give priority to enforcing neo-liberal directives.

For Africa, the move beyond neo-liberal order/disorder synonymous with neo-liberalism on the continent begins with the end of the debt crisis and the implementation of a new international monetary and financial system. This crisis and the absence of a new monetary system constitute the major obstacles to setting up and consolidating industrialising powers that

are concerned about social justice, and respect human rights and the principles of democratising societies (and not only in the political sphere). This is why the orchestration of a real campaign to suppress the debt is inseparable from the broader campaign directed against the 'Bretton Woods institutions', which act as instruments of the centres and substitutes for African States, managing the economies without running any financial or political risk. Progressive European forces must tackle the task while situating it within a socialist perspective.

Are these utopian proposals? The United States is a bastion of neo-liberalism and East Asia is economically and culturally opposed to Anglo-American style neo-liberalism, but authoritarianism stifles the forces of socialism. On the other hand, Europe is fostering a considerable potential for socialist evolution because anti-neo-liberal resistance includes a social component and Marxism is part of Europe's culture and history. This potential will be a factor in socialist evolution world-wide provided that European unity is reached and confirms its strategic autonomy.

Africa needs this Europe in which the Left, having prevailed with the theory of socialist globalisation, will grasp the power or else will be in a position to exercise a decisive influence over relations with Africa and the Third World. Actually, this Left wing is made up of three parts. The first, an electoral majority (on the Left) is social democrat; it thinks and acts in the context of North-South relations in the same terms as those on the right. The second was formed out of the 'classic' communist current. Previously closely linked to the USSR, it supported independence struggles, but because it accepts the polarisation theory in its political analysis, it encountered difficulty in articulating an alliance with nationalist forces once the countries gained independence. We must recognise that it was a complicated task by virtue of the very repressive nature of populist African regimes towards socialist and communist parties who were in general in accord with the USSR or China, depending on the case. The third element is formed out of research, think tank, and development centres and organisations who take polarisation into account in their analyses. The majority have accomplished considerable feats, for example the organisation of campaigns opposed to the Third World debt, the IMF and the entire Bretton Woods institutions.

As the crisis deepens, the Left in its entirety will be dragged into adopting this approach. Thus the European Left will become strong again and will commit its action as much against imperialism as against untamed capitalism in Europe. It will understand that the security of supply routes to Europe must rest on negotiated relations with Arab States and Africa. In this context its ecological discourse will have real political impact. For their part, the Arab and African lefts that are nudging theoretical thought on these

relations forward, should find a more solid social and political anchorage, while influencing the negotiators.

This Collection's Principal Issues

I have favoured the economic dimension without being over economicist and cut off from the globalising approach; and the exterior/interior articulation. Two reasons explain these preferences. First there is the conviction that one of the neo-liberal offensive's objectives is to extract economics from the debate in the Third World, making everything depend on 'growth' and 'competition'. This is how 'world summits' multiply on almost all dimensions of the crisis, except on the international monetary and financial system. This thematic and methodological option can be justified by both the fact that the social and political dimensions are largely treated by the volume's authors, as the range of themes explored will show. They cover the major over-riding problems by positioning them in national and regional contexts, but for all that not losing sight of the unity of the world system. Thus these are not monographs. We have grouped them by what seemed to be the dominating themes.

In the first section we have assembled three texts whose first objective is to analyse the crisis. Ninsin's analysis of the case of Ghana is an excellent presentation of structural adjustment's divisive effect on society. He shows how short term macro-economic management can be combined with 'political manoeuvres' to stabilise a situation in which transnationals profit from the privatisation of mineral wealth (in this case, gold). The text on Senegal analyses, as in Ghana, the social power base and emphasises how the economic crisis of the 1980s made it explode. It underlines how very skilful political management allows the myth of democracy and the nation to develop and meanwhile liberal dictatorship and regional and ethnic tensions risk calling the issue of national unity into question. From the confrontation of these three texts emerges a differentiated vision of economic and political management of the crisis, in a context with undeniably common threads. In striking fashion the text on Cameroon shows how the growth crisis set in after the fall in petroleum profits.

The second section is composed of two texts that introduce the debate on development in liberal democracy and analyse the cases of Mauritius and Botswana. They highlight the difficulties in finding an alternative model of development in small countries. The Botswana paper also demystifies an apologetic usage of statistical data which gives the illusion that the country is in the process of industrialising, whereas industrial processing activities are limited to the slaughter of cattle and the cutting of diamonds prior to exportation.

The third section is composed of three major texts on Algeria, Zaire, and Nigeria, the key countries in their sub-regions. Three options are open to

each of them, and to others as well. First there is continued subjugation to globalisation by the same (curtailed) market which has already led to dead-ends and even chaos. There is also the liberal democracy option, the counterpart of and condition for economic neo-liberalism. Mobilisation around this option is so widespread that it seems to impose itself naturally. However, it is speechless when it comes to the relation between democracy and sustainable economic development. Likewise, it dodges questions on social polarisation and pauperisation. The third option insists on the importance of and need for synergy to be developed between a new world system based on the principles of multi-polarisation, the democratisation of societies — not just of political regimes — and social progress.

In the context of these options, El Kenz' text on Algeria beckons us to leave behind cultural reductionism in order to analyse the class conflicts and the political and economic camps so as to unveil the weaknesses, but also the strengths, of totalitarian Islam.

Using the positions taken at the National Conference as his departure, Mbaya demonstrates that a 'democratic' option devoid of any specified socio-economic content, is not an alternative to Zairian crisis management. He shows that an option based on surpassing capitalism by socialising development could be initiated.

The Nigerian team offers a kind of complement by showing us how beyond the aspirations of building a civil society that incarnates the social movements — and workers' unions in a very marginally industrialised country incidentally — a socialist conscience is developing.

The fourth section tackles the concrete problems confronted by alternative forces once they are in power. It is about Mali, Burkina Faso under T. Sankara, and post-Apartheid South Africa. The difficulties facing the Malian government just after the 1992 urban insurrection and the ensuing free elections that partisans of change won, are put back in a historical and even psycho-cultural context. Administrative and political decentralisation is the example chosen. In few years the Sankarist revolution had inculcated the Burkinabé, through theory and practice, with the principles of self-reliance and popular participation in politics. But the power structure lacked democracy and became a victim of the hostile external (regional and global) environment. The lessons to be learned have a general application.

While the Burkina experience unfolded in a small country, with an agrarian economy and great dependence on sub-regional trade, South Africa's experience takes place in a semi-industrial country. The debate on the future of this country is particularly fierce, with little to compare with it except the 1920s in the Soviet Union. The text submitted to the reader is the synthesis of a soon to be published book. It appears clear that for the right, South Africa must quickly become the African 'South Korea.' For the team

claiming the Forum's option, the preference should go to sub-regional consolidation and to profound reforms to benefit the masses.

The fifth part is devoted to the global and regional implications of the crisis, and to the alternative that we are proposing. It is made up of five texts. The first two treat the central theme of the great powers' responsibility in resolving the crisis of nation building, using the case of Ethiopia as an example. The authors, partisans of a democratic and strong Ethiopia, wonder if the West — and especially the United States — is not hostile to the existence of an important State in terms of its population, its natural resource wealth, and its proud history, in a region close to the Middle East petroleum basin.

The three texts that follow the latter address sub-regionalisation which is one of the themes to which the Third World Forum accords a very high importance in that it means in effect a crucial stage in the constitution of a polycentric world system. The prospects of Maghrebian unity become more distant, because the culture of unity itself has withered. In West Africa rhetoric speaks while the potential for co-operation has hardly been exploited. In Southern Africa it is the state of uncertainty. The authors of the three texts think that the new regionalisation is bound to bring up four challenges: 1) to avoid founding regionalisation on 'common market' economics by adhering from the start to economic co-operation in the spirit of federated powers skilled in social and diplomatic fields, 2) to forge sub-regional identities that complement national, local, and cultural identities, 3) to solidify South-South relations with the perspective of forming a polycentric world that takes stock of the different levels of development and freedom of choice in modes of social organisation; 4) to involve the people, relying on referenda if necessary.

The papers published herein have been written in the context of the programme 'An Alternative to the Crisis for Africa and the Middle East, Autonomous Economic and Social Development in Democracy', which mobilised more than one hundred researchers. For certain countries it has been an isolated occasion to reflect upon an alternative besides adjustment. The list of publications with the editors comments is available from the Third World Forum.

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