

France, Germany, and the Netherlands) meant that more workers were required.

During the Fifties and Sixties two main types of migration occurred. First, we can see those who would say “we are over here, because you were over there”. The majority of immigrants from colonies and ex-colonies were people wanting to return to the ‘mother-country’ and individuals from different ethnic groups, for instance: Great Britain- India, France - Algeria, the Netherlands - Indonesia. Secondly, the more industrialised countries began to recruit people from the South of Europe (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey) and from other near countries.

Generally, they joined the labour market of the receiver countries as manual workers and, as a rule, were given a friendly reception. They were “needed”.



*What types of migration occurred into or away from the country where you live from 1950 to 1970?*

The economic crisis which began in 1973, changed the situation. Previously unthinkable rises in oil prices encouraged the development of new technology and forms of production. Consequently rapid increases in unemployment were experienced in every industrialised country.

This was structural unemployment and affected mainly “the weakest” in the production system, that is to say, those working in unskilled jobs, especially foreign immigrants. The initial friendly reception turned into fear or suspicion: “you are not needed anymore”. Foreigners were made into scapegoats for the economic problems and blamed for taking jobs away from the host population. Many emigrants from the Fifties and Sixties returned to their native countries which were also suffering under the economic crisis. One of the less well-known effects of the massive changes in Central and Eastern Europe in recent years has been the forced return of workers and students to such countries as Vietnam, Mozambique and Cuba - they were not “needed” anymore either.

Since the end of the seventies, Europe has become an important destination of a new migratory flow principally formed by people from the Southern Mediterranean and so-called “Third World” countries. In contrast to the immigration of the Fifties and Sixties, it has not been initiated by European countries, but it has its origins and explanation in the precarious social, economic and political situation of the majority of countries in the world.

## **North-South, A Question Of Imbalance**

### ***The international economic system***

Throughout history our world has been the subject of multiple divisions. Romans divided the world into the Roman Empire and the Barbarian World; after the voyages of Columbus, people spoke about the New and the Ancient Worlds; an “iron curtain” was built to separate Eastern from Western Europe at the end of the Second World War; and more recently we have begun speaking about the world divided into the North and the South.

? What other divisions can you think of?

This differentiation between the North and the South does not refer to the geographical situation of each country in relation to the Equator, (Australia is economically in the North!), but to a much more complex economic and political situation.

Only a small minority of this planet's inhabitants enjoy the benefits of this smaller world we referred to earlier: technological advances and consumption levels which surpass basic needs. The terms "North" and "South" are generalisations, and there are lots of differences among countries from each group. But it is undeniable that the real frontier dividing the North from the South is **poverty**. Although poverty exists also in the Northern countries, the situation of their poor could sometimes be viewed as a privilege compared to those in poverty in the South. Go to the sections on **Globalisation** and **Poverty** in Compass for further discussion of these issues.

? What is your idea of poverty? How many people live in poverty near you?

While much of the world experienced sustained economic growth in the 1990s, 54 developing countries suffered average income declines over the course of the decade, reveals the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report 2003*. Most of the countries that were poorer in 2000 than in 1990 are in sub-Saharan Africa. When a country is "under developed", this means that it loses the ability to dictate its own development; it has to depend economically and culturally on other countries.

? What is "development"? What is "growth"? Who sets the criteria?

This situation of poverty has not occurred naturally: in many cases the countries concerned have more natural resources than those of the developed countries and in the past they had thriving economies. So, what are the reasons for this unequal and unjust situation? At the risk of over simplification, it may be said that these countries' situation stems from the international system that dominates politically and, above all, economically, our world.

**An imbalance everyone of us helps to maintain.**

After the Second World War the present international economic order was created by a small number of "Northern" countries. These countries imposed rules and created structures that reflected their interests (for example, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, trade agreements...) and made use of resources that were not theirs... In a few words: they designed a system by which the development of the few was supported by the poverty of the majority.

Other, subtler forms of dependency became the norm and their main expression can be found in the concept of **foreign debt**, which burdens most of the developing

countries. The countries of the South became trapped into a system of having to exploit and sell their primary resources in order to pay for machinery and technology.

**?** *Many countries are in the very difficult position of paying huge proportions of government income to service their foreign debt. Who do you think is responsible for such situations? What do you think of the global campaign to “Drop the Debt” - which would mean cancelling the foreign debt of the world's poorest countries?\**

Basic inequality of the economic system, civil wars (Rwanda, El Salvador...), environmental disasters (desertification, earthquakes), famine and a strong increase in the level of population (particularly in Africa) all combine to produce a dramatic situation. Increasing numbers of people have been forced to take a painful if not traumatic decision: to leave their homes, emigrate or seek asylum. They do this to survive, despite being aware of the difficulties involved in living in a foreign country.

**?** *What do you think is the difference between “a migrant”, “a refugee” and “a displaced person”?*

In January 2004, the number of people “of concern” to the **United Nations High Commission for Refugees** was 20,556,781 (in 1974 the figure was 2.4 million) – that is roughly one out of every 300 people on the planet. Can you imagine what these figures really mean in terms of human tragedy? Increasingly, in the North, our attention has been diverted away from the South: particularly in Europe we have been looking at ourselves.

**all different  
all equal**

*\*For more information on worldwide debt see: [www.jubilee2000uk.org](http://www.jubilee2000uk.org)*

**kõik erinevad  
kõik võrdsed**

## **East - West: The New Search For Balance**

### ***The changing faces of Europe***

What is Europe? Where does it start? Where does it end? How many countries are there in Europe? Who can claim to be a European? Is there a European culture? Who cares? Attempting to answer such questions has become much more complicated since the end of 1989. No more Soviet Union; years of war in what was Yugoslavia; the unification of Germany; independence for the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic; enlargement of the European Union to 25 members - the consequences of these transitions have been massive.

**?** *What have been the most important changes in the country where you live since 1989?*

Although Strasbourg is geographically closer to Prague than to Paris it will take time to reduce the distances in our minds. Such monumental changes provoke many emotions: hopes for a “Common European House” with open borders; fears of massive waves of migration; hopes for new nations; fears of more conflict. Relationships between states and peoples which once seemed fixed now have to be re-negotiated. (Even that statement can be pulled to pieces if you look, for example, at the history of Cyprus, or