

## The emergence of the Third World

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## The emergence of the Third World

The independence movement led to the emergence of a series of countries that did not belong to the Western bloc or the Soviet bloc. These countries had various features in common, including underdevelopment and rapid demographic growth, and they became known collectively as the 'Third World', an expression coined by French economist and demographer Alfred Sauvy in 1952.

In the 1950s, five newly independent Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia) took the initiative to rally the Third-World countries to form a united front against colonisation. On 17 April 1955, the first Afro-Asian Conference was held in Bandung in a bid by Third-World countries to consolidate their position on the international stage.

The 1956 Suez Crisis illustrated these new international power relationships. In Egypt, on 26 July 1956, President Gamal Abdel Nasser, a champion of pan-Arabism, announced the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company. The Suez Crisis directly threatened the interests of France, the United Kingdom and Israel, leading to a trial of strength that culminated in a joint military operation by the three countries against the former British protectorate in October 1956. The dogged efforts by France and Britain to safeguard their economic and financial interests at the expense of a developing country prompted the involvement of the international community.