

# Migration and the New World Order

DEMETRIS CHRISTOFIAS

Migration issues today constitute thorny questions for our world and call upon us to respond effectively and without delay. They are matters of a particularly urgent nature that demand systematic study, in order to face them in a just and fruitful manner. Developments triggered in the last few years at world level by the establishment of the so-called 'New World Order' have created situations of exploitation all over the universe, as well as areas of tension and confrontation – whether it be national, religious, racial or economic.

Military aggression against peoples, devastation, wretchedness and occupation create insecurity and push peoples to look for a safer place in order to survive. At the same time, the leaders of this 'new world order', in their excessive complacency and arrogance, along with their various economic, military and political interests, attempt to dominate world developments, ignoring the intensifying inequalities between richer and poorer countries.

The resurgence of sources of tension and poverty, as a result of the over-exploitation of some countries, has led to a dramatic reappearance of the mass movement of peoples from poorer to richer countries. We in the Mediterranean region experience this migration in a particular way, in that it has unfortunately led to the reoccurrence of racist incidents among various peoples and societies.

Responding to such phenomena constitutes one of the greatest challenges faced by today's societies. In this framework, it is imperative to shape a new social culture, which will integrate and not exclude, protect and not marginalize, our fellow human beings, who become victims of political, racial, religious, or nationalistic persecution and cleansing.

To face these problems we need to go back to their prime causes and to try to cure these causes. Migration is the symptom of a sick society and racism is a dangerously contagious disease. It is our duty to look for the causes of racism, whether economic, social, or political, and to deal with them.

Countering the reflex feeling of fear against the 'other', the 'foreign', the 'different', we must instead project the principles of hospitality, solidarity, humanity. Instead of the 'frightened and secluded society', we must convince our citizens of the need for an open, democratically structured state.

At the basis of our tradition and civilization lies our solidarity and humanity. Securing equal opportunities for each and every man and woman and safeguarding their rights civilizes society and in turn promotes civilization itself. We must come up with satisfactory answers and effective solutions against the phenomenon of migration, the upheaval that is generated in economic activity and labour relations by these population movements. Only thus can we hold back feelings of racism, xenophobic incidents and the existence of intolerant behaviour. This is the field in which our efforts must concentrate in order to respond to the needs of the new era, which constitutes a confirmed reality.

The twenty-first century will evolve into a period of severe social problems and dramatic population movements if we do not attend with the utmost of our strength to the problems of those peoples and countries that are scourged by wars, poverty, exploitation, social inequality, unjust allocation of wealth and a one-sided enjoyment of productive resources.

We must look for answers to the problems of migration, mainly in the implementation of financial aid, debt cancellation, and the economic and social development of the migrants' countries of origin, in the full knowledge that the economic model of globalized neo-liberal capitalism produces new poverty and greater inequalities, pushing these populations to abandon their countries.

The century which has just begun risks being characterized as an era of darkness and intolerance, if we do not hasten to fight poverty, illiteracy, exploitation, racism and prejudice. Facing problems connected with peoples' migration is the field *par excellence*, where the principles of humanity, solidarity, civilization and democracy will be judged in all societies. It is a field of struggle for all of us, a ground for collective action and joint effort.

**Demetris Christofias** is the President of the House of Representatives of Cyprus.