

# Christians for Socialism

An interview with

**Gonzalo Arroyo, S.J.**

*A Chilean Jesuit priest who is also an expert on agricultural economics, Gonzalo Arroyo was a technical adviser on problems relating to agricultural reform for the ten years previous to the overthrow of the Allende government in 1973, and is one of the founders of the world-wide movement called Christians for Socialism. Now living in exile, he gave this interview last June. Here, utilising in his argument methods proper to the Theology of Liberation, he gives his reasons for believing this world-wide movement is going to be of rapidly growing importance in the uncertain years ahead.*

**Q.** *In your opinion, what are the principal problems facing mankind?*

**A.** I shall restrict myself to the five which seem to me the most crucial.

1. The *ecological problem*, that is the problem of conservation and renewal of natural resources like water, soil, air and forests which capitalist industrialisation does not manage to take seriously, subject as it is to the dictates of the frantic race for production and consumption.

2. There is the *problem of food*. The food crisis is at present greater than at any other period in history. Of a world population of four thousand million people, three thousand million are poor, and, of these, eight hundred million are in danger of dying from starvation. The problem has become even more acute with the fantastic rise in the price of essential foodstuffs like corn and rice and with the shortage of fertilizers. Robert McNamara, who cannot be accused of being a revolutionary, drew attention dramatically to this problem at the Overseas Development Council Conference held at Colorado in the beginning of June, when he said: 'If it does not rain in India this year, between 25 and 80 million people will die of hunger'.

3. The *demographic problem*. If the demographic factor continues to operate unchecked, world population, according to the *average* estimate of the UN, will rise from 3,600 millions in 1970 to 6,500 millions in the year 2,000 and to 11,200 millions in the year 2050<sup>1</sup> It is easy to foresee that this increase in world population will be larger in poor countries and smaller in rich ones. In recent years several demo-

<sup>1</sup>See Lester R. Brown, in *The Human Interest: A Strategy to Stabilize World Population* (W. W. Norton and Co., New York 1974), p. 26. The moderate estimates of the UN differ from more conservative estimates predicting 6,000 million in the year 2000 and 9,200 million in the year 2050, and also from more generous ones predicting 7,100 million in 2000 and 13,800 million in 2050. *Loc.cit.*

graphers have raised the alarm and, by correlating the population and food problems, have conjured up the prospect of a worldwide catastrophe.

4. The *energy problem*. Before the oil crisis, in 1970, developed countries, with 29.2 per cent of the world's population, were responsible for 84.2 per cent of world consumption of energy, while underdeveloped countries with 70.8 per cent of world population consumed only the remaining 15.8 per cent.<sup>2</sup> During the past year, the oil crisis has had a considerable effect on the international distribution of incomes. The economic position of countries importing oil has suddenly weakened; this is particularly true of developed capitalist countries like West Germany, Britain, France, Japan. The Third World countries have seen the cost of their imported oil products almost treble in less than one year. From 1973 to 1974 it is estimated that the cost of oil imports will have risen from 540 million dollars to 1,425 in Brazil, from 415 to 1,350 million in India, from 147 to 362 in Chile.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the economic position of oil producing and exporting countries is suddenly strengthened. Income from oil exports will have risen in 1973-4 from 4.9 to 19.4 million dollars in Saudi Arabia, from 3.9 to 14.9 million dollars in Iran, from 2.1 to 7.9 in Kuwait, from 1.5 to 5.9 million in Iraq, from 2.8 to 10 million in Venezuela, from 1.9 to 7 million in Algeria.<sup>4</sup> The USA and Canada, both countries rich in oil, will benefit similarly even if they are not counted among the 11 members of OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries). In short, the sudden rise in petrol prices, which have risen in 1973-4 from \$3.40 to \$8.50 per barrel, has immense implications for the trade balance of the importing as well as for that of the exporting countries.<sup>5</sup>

5. More broadly, there is the *problem of inflation*, of which the oil crisis is only one facet. Since 1972 inflation has become a *worldwide phenomenon* which affects even developed capitalist countries like France, the USA and Canada. Inflation makes itself felt even more sharply in the area of food products, which constitute the major part of the budget of lower-income families. The fact that from 1972 to 1973 the world price of basic commodities like corn, rice and soya beans has doubled has dealt a hard blow to the mass of people on an international scale, including the favoured proletariats of rich countries like the USA and Canada.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup>See James W. Howe *et al.*, *The US and the Developing World: Agenda for Action 1974* (Praeger, New York, 1974), p. 174.

<sup>3</sup>Howe *et al.*, *op.cit.* p. 180.

<sup>4</sup>See *ibid* p. 183. Estimated revenue from petrol in the 11 oil producing and exporting countries (Canada and US excluded) has increased from \$12.1m. in 1971 to \$14.5m. in 1972, to \$22.7m. in 1973 and to \$85.2m. in 1974 (*ibid.*, p. 182).

<sup>5</sup>See Howe *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

<sup>6</sup>From 1972 to 1973 prices rose from \$9.40 to \$19.00 per one hundred pounds of rice; from \$1.75 to \$3.80 for a bushel of corn; and from \$3.38 to \$6.20 for a bushel of soya beans. See L. R. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

*Q. Given the list of problems which you have just drawn up, what is your diagnosis?*

A. To begin with, I would like to make it clear that the first to be alarmed by these problems are the representatives of international capitalism themselves. Without, naturally, endangering the rules of the system (for example, by deploring the 400 per cent profit rate of the multi-national oil companies in the midst of an oil crisis), the representatives and ideologues of international capitalism fast became alarmists on the subject of the very future of humanity. They even feared the recurrence of a crisis of the type which the world capitalist system underwent in the Thirties. They are becoming aware that a world disaster is in the offing if the present distribution of world income is maintained and the present rate of population growth is not moderated, to the extent that soaring millions of persons, particularly in the Third World countries, are going to be condemned to death by starvation for lack of access to food resources. Given this sombre picture of the future of humanity, even if it overlooks the fact of worldwide militarisation and the development of repressive regimes to maintain 'the capitalist order', they are nevertheless forced to recognise the irrationality and wastefulness inherent in the present functioning of the international capitalist machine and to consider recourse to means which they have always hitherto resisted, such as price control on an international scale.<sup>7</sup> In the wake of the oil crisis, they fear that the embargo technique employed by the Arab countries will give ideas to other countries with strategic natural resources like iron, bauxite and copper.

*Q. But does your diagnosis, then, coincide with that offered by the most progressive elements in the capitalist camp?*

A. No. If I begin by acknowledging the analysis of the most enlightened and progressive wing of international capitalism, it is to highlight the fact that the crisis of the international capitalist system, now as in the Thirties, is recognised even in the ranks of the international bourgeoisie; often it is liberal analysts who give us the data on problems like those mentioned above, and who pose the problem of the future of humanity. But if we want to go to the root of these problems, and to promote just solutions, we cannot follow the lead of these bourgeois analysts who, for example, having furnished useful data on the demographic explosion, fall back frequently on inhuman solutions like systematic control of population growth and the extension of military dictatorships in the Third World countries. These solutions are often tempting but they remain simplistic to the extent that they

<sup>7</sup>Robert McNamara, President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, spoke similarly in a lecture he gave in a symposium on justice organised by the Overseas Development Council at Aspen, Colorado last July in which Gonzalo Arroyo participated.

evade the problem of the unjust world distribution of world income and fail to make it clear that the problem of food is today less one of production than of distribution. For my part, I would like to make it quite clear that the world problems discussed above appear as so many symptoms of a crisis of the international capitalist system, a crisis which is not just conjunctural but structural. We saw it with the oil crisis: to maintain its hegemonic position in the international capitalist system, an imperialist country like the USA, needing to make fabulous investments for new energy resources, is obliged to over-accumulate capital, to over-exploit the Third World countries, and even to injure other advanced capitalist countries with which it was on good terms in the past, like the capitalist countries of Western Europe and Brazil in Latin America.

Q. *Then what solution do you advocate?*

A. I must make an initial point of clarification, so as to make intelligible the solution I propose: it is erroneous and misleading to maintain the hallowed expression 'Third World' as if the world were divided in three. It is more accurate and enlightening to start from the fact that in the international capitalist system *there are two worlds* rather than three and that these two worlds treat national frontiers with contempt. On one hand there is an *international bourgeoisie* of which the national bourgeoisies of the poor capitalist countries form just as much a part as those of the rich capitalist ones. The Chilean coup d'etat, to take a recent example, would have been impossible without a close solidarity between the Chilean bourgeoisie (opposed by the economic programme of Popular Unity) and the international foreign bourgeoisie represented above all by the American multinational companies. On the other hand, there is an international proletariat, of which the industrial and agricultural workers of the rich capitalist countries are just as much a part as are those of the poor capitalist countries. Certainly, it is clear that the proletariat of the rich capitalist countries like the USA and Canada have a privileged position on the international scene in comparison with the proletarians of the poor countries but this does not mean that it is not dominated and exploited by the bourgeoisie in the same sense as other proletariats in the poor nations. In this context of a world divided in two and not in three, *the only rational solution to the structural crisis of the international capitalist system comes from socialism*. We cannot expect that from the heart of the capitalist system solutions will emerge to the problems of ecology, food, population growth, and exploitation. The interests of the international bourgeoisie demand, for their maintenance and growth, irrational phenomena like the squandering of natural resources and the over-exploitation of the international proletariat. To survive, humanity must choose between destruction and socialism.

*Q. Given the crisis of the international capitalist system, what, then, are the chances of socialism?*

A. Overall, that crisis has a double effect :

To begin with, within the international bourgeois camp, the crisis means the development of new contradictions. These contradictions are secondary and do not of themselves ensure the destruction of the capitalist system, but they are nonetheless breaches in which the revolutionary action of the organised proletariat can take root. For example, thanks to the oil crisis, we have seen, in the bosom of the international bourgeoisie, tensions and conflict appearing between on the one hand the capitalist countries to which the crisis gave an advantage (for example, the USA, Canada, the Arab capitalist countries) and, on the other hand, the disadvantaged capitalist countries (for example, Japan, France, Italy, Portugal, Holland, Brazil, India and Chile). I will not emphasise the struggle between the American bourgeoisies and the bourgeoisies of Western Europe, of which your communications media have spoken often enough. I shall simply draw your attention to implications of which you have heard less—those concerning Brazil and Chile.

It is possibly not well known in Europe, but, since the oil crisis, Brazil has been driven back to new economic and political options and a possible modification of the fascist model, even if it is too early to speak of liberalisation. Events occurring over the last few months, like the cold welcome accorded to General Pinochet on his visit to Brazilia, the dismissal of Fleury as head of the branch in Security which has become so notorious for the use of torture, and the tours of Europe and of the Arab countries by distinguished civilians, can all be interpreted as so many symptoms of a possible movement in the direction of an independence and a distancing of Brazil from the USA. In any case it is clear that the economic situation of Brazil has been severely damaged by the need to devote an additional \$1,600 million to its imports of petrol products in the space of one year. In these new conditions, the alleged 'Brazilian miracle', based on the selling price of natural resources to the foreign bourgeoisie, especially American, and on the capital accumulation made by 10 per cent of the local population, is in danger of being cut short: the internal distribution of income is so bad that it is becoming a threat to the Brazilian bourgeoisie themselves, as manufactured products are inaccessible to the 90 per cent of the population deprived of all purchasing power by over-exploitation. Thus the military government of Brazil has to develop new measures, either internally, by proceeding to a new distribution of income and purchasing power (by raising the incomes of workers, etc.), or externally, by creating a new capitalist bloc (for example with the European and Arab countries). In either case, a certain liberalisation and a certain modification of the fascist image are necessary. Whatever happens, any change in the internal and external policy of Brazil cannot fail to

alter profoundly the whole situation in Latin America, and liberalising forces inside and outside Brazil have nothing to lose from this.

*Q. And what is the significance of the Chilean coup d'etat in the international context?*

A. Paradoxically, even from the point of view of both the international and Chilean bourgeoisies, the coup d'etat, in its brutal fascist shape inspired by the Brazilian model, came, in a certain sense, too late and has become counter-productive by being 'more Papist than the Pope'. The chief mistake of the junta representing the interests of the international and Chilean bourgeoisie was to try to repeat the 'Brazilian miracle' in a country which is poorer and less independent in terms of natural resources, and at a time of international economic crisis which is forcing even Brazil to modify the most obvious traits of its militarist, fascist and repressive image. Clumsy from its first unconstitutional intervention, the military junta, piling gaffe upon gaffe, has condemned itself, in Chile and on the international scene, in its economic and political policies, to becoming more and more isolated and to losing allies who in other conditions would normally have remained faithful to it. On the *economic level*, having taken power as a result of an ideological campaign conducted by the bourgeoisie to blame Popular Unity for an 'economic chaos'—provoked by the bourgeoisie themselves—whose principal symptoms were inflation and the trade deficit, the junta yet needs external economic aid of almost \$3 million a day despite the rise in the price of copper. It has proved incapable of controlling a still chronic rate of inflation, and also incapable of stimulating production; it has also had to meet soaring world prices of food imports and oil products. In this context the economic policy of the junta remains unable to win the support of the middle classes, still less that of the labouring classes hard hit by inflation.

In the political arena, the junta, by its clumsiness, has alienated even the Christian Democratic Party, of which at least the Frei section is its 'natural ally', by last March denouncing Christian Democracy, along with the Marxist parties, as an international political force 'foreign to the soul of Chile'. Moreover, on the international scene, revealing itself by the 'gorilla-like' character of its brutal repressive operations, the junta has drawn upon itself the reprobation not only of the socialist countries but also of many capitalist ones, has created enemies for itself in the very bosom of the American governmental machine and, for various reasons, is experiencing difficulties even in its attempts to create an anticommunist bloc with the governments of Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay . . . all of which does not exactly square with the performance projected by the Junta on usurping power.

*Q. From the facts which you have given on the new contradictions*

*appearing within the international bourgeois camp, it is possible to see that these contradictions create many openings for revolutionary interventions on the part of the organised proletariat. But on this topic, could you show us more directly how the crisis of international capitalism affects the international proletariat, and what this means for the chances of socialism?*

A. This question is paramount, since one would need to be naive to believe that the capitalist system could disintegrate all on its own, even in a period of international crisis. Only a conscious, organised and combative proletariat can, in the countries where the internal contradictions of the bourgeoisie appear, transform these into positive factors in the building of socialism. And the Chilean coup d'état is there to remind us that, in the face of a united and internationally organised bourgeoisie, the determination of a national proletariat on its own proves insufficient for the advance to socialism. In the presence of an international enemy the proletariat must, more and more, learn to organise itself also on an international scale. On the basis of these facts, I judge that the structural crisis of the international capitalist system creates, for the next few years, the objective conditions permitting a qualitative leap on the part of the proletariat in the dominant capitalist countries as well as in those dominated. In the dominant capitalist countries like the USA and Canada soaring inflation hits the workers very hard. To the extent that inflation affects especially the consumer goods (food, clothing, housing) which absorb most of the workers' purchasing power, these are worse hit than all the other social classes. Socio-economically pampered in comparison with the workers of the dependent capitalist countries, North American workers and their organisations have been, since Roosevelt's 'New Deal' (1934), the accomplices of the international bourgeoisie rather than the allies of the international proletariat. But the present crisis (or, more particularly, the crisis of inflation and unemployment), by brusquely weakening the position of North-American workers offers them a chance to break free of their alienation, to gain a clearer consciousness of their situation as exploited proletarians, to question their submission to the international and local bourgeoisie, to develop solidarity with the organised proletariats of other countries and to join in the struggle for socialism, for a more just and more humane society.

In the dependent capitalist countries the crisis hits the workers yet more strongly, to the extent that the internal contradictions of the international bourgeoisie mean that the national bourgeoisies of the dominant capitalist countries are forced, in order to preserve their share in capital accumulation, to over-exploit their local proletariat. This over-exploitation and the repressive mechanisms which accompany it often have the effect, in many countries, of arousing the awareness of the working class, who, unlike the North-American workers, are frequently heirs of a tradition of struggle which has not abandoned

militancy in the course of the last forty years. Directly concerned by the population problem and the food problem and suffering in their turn from inflation, the workers of the dependent capitalist countries have nothing to lose from turning to the socialist path. This explains the tenacity and the determination of Latin American workers' movements and organisations, despite strong repression. If the crisis lasts and intensifies over the coming years, it will not fail to stimulate the appearance and development of new liberating forces in several countries.

*Q. Can you now tell us how you situate the churches in the global panorama you have just depicted?*

A. I have three considerations to bring to a sociological analysis of the churches (Catholic and Protestant) as institutions.

1. The churches in general are not aware of the crucial problems and challenges confronting humanity today and tomorrow. They are quite simply incapable of understanding why there are millions of persons who, in the international socio-economic framework discussed above, experience suffering, repression and death. Whereas the christian communities, as founded by Jesus Christ, ought to be the conscience of humanity and the 'salt of the earth', they appear at the moment as being in bondage to history. They receive blows but they give none. Even when the most fundamental rights of man are flouted, as for example in torture and repression in the European fascist countries, they remain incapable of reacting. Of course there are, dotted here and there, some bishops able to intervene with prophetic courage, but the hierarchies (and one must indeed speak chiefly of these when one refers to the Church as an institution) remain in general incapable of exercising an enlightened leadership. In face of the world problems of our time (inflation, population, food shortage and so on) thrown up by the very structures of international capitalism, they have difficulty in breaking out of an abstract discourse in which words like 'democracy', 'liberty', 'justice', 'peace' play the role of an opiate. At the very moment when humanity is in a world crisis where its own survival is at stake, they seem to have abdicated their responsibility to be a moral force to orient men, or at least christians. In other words, the churches are no longer 'salt'!

In addition to this the institutional churches, with their leaders, their permanent elements, their goods, their equipment, their parishes, their colleges, their schools, their communications media, their social works, and their other organisations are an integral part of the capitalist system. In conformity with the law of institutions, they have been led, in order to support themselves and survive, to accommodate themselves to the economic system and the dominant political regime. The possibilities of development of the institutionalised churches are, at the present stage of history, often bound up with the possibilities of de-



velopment of the capitalist system. That is why the churches are unable at critical moments to speak freely, to promote the Gospel and to proclaim liberation. Institutional allies of capitalism, they are like prisoners and, by this token, transform God's word itself into a prisoner. For example, if a coup d'état happens in Chile, the churches have to be careful lest they be weakened or destroyed. Therefore they remain silent or, if they speak, they do so in words foreign to themselves, in words which are alienated because assimilated to the bourgeois ideology of the strongest. This is how the law of institutions affects the churches, forcing them to restrict and stifle the Gospel. The churches live to far too great an extent off capitalism for them to recognise that the mechanism's structures are in *contradiction* to the Gospel message, because they are structures based on exploitation of man by man. The sociological rules always run counter to the theological rules!

Furthermore the churches—that is above all the hierarchies which run them—exercise a certain political function, in politically orienting the christian masses and legitimating in their eyes regimes, programmes and public acts. There is little point in recalling their spiritual mission and reiterating their claims to be apolitical; in fact, they speak and act in public in a manner which has the effect, at least indirectly, of advising conservative or, at best, reformist policies. And christians are all the more susceptible to these political influences in that they have traditionally recognised their hierarchies as the representatives and legitimate, almost exclusive, spokesmen of Christ and the Gospel message. But for several years now christians have been less ready to make their own the political directives coming from their hierarchies, have been less unanimous in accepting them. Certain historical facts have forced the mass of christians to open their eyes and ask themselves whether the bishops do not, in some of their social and political interventions, exercise an illegitimate function and succeed in promoting political orientations which betray rather than reflect the Gospel message. Consequently in several countries where christianity is a significant social reality (in for example Chile, Mexico, Italy and Spain) important sections of the christian community have been led to make a *qualitative leap* and not relapse automatically into dependence on the hierarchy to show them what political line they, as Christians, ought to take in given circumstances. In Chile, for example, in the last six or seven years, a growing number of christians have opted for socialism even though their hierarchies have a clear leaning to Christian Democracy, a leaning which emerges in many of the bishops' political actions, including the courageous one of last April, by which they dissociated themselves from the Junta (a month after the Junta had itself disowned the CDP). In Italy, in the recent divorce referendum, even after frequent interventions by the Catholic church to persuade Christians to vote 'No', a great number of them, having grasped

that this was a political rather than a moral trial of strength, voted 'Yes', thus contributing to the measure's passing with majorities of as much as 73 per cent.

*Q. How do you explain the emergence at the moment, in several countries, of groups of 'Christians for Socialism' (CFS)?*

A. The emergence and development on the international level of the CFS (using that term in a broad sense) appears to me to be a logical consequence of the three observations which I have made on the position and role of the institutional churches in relation to the great problems confronting humanity. Because the institutional churches do not know the effects and above all the causes of the structural crisis of international capitalism, because they are themselves allies of international capitalism and because they continue to exercise a bourgeois political function in relation to the mass of christians, a larger and larger number of christians in various countries where the phenomenon of christianity is of social importance, in solidarity with the organised proletariat (which is increasingly aware of being exploited and aspires to freedom), are led to shake off the political reins of their hierarchies and give material effect to the evangelical protest against injustice in the very heart of the struggle for liberation of the oppressed people and classes. The development of the CFS is not only a political, but a christian, duty; it is a response to protect the Gospel, which is betrayed every time it is identified with the interests of the oppressors; it is an attempt to restore to Christians the ability to 'salt' the process of history.

*Q. Can you more precisely characterise the CFS: tell us their objectives and tasks?*

A. The CFS are Christians who are militants within the organised labour movement in their country (in its political parties of workers, unions, popular groups, etc.) and who as *Christians* feel the need for solidarity with other companions who share the same faith and the same struggles. More concretely, we can reduce to two the tasks and objectives which the CFS pursue :

1. We pursue a task in the Church. We aim at a Church in solidarity with the interests and struggles of the workers, but without breaking with the present Church. If we want to gather together and form a group as christians inserted in the heart of the organised proletariat, it is firstly to cultivate our faith, to make our hope dynamic, to develop our theology. Our task is first of all a task as a Church, as christians. Admittedly at present many of the hierarchy tend to treat us as marginal, saying to us 'You cannot continue in that line, for it is not the Church's line' and the hierarchies are justified to the extent that the Church to which they refer is as we have analysed it above. As for us,

we wish to maintain a commitment to church solidarity. Even if we admit that our position is difficult in the short term, we think that in the medium and long terms it will appear more clearly in the eyes of a growing number of the faithful as a service to the church and a service to the authentic message of Jesus Christ which summons Christians to identify themselves with the oppressed, struggling for their liberation and simultaneously for the liberation of all mankind. And unlike some other left-wing christians we refuse to allow our struggle to become one against hierarchies and to restrict its efforts to the domain of the Church, as if the Church could change independently of a radical *social* transformation. We have been warned by seeing the churches as institutions of the capitalist social order, and it pains us, it seems a betrayal of Jesus Christ. But it does not surprise us and we know that it will disappear and that a renewed Church will be able to grow to the precise extent that growing numbers of christians will identify themselves with liberation movements to destroy the old society and bring about a new one which will more fully allow men to have hearts which beat for others.

2. We also pursue a political task. This task is not that of an avant-garde, and is situated in a restricted sector of the global political field, namely that of culture and ideology. As CFS, our business is not to constitute a new political organ. We are already inserted within autonomous organisations which the workers have made for themselves and it is there that we must continue to struggle, in solidarity with companions who do not share our faith. Here we must not be triumphalist, and we must recognise that the CFS have much to receive from the workers' movement, on condition that they are inside it. But in the area of ideological struggle, we have a task which is proper to us as CFS: it is a matter of identifying, in the dominant interpretation of the christian message, the elements borrowed from bourgeois ideology; it is a matter of working to liberate the mass of christians who, through the penetration to their depths of a christianity wedded to capitalist values, are blocked by the religion whose heirs they are from becoming aware of the causes of social problems and from adopting a liberating solution. More positively, it is a matter of showing, by our practice as much as by our words, *that the christian faith can and must become more and more at home in a socialist option*, even if it cannot become enclosed within that option.

**Q.** *In which countries are there CFS groups at present?*

**A.** CFS groups can appear only in those countries where christianity is socially significant, where there are proletarian organisations struggling for socialism and where there is a significant group of christians who are inserted in those organisations. If these three conditions are not realised, it is artificial to think of creating CFS groups.

These considerations make it understandable that the CFS should first have appeared in Latin America. At present the strongest groups are there (even if in Chile they have been subject to repression—the expulsion of 130 priests and nuns, the assassination of 2 priests), in Argentina, in Peru, in Mexico, in Cuba, in Central America. These groups of left-wing christians have appeared since the end of the Sixties.

In Europe, their emergence is a more recent event. In 1973 there was a CFS meeting in Spain and another in Italy attended by 2,000 people even though only 400 were expected. Moreover, there is a CFS group which has been formed for immigrant workers dotted throughout various countries like France, Switzerland, Holland and Germany.

In North America, as well as the *Politisés Chrétiens* who have been going in Quebec since 1972 and at present number 200, embryo groups are starting in the USA and English Canada. In the near future, CFS groups could appear in the Phillipines, in the two Vietnams and in some African and European countries.

*Q. But is there any kind of international coordination between these different groups?*

A. There is no formal coordination at present. But all the national groups wish to know one another, to exchange information and experience. For the need for international coordination is becoming increasingly evident.