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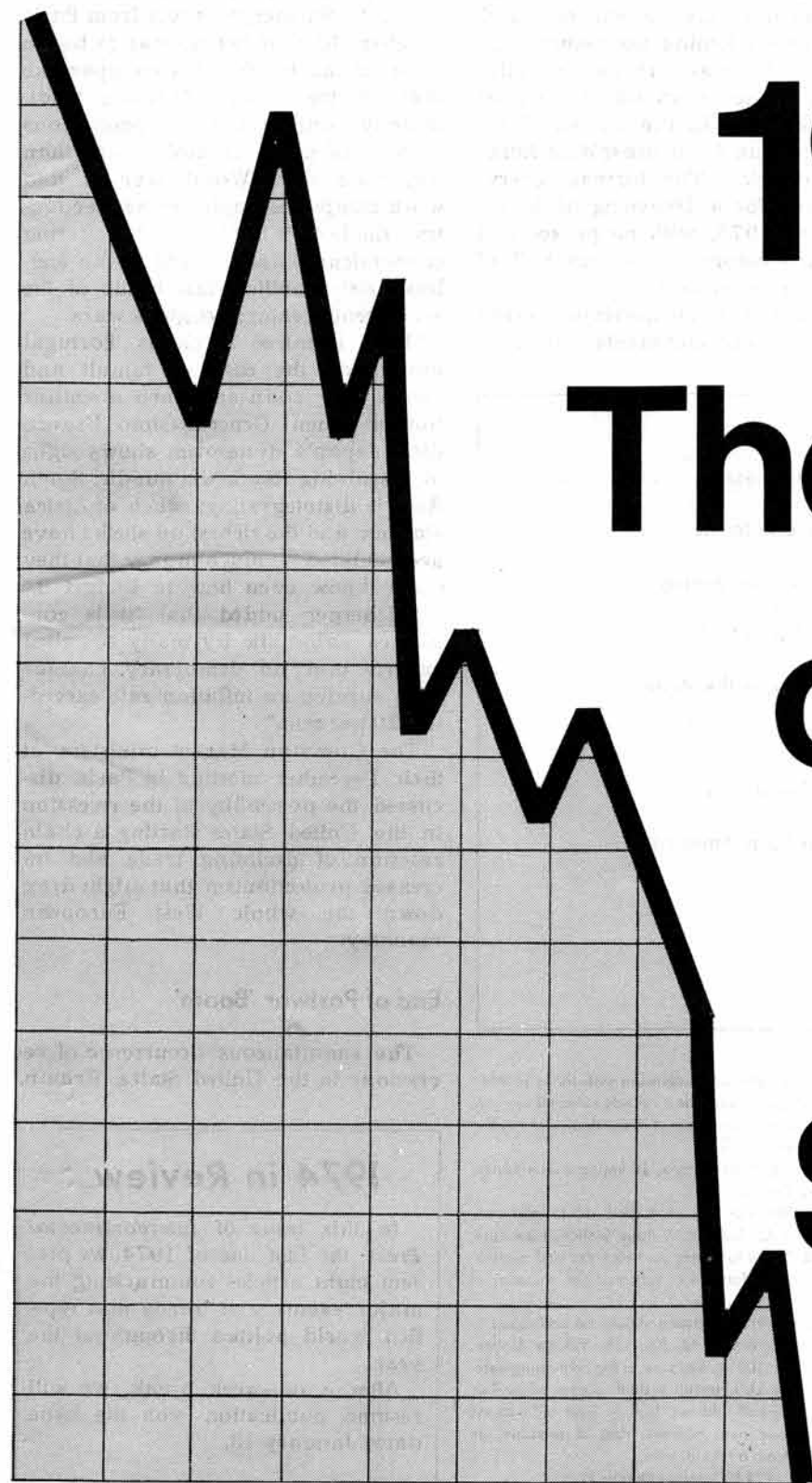
the Americas

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1974:

The Year

of the

Big

Slump

Sliding Toward a Generalized Recession

By Dick Fidler

As 1974 drew to a close, the world capitalist economy was heading toward the first generalized recession since the second world war.

In mid-November, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicted that the world's seven major capitalist economies would show an average growth in production of about 1% during 1975. But many economists thought that the forecast was overly optimistic. In the last quarter of 1974, the industrial output of most of the major

imperialist economies was declining. The growth in the volume of world trade was slackening noticeably. Unemployment was rising rapidly, reaching close to an official 7% of the work force in the United States and more than 3% in most West European countries. The forecast everywhere was for a deepening of the recession in 1975, with no prospect of an upturn before the second half of the year at the earliest.

Symptomatic of the developing crisis were the gloomy comments in the cap-

italist press. *New York Times* columnist C.L. Sulzberger wrote from Paris October 30 that "we appear to be on or over the brink" of a collapse like that of the 1930s. "France, traditionally Europe's most prosperous land, has more unemployment than any time since World War II and work stoppages ripple across the country. England is flat broke, floundering economically and caught in an endless Irish conflict, last battle of the seventeenth-century religious wars.

"Italy is mired in chaos. Portugal hovers on the edge of tumult and Spain may soon approach a similar border when Generalissimo Franco dies. Japan's dynamism shows signs of dissolving like a wet noodle; South Asia is disintegrating; much of Africa starves; and the richest oil sheiks have accumulated so much money that they don't know even how to budget it."

Sulzberger added that "it is considered axiomatic by many so-called experts that no democracy can for long survive an inflation rate exceeding 20 per cent."

The Common Market ministers, at their December meeting in Paris, discussed the possibility of the recession in the United States starting a chain reaction of declining trade and increased protectionism that might drag down the whole West European economy.

End of Postwar 'Boom'

The simultaneous occurrence of recessions in the United States, Britain,

In This Issue

- 1842 Sliding Toward a Generalized Recession
—by Dick Fidler
- 1846 Crises From One End of Europe to the Other—by Gerry Foley
- 1851 In the United States, a Year of Deepening Radicalization—by Dick Fidler
- 1853 Asia in 1974: A Caldron of Discontent
—by Peter Green
- 1856 Continued Talk of Another War in the Arab East—by Michael Baumann
- 1858 The Dividends of Detente
—by Michael Baumann
- 1860 A New Rise in the African Revolution
—by Ernest Harsch
- 1863 Argentina Key for Upturn in Latin America
—by Gerry Foley
- 1866 Index—Volume XII—1974
- 1866 Authors
- 1871 Countries
- 1884 Subjects
- 1887 En espanol

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1974 in Review

In this issue of *Intercontinental Press*, the last one of 1974, we present eight articles summarizing the major events and trends that typified world politics throughout the year.

After a one-week break, we will resume publication with the issue dated January 13.

and Japan marks the end of the long postwar "boom."

In previous recessionary phases, the impact of downturns in some countries was lessened by simultaneous upswings in others. But the cost of stabilizing these cyclical downturns was permanent and growing inflation, as governments strove to stimulate their economies by expanding credit and printing more money. Increasing dollar inflation led to the crisis and collapse of the international monetary system established at Bretton Woods in 1944, opening a new period in the late 1960s of increasing rivalry in international trade and finance and of slower growth in all the major imperialist economies.

A peculiar feature of this recession is that it coincides with a high level of inflation, which in some countries continues to rise despite the recession. "Double-digit" inflation has now hit most capitalist economies. Inflation in the major West European countries ranges from a low of 7% in West Germany (by far the strongest economy) to 17% in Britain, and over 20% in Italy. In the United States, retail prices are rising by close to 12% a year, and in Japan by 25%.

The worldwide inflation and the concurrent downturn are exacerbated by the increasing interimperialist rivalry.

Competition among multinational trusts speeds concentration of capital; rapid technological innovations shorten the life cycle of fixed capital; the falling rate of profit (as a result of the increased organic composition of capital) requires companies to rely increasingly on "external" financing, borrowing more and more extensively to finance expansion of plants and equipment.

The U.S. magazine *Business Week* estimated in October that the total debt load of the world capitalist economy could be more than \$10 trillion. The United States accounts for a quarter of this debt.

Inflation of the currency increases the liquidity squeeze on businesses. And currency inflation is itself greatly aggravated by arms spending, which, for example, accounts for about a third of the U.S. government budget.

The increased difficulties encountered by businesses in financing needed expansion have resulted in a growing chain of bankruptcies, decreases in capital spending, cutbacks in output, and widespread layoffs. These develop-

ments lead to a generalized downturn in economic activity.

The downturn began about a year ago in automobiles and construction, and spread rapidly to electrical and other household appliances, petrochemicals, textiles and clothing, and aviation. While steel was a holdout, particularly in the United States—thanks in part to unfilled orders for pipelines, derricks, and refineries as a result of the expansion in new oil exploitations—the recession has now reached this sector, too.

Depression in Automobile Industry

In the automobile industry, the situation is acute. Sales are currently down by about 40% from a year earlier in the United States, by 20% in West Germany, and by 27% in Britain. About 200,000 U.S. production workers—more than a quarter of the total—were laid off in December, with the prospect of more layoffs in January. In Italy, Fiat has put more than 70,000 workers on a three-day workweek. A prolonged depression in the automobile industry would have a profound effect on investment and the rate of growth throughout the whole capitalist economy.

The crisis in the automobile industry is an expression of the classic tendency of every capitalist boom to produce more than can be sold on the market. The greater the overproduction, the more will current output and employment be curtailed.

But in addition to the recession in most sectors, marked shortages have appeared in some important sectors—in particular, energy (especially oil) and food. These shortages are the result of the deliberate policies of monopoly capital.

An example in 1974 was the "energy crisis." In retaliation against Western support to Israel in the October 1973 war, the Arab oil-producing countries cut production by 5% a month, imposed a total boycott on oil exports to the United States and the Netherlands, and carried out a series of increases in royalties and taxes that quadrupled the price of oil at the wellhead. These price increases were passed on directly to consumers by the major oil companies, which control the international market.

In raising oil prices, the Arab regimes belonging to OPEC (the Organ-

ization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) hoped to strengthen their hand in negotiations with the imperialist powers at the Geneva conference. They also sought to enhance their nationalist image among the Arab masses, who were mobilizing in response to the military victories scored against Israel in the initial phase of the war.

The rise in oil prices, however, fitted in very well with the policies of the giant oil trusts. Of the seven major oil companies, five are U.S.-owned.

Oil Trusts' Policies

The oil trusts want to lessen their dependence on sources in the semi-colonial world, where they face rising threats of nationalization and increased demands to reinvest their profits in the producing countries instead of exporting them. The companies are seeking sources in areas under direct imperialist control such as Alaska's North Slope, the North Sea, the Norwegian coastal waters, and the offshore wells in the Gulf of Mexico.

The oil trusts are also seeking profitable alternative sources of energy, such as coal, nuclear energy, and oil shale.

Long before the Arab oil boycott and price increases, the trusts moved to create shortages in U.S. supplies of oil by deliberately cutting back production and limiting construction of new refineries. This helped to drive up domestic prices and profits. It also helped to create an "energy crisis" psychosis that enabled the oil barons to defeat the ecology movement in such a key area as Alaska and to increase the pressure for lifting restrictions on offshore drilling and on the development and exploitation of "dirty" fuels like coal and nuclear energy.

The Arab boycott gave the companies an excuse to blame the Arabs for the very situation that the companies themselves had created.

The fourfold increase in oil prices had a devastating effect on the main capitalist competitors of the United States. While the United States imports only 15% of the oil it consumes, Western Europe and Japan are dependent on imports for 65% and 98% of their oil, most of it coming from the Arab East. The balance-of-payments deficits of West European countries, including Britain, Italy, and France, the hardest-hit countries, were expected to total at least \$20 billion in 1974.

As a result, the U.S. dollar rose

relative to other currencies, reflecting its regained strength. On January 7, 1974, the yen was devalued by 6.7%, and on January 19, the Pompidou government announced that the franc would be set free of any fixed rates, as the Japanese and French governments sought to alleviate their expected payments deficits.

In October, the Japanese vice-minister of international trade and industry, Eimei Yamashita, predicted a depression in 1975. He attributed it in large part to the increased oil prices, which he called a "fatal blow to the Japanese economy."

Higher oil prices became one of the generators of the general increase in world prices, affecting the cost of many essential commodities ranging from synthetic fabrics to fertilizer.

For the semicolonial countries that are dependent on imported oil, the increased prices had a particularly disastrous effect. The prices of essential imports soared, giving these countries some of the highest rates of inflation in the world. The enormous increases in the cost of fertilizer and food imports were a direct cause of the famine that ravaged large areas of Africa and the Indian subcontinent during the year.

Food exports are an additional example of the aggressive policies of U.S. corporations in the intensified struggle for markets. The United States is by far the world's largest food exporter, and its policies greatly affect world prices. In the July 29 issue of *Intercontinental Press*, Dick Roberts cited recent price increases in U.S. exports: corn (the U.S. accounts for 45% of world exports), up 220% since 1966; rice (U.S. share, 27%), up 361% since 1967; soybeans (U.S. share, 94%), up 233% since 1967; wheat (U.S. share, 32%, Canada, 21%, Australia, 12%), the price in Kansas City rose by 325% since 1966.

These price leaps paralleled a huge increase in the volume of U.S. food exports, beginning in 1972, so that recent profit increases are even greater. In other words, as famine-stricken countries were forced to purchase more, U.S. prices rose proportionately.

Limitations of 'Oil Weapon'

Ironically, the increased impoverishment of most of the semicolonial world resulting from the recession and infla-

tion exposed the underlying weakness in the arguments of those who saw the OPEC countries' "oil weapon" as a viable means of redressing the unfavorable terms of trade imposed on them by the imperialist countries.

The leaders of many OPEC countries argued justifiably that they were only doing with raw materials what the imperialists have always done with their exports to the underdeveloped world — charge what the market would bear. Their case was put most clearly, perhaps, by the shah of Iran, who stated, "If the world prices go down, we will go down with oil prices. But if they go up, why should we pay the bill?" He proposed linking the price of oil to an index based on the prices of selected manufactured imports.

In fact, for most of the oil producers, the inflated prices of imported goods, including oil derivatives like fertilizer, and food imports, would in the long run undermine much of the advantage of their increased oil revenues. In any case, only a small part of the oil revenues, if any, was likely to benefit the masses of the population in these countries, some of which are ruled by particularly conservative regimes.

Nor are increases in the prices of specific raw materials a solution for the underdeveloped countries as a whole. As the fate of the semicolonial oil-importing countries has vividly demonstrated, whatever the benefits for the oil producers from the conjunctural demand for their product, they were gained at the expense of increased impoverishment for other semicolonial countries, as the oil trusts simply passed on the increased well-head price to consumers. And the limitations of the "oil weapon" as an instrument of Arab diplomacy were revealed when the oil companies used their control of the capitalist market to circumvent the boycott by rationing and otherwise shifting supplies from non-Arab sources so as to ensure deliveries to their customers in Japan, Western Europe, and the United States.

Referring to the OPEC strategy of charging higher prices to the oil monopolies, Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez said in a September 25 "Open Letter to Ford" that "we see no other way to confront the economic totalitarianism that has been coming to the fore in business and world trade. . . ." This is an understandable

reply, but it reveals the limitations of the national bourgeoisie. The only effective reply is to break out of the capitalist system itself by expropriating private industry and initiating planned economic development under the protection of a state monopoly of foreign trade.

Washington Threatens War

Imperialism's response to the "oil weapon" was not long in being formulated. Washington began testing public reaction on the use of troops should the oil-producing countries of the Arab-Persian Gulf go too far in "disrupting" the world capitalist economy through their oil policy.

These threats became more explicit as the danger of a world depression, aggravated by the inflationary effect of petrodollar investments and oil-induced balance-of-payments problems, became more apparent. In September, following an OPEC decision to maintain its oil price and possibly increase it within a few months, Ford and Kissinger escalated the offensive against the oil producers, hinting broadly at possible military intervention.

No one could doubt Washington's readiness to follow up its threats with action. The news media carried articles citing "informed sources" in Washington describing possible "covert operations" that involved such items as "selective assassinations" of Arab leaders. U.S. troops were photographed training in desert warfare. At a September 16 news conference, Ford defended CIA covert operations to subvert and overthrow regimes deemed hostile to U.S. interests.

A major aim of this propaganda was to portray the Arabs as the cause of the world inflation and recession, in much the same way as the great economic crisis in the 1930s was blamed by some on the Jews.

U.S. Persuades Allies to 'Cooperate'

Besides pressuring the oil-producing countries to lower their prices, Washington sought to restrain Tokyo and its West European competitors from breaking ranks and trying to improve their own competitive position by unilateral deals with the OPEC states.

At the international energy conference in Washington in February 1974, Kissinger initiated the formation of a "counter-cartel" of oil-consuming states, involving common agreement

to restrict consumption, build huge stockpiles, and share supplies in the event of a renewal of the Arab boycott or similar shortages.

The West Europeans were at first reluctant to go along with this plan. In a joint statement February 5, on the eve of the Washington conference, the Common Market council of ministers appealed to Washington to allow them more freedom of maneuver in their relations with the producer countries. But as the world economic crisis deepened, they gradually submitted. The alternative to "energy sharing" under U. S. leadership, Kissinger made clear, was an all-out trade war in which the United States would clearly hold the upper hand.

A sixteen-state International Energy Agency (ratified November 15) was set up for stockpiling and "sharing" through "majority decision." The largest number of weighted votes is held by the United States.

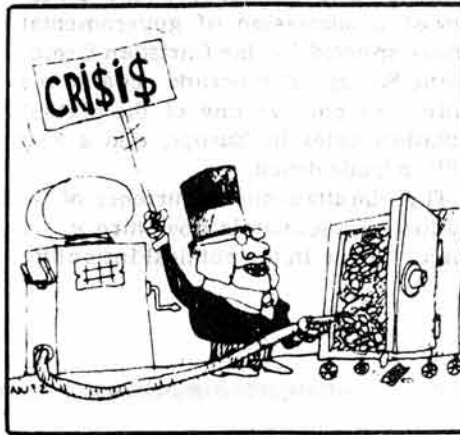
The energy crisis underscored the relative superiority of U. S. imperialism in relation to its leading competitors.

A major casualty of the increasing international rivalry was the attempt to structure closer pan-European capitalist integration through the European Economic Community. The Common Market's fragile unity was fractured when Italy and Denmark imposed limitations on imports originating from other EEC countries. The Wilson government decided to renegotiate the terms of Britain's membership. Efforts to achieve a "common float" of the currencies of the nine member countries failed.

West Germany was the only major country not to suffer balance-of-payments deficits resulting from oil imports. It was torn between demands from its European allies to adopt a "new push for the Common Market," and the option of refusing to underwrite the other EEC economies. The first course would mean absorbing both the balance-of-payments deficits and the effects of accelerated inflation of three of its major partners, France, Italy, and Britain. The increased protectionism of other West European countries that the second course would necessarily entail could deal a decisive blow to West Germany's exports, the foundation of its prosperity.

Bonn's announcement December 12 that it was shifting to an expansionist, antirecessionary economic policy, de-

signed to "reflate" its economy, signified that it had opted for the first course. But the announcement was accompanied by appeals from Chancellor Helmut Schmidt that Washington likewise give top priority to fighting



Punto Critico

the recession, rather than inflation. A strong "reflation" of the West German economy will tend to push up the prices of German exports, while encouraging investment and imports from its competitors.

The underlying concern of both Bonn and other West European capitals is that the deepening U.S. recession will drag their economies down in a worldwide depression. Thus they feel obliged to urge measures that would improve the economy of their worst capitalist rival.

Increased protectionism and aggressive efforts to break into each other's markets—these were the stock responses of all capitalist countries as each sought to shift part of the burden of the recession onto its competitors. In first line for attack were working-class rights and living standards. Among the early indications of the ugly measures in store were the moves by many countries to restrict immigration, and even deport foreign workers.

In Canada, the Trudeau government made a first test of its tightened immigration restrictions by moving to deport hundreds of Haitian immigrants, returning them to the bloody prisons of the Duvalier dictatorship. Ottawa's nationalist stance in response to the growing economic crisis includes plans to phase out oil exports to the United States (Canada is at present the source of almost 25% of U.S. oil imports) and to ban beef imports from the United States.

The Ford administration stepped up its efforts to deport "illegal" Mexican

immigrants. The Wilson government used the Birmingham bombings to place restrictions on Irish immigration to Britain.

Women, immigrants, and national minorities were among those most affected by the mounting layoffs. In the United States, unemployment among young Blacks reached 40%, leading some politicians to warn of a renewal of the ghetto revolts that swept major cities in the 1960s.

Under the impact of double-digit inflation in retail prices, workers' real wages were falling in most countries. The ruling class was confronted by a dilemma: Fear of the social consequences of a massive new rise in unemployment inhibited them from applying sharp deflationary policies; but continued high inflation rates, which could take a new surge forward as governments shifted to expansionist policies, raised a similar specter of mobilization by the working class in defense of its living standards.

The dilemma was expressed by the editors of *Business Week*, in the U.S. magazine's November 9 issue: "Once it was possible to think in terms of a trade-off between inflation and unemployment. . . . In the 1950s and early 1960s, a little rise in one would be matched by a decline in the other. But if such a trade-off still exists, the numbers involved are so enormous that they are politically out of the question."

For one thing, even minor cutbacks in employment levels come as a shock to workers with high expectations conditioned by twenty-five years of general economic expansion. Moreover, the recession comes after a decade or more of radicalization throughout the capitalist world—a radicalization that has already extended deep into the working class.

Workers Respond to Crisis

At the outset of the current recession the working class was already making clear that it is not willing to pay the cost of a capitalist "solution" to the crisis. During 1974 workers' militancy continued to rise in Western Europe, and there were significant indications of similar combativity among the masses in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States.

In Canada, the trade unions demanded that contracts be reopened

and renegotiated to provide catch-up cost-of-living clauses. Unions in Québec formed a Common Front to fight for "indexation"—an escalator clause in every union contract. On October 29, 40,000 workers marched in support of such demands in Montréal. The Trudeau government was defeated in parliament on a motion condemning its failure to stem inflation; it won the subsequent general election mainly on the strength of its claimed opposition to the wage-control proposals of the major opposition party.

In the United States, a series of

militant strikes in the closing months of 1974—notably the miners' strike—indicated the mood of rising militancy among the workers.

The instability of bourgeois regimes in the face of the economic crisis was most evident in Italy, which experienced a succession of governmental crises spurred by the Christian Democratic-Social Democratic coalition's failure to counter one of the highest inflation rates in Europe, and a \$10 billion trade deficit.

The simultaneous occurrence of inflation and economic downturn was a major factor in the political instability

that characterized southern Europe throughout 1974.

Perhaps the most significant test of forces between labor and capital took place in Britain. The Heath government, confronted by the miners' struggle to break through its wage-control policy, put most of British industry on a three-day workweek beginning in December 1973, and prepared an electoral confrontation with the labor movement. But the February 1974 general election resulted in the Conservatives' defeat, and the new Labour government settled the strike by granting major concessions to the miners.

And More in Store for 1975

Crises From One End of Europe to the Other

By Gerry Foley

With the fall of the dictatorships in Portugal and Greece, the deepening of the prolonged crisis in Italy, and the buildup of tensions in Spain, the phrase the "soft underbelly of Europe" began to gain a new meaning in 1974.

Churchill used this expression arguing for a Mediterranean site for the Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied Western Europe. Militarily it was nonsense. Churchill's real objective was to head off social revolutions in this chronically explosive part of Europe.

In Italy, with the help of the Communist party, which called on the popular militias to lay down their arms and give allegiance to the slightly reconstructed fascist marshal recognized by the Allies as the ruler of "democratic" Italy, Churchill's strategy was successful. Now, thirty years later, the weakest links of capitalism in Europe seem once again to be nearing the breaking point.

In fact, the crisis of capitalism that hit almost all the advanced countries in 1974 affected Europe in a more uneven way than any other region. While in the Mediterranean countries, backward economies threatened to collapse under the pressures of inflation and the slump, Europe also included the world's most stable states, notably Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, and for the time being, West Germany.

The economic unevenness arose not

just from the pattern inherited from the industrial revolution and the rise of modern capitalism but from some specifically post-World War II trends. Britain, historically the most stable of the major West European states, joined Italy in the category of economically weakest large countries.

One factor in this turnabout was the failure of British capital to keep up with the advances in industrial technology and organization. Another was the strength of the union movement, which, in a contradictory way, because of its political backwardness, remained more united than in countries such as France, where it has been split among Stalinists, Social Democrats and Catholics.

Also in Britain the mass student radicalization lagged behind that of France, Italy, and Germany. The traditional workers movement, politically broader and less tightly controlled by reformist apparatuses than in the other European countries, has played a larger role vis-à-vis the student movement. As a result, the largest opportunist currents in the student radicalization have been left-economist rather than Maoist or anarchist as in most other European countries.

Ironically, this economist left in Britain was confronted in 1974 not only with some of the most extensive trade-union struggles in Europe; it also has had to face the most acute political

problems arising out of a violent struggle for national liberation within the formal borders of the British state itself and the rise of mass separatist movements even on the island of Britain.

The degree to which the international economic crisis provoked explosive situations in Europe was, moreover, not simply a function of the different economic strengths of the various bourgeoisies. Historic cultural and political factors also played a large role.

Unrest in France

Although France has not yet suffered economic or social problems anywhere near as severe as Britain, the rise of massive strikes this fall set the capitalist commentators speculating again about the possibility of a revolutionary crisis in France similar to the one in 1968. In an effort to break long strikes by public workers, the Giscard d'Estaing government called out an army whose ranks have been showing signs of discontent.

While the French bourgeoisie has been able in the last decade to modernize its economy more quickly than its English ally-rival, its political machinery remains more clumsy and disjointed. Despite the fact that almost all the bourgeois political forces united behind Giscard d'Estaing in the May

19 elections in order to block a popular front set up by the Communist and Socialist parties, they have not been able to create a stable party to represent the bourgeoisie as a whole.

The political empire left by Charles de Gaulle collapsed in the first round of the presidential elections May 5 when the official Gaullist candidate, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, won only 15 percent of the vote as opposed to 32.6 percent for the black sheep of the Gaullist family, the "modernist" liberal Giscard.

In the elections, Giscard was able to promise reforms almost as extensive as those called for in the popular-front program. In his first year in office, his credibility has waned very rapidly.

On the other hand, the revival of the Socialist party under Mitterrand offered the bourgeoisie more maneuvering room. Through its electoral alliance with the Communist party, the SP, which had been a declining shell since the second world war, gained new credibility as a broad party of reform.

It forged an alliance with the independent trade-union federation, the CFDT (Confédération Française et Démocratique du Travail—French Democratic Confederation of Labor), which includes new layers of skilled workers and has shown a certain openness to the radicalized younger generation. At the same time, the SP seemed to attract some of the young far left, such as, for example, Régis Debray, the systematizer of the "foco" theory of guerrilla warfare.

In the period since the May elections, tensions have increased between the revived SP and the Communist party, which now, for the first time in its postwar history, faced a strong competitor for the left vote.

Youth Radicalization

Within the youth radicalization itself, which is a worldwide as well as a Europe-wide process, the concrete political expressions have differed widely from country to country. In Norway, virtually the entire student radicalization has been absorbed by one right-centrist Maoist group, the AKP (Arbeidernes Kommunistparti, marxist-leninisterne—the Communist Workers party, Marxist-Leninist). In Sweden, the young left has been polarized between an ultraleft Maoist group and a right-centrist Maoist group. In Por-

tugal, the young left is dominated by a myriad of Maoist groups. In Italy and France, Maoist-anarchist hybrids have been popular, although in the latter country the largest group is the



CARAMANLIS: Told Greek voters they had a choice between him and the tanks.

Trotskyists who support the Fourth International.

In Ireland, the radicalized youth are divided essentially between the Provisional and Official republicans, two leftward moving nationalist groupings. In Finland, the youth radicalization has been absorbed almost entirely by the pro-Moscow CP.

In one country, Greece, there is still a broad, rather cohesive radicalized student movement of the type that existed in France and Germany in 1968. This stratum was involved in the student rebellions of November 1973 that destroyed the political viability of the junta. Since the fall of the dictatorship, organizations based in the radical student movement have succeeded in holding militant demonstrations of tens of thousands of persons against the determined oppositions of the two factions of the Communist party and their allies.

The effects of the "energy crisis" also

increased the national contradictions in the European area in 1974. This took its most acute form in the threatened war between Greece and Turkey at the end of the summer. More than differences over Cyprus, the bone of contention was ownership of the oil found under the Aegean. However, the whipping up of chauvinism in Turkey and the dispossession of the majority of Greek Cypriots of their homes and property by the Turkish military occupiers considerably aggravated the festering crisis in the eastern Mediterranean.

The Greco-Turkish conflict also indicated that the détente has increased the possibilities for local wars into which the United States and the Soviet Union could be drawn. Such a sharp clash between two members of NATO would have been inconceivable before the U. S.-Soviet deal.

The energy crisis also sharpened the problems of one of the oldest capitalist states in Europe in more ways than one. A third of the Scottish electorate voted in the October 10 elections for a separatist party campaigning on the slogan that the North Sea oil profits should go to develop Scotland and not to bail out the British economy.

For centuries, the strength of the British state and economy has been so great that Scottish bourgeois and petty-bourgeois interests accepted integration in an English-dominated economy. Now the decline of that economy has led to the blossoming of probably the largest separatist movement in developed Western Europe since the Norwegian revolution of 1905.

In the case of Norway, the rush for the oil under the European continental shelf may have a direct effect on the youth radicalization. The dominant Maoist group has followed a nationalist-populist course. Since Norwegian oil claims may clash with Soviet territorial claims, the nationalism and extreme anti-Moscow line of the Maoists could take a reactionary direction.

Already in Sweden, the Peking leadership's line of a front against "the superpowers" has led the main Maoist faction to drop its defense of the Vietnam revolution in favor of turning its Vietnam front group to defending the "national interests" of Sweden against the "superpowers." In No. 6, 1974, of the internal newsletter of the "NLF Groups," the Maoist leadership said:

"Vietnam is no longer the flashpoint of the primary contradiction in to-

day's world. Hard struggles are being waged on other fronts—Palestine, the raw materials question, and the question of boundaries for fishing rights."

For some small countries, questions that are still marginal in the context of the general resources crisis are matters of life and death. Iceland, for example, has been hard hit by the depletion of fish stocks in the North Atlantic. The conservative government, installed July 5, announced its intention to extend the country's territorial waters to the 200-mile limit. On November 24, the gunboat *Aegir* fired on a West German trawler off the coast of Iceland.

The small and narrowly based Icelandic economy proved particularly vulnerable to inflationary pressures. The price rise from July 1973 to July 1974 was more than 40 percent.

Another small Scandinavian country, Denmark, proved especially vulnerable to the change in the international economic situation. By the end of 1974, unemployment totaled 8 percent of the work force. The March 6 elections revealed general discontent with all the big parties. A demagogic "tax payers" party led by Mogens Glistrup won 8.5 percent of the vote.

On November 26, an estimated 100,000 persons demonstrated outside the government building in Copenhagen, demanding the resignation of the bourgeois government and measures to halt rising unemployment.

Irish Stabilization Erodes

In the formally independent part of Ireland, one of the weakest links both politically and economically in capitalist Europe, the precarious prosperity of the last decade began to collapse. The limitations of the dependent type of economic development bought by surrender to British imperialism in 1957 became apparent.

By January 1975, the Irish Economic and Social Research Institute estimates, unemployment will have reached about 90,000, close to 9 percent of the work force.

As the international crisis deepens, the foreign companies are closing down the plants they established in Ireland to take advantage of government tax concessions and cheap labor. At the same time, the benefits to Irish agriculture expected from Common Market entry have not proved lasting, even for the most favored categories.

The problems of the small farmers have increased dramatically.

The position of the coalition government of Labour and Fine Gael, the historically more pro-imperialist bourgeois party, seemed to be weakening rapidly. In the June 1974 local elections in Dublin city, the coalition share of the vote dropped from 54 percent scored in the February 1973 general elections to 47 percent.

The coalition won the 1973 elections on a program of "peace and prosperity." It called implicitly for surrendering the historic Irish national aspirations in return for profitable economic collaboration with imperialism. But in 1974, the coalition proved unable to produce any "peace" or any "progress." It produced only more repression. Since the coalition government has carried the policy of surrender to British imperialism the furthest, its failure should tend to discredit the whole settlement with British imperialism represented by the 1957 Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement.

Growing discontent with the coalition government seemed to be preparing the way for a revival of mass anti-imperialist sentiment in the formally independent part of Ireland. This sentiment fell to a low point in 1973 following the demobilization of the oppressed Catholic population in the North, a process that culminated in the British military occupation of "Free Derry" on July 30, 1972.

However, the hard-pressed British capitalists have not offered any economic concessions to reduce the desperation of chronically unemployed Catholic youth. On the other hand, in the face of reactionary Protestant opposition, the political deal with the bourgeois nationalists that was based on the defeat of the mass struggle, the Sunningdale Agreements of December 1973, has not been implemented.

The war-weariness that set in with the decline in the mass movement seems, after another year of grinding intimidation and reactionary terror, to be turning into a mood of desperation, at least in some strata of the Catholic population. The concentration camps and prison complexes that have become a major feature of Northern Irish life exploded October 15-16 in a series of prison rebellions that touched off the strongest mass upsurge in the Catholic ghettos since the internment raids of August 9, 1971.

The movement in Britain for with-

drawal of the troops from Ireland also showed an upturn in the fall of 1974 after a period of decline.

Through 1974 the crisis of perspectives continued in the large militant nationalist organizations. In the Provisional publications, disagreement on what attitude to take toward the Protestant caste was expressed openly. In the Official republican organizations, debate on this issue was muffled. Although a drift to the left continued in the Provisionals, there was no sign of progress toward a consistent revolutionary program. The Officials, on the other hand, continued evolving in the direction of dogmatic economism with more and more signs of stronger Stalinist influence. As a result they seemed to continue to lose ground relatively to the Provisionals among the radical and nationalist-minded sectors of the population.

In the last weeks of 1974, the British bourgeoisie decided to take advantage of pub bombings in Birmingham, which the capitalist press and government attributed to the Provisionals, to launch a witch-hunt against the Irish population in Britain. In the context of threatening economic disaster and the rise of rightist tendencies, this move was particularly ominous. On the other hand, if systematic persecution of the Irish is started, it will almost certainly provoke a strong nationalist reaction on their part.

Foreign Workers Victimized

The question of immigrant workers, which has the longest history in Britain, continued to grow more acute in most of the leading capitalist states as the general economic downturn deepened. A proposal was put to a referendum in Switzerland October 20 calling for mass expulsions of foreign workers. It was defeated with 66 percent of the voters opposed. But there will almost certainly be more xenophobic campaigns in the coming year.

In France, for some time there has been a pattern of rising racist violence against North African workers. In West Germany, where the most important concentrations of foreign workers exist, growing unemployment only began to attract attention at the end of 1974. If the economic system worsens, the German bourgeoisie will almost certainly exploit the special status of foreign workers, who have

almost no legal rights, to make them pay the largest share of the cost.

'They Want Our Money'

With the lowest inflation rate and the most substantial liquid reserves, West Germany remained politically and economically the most stable of the major capitalist states. However, because of its dominant position in the area, the economic difficulties of its weaker Common Market partners tended to rebound against it. Bonn was forced to try to shore up the Italian economy by large loans. The question of loans to Greece and Portugal was raised. Other countries pushed for Common Market aid to disadvantaged regions, aid that would have to come essentially from Germany.

The December 2 issue of *Der Spiegel* offered long excerpts from a speech by Bundeskanzler Helmut Schmidt to a closed-door meeting in Berlin of the ruling Social Democratic party, in which he said, among other things:

"There are discussions in the Common Market on social funds and regional funds, on currency support and credits, on agricultural policy and mines. We are trying to minimize the sacrifices to the German economy without endangering European cooperation. I admit that no fundamental solution has been found. We could solve the problem by Europeanizing everything. But then our reserves would soon vanish. The Italians need \$2 billion, every quarter, the English not much less.

"They might need big grants out of our budget; they are already raising this question. It's always paraded in some sexy new costume—development aid, agricultural policy, mines, social or regional funds. But these are only a come-on. The fact is that they want our money."

Both the underlying tensions and the continuing relative stability in West Germany were shown by the ouster of Willy Brandt from the chancellorship over a Soviet-bloc spy scandal. The rise of Helmut Schmidt as head of government reflected a rightward evolution of the Social Democratic party leadership. But Brandt's policy of overtures to the Soviet bloc was not reversed. In fact, at the end of the year Schmidt visited Moscow, among other things, to negotiate for a share of Soviet energy resources.

Growing discontent with the conservative policies of the Social Democrats was indicated by the sharp defeat they suffered in the elections in Hesse this fall. At the same time, the



SPINOLA and VASCO GONCALVES:
"Two sides of the same coin."

party leadership and the bourgeois press have kept up a furious red-baiting attack on the left-wing elements centered in the Young Socialists. The government approved legislation in March limiting access of known radicals to public employment. Captured members of a small terrorist group called the Red Army Faction were tortured in prison.

The government and the capitalist press continued a witch-hunt campaign over the alleged "terrorist danger." The campaign reached its height after a Berlin chief justice Günter Drenkmann was assassinated November 10, purportedly in retaliation for the death of a Red Army Faction member, Holger Meins, who died the day before after a two-month hunger strike.

Stalinists Push Popular Fronts

There were four important elections in Europe in 1974, the two British general elections in February and October, the French presidential elections in May, and the Greek general elections in November.

The Greek elections were the second major test in 1974 of the Communist parties' new popular-front offensive, the first being the elections in France. This new push has gained momentum both from the détente and the economic crisis. The combination of these two factors made it possible, for example, for Italian CP representatives to offer their party's participation in a "national unity" government as the only

means of stabilizing the country.

"What is the interest of the Western European countries and of the United States?" an "authoritative party spokesman" was quoted as asking. "Are they interested in the kind of Italy as she is now, economically unstable and politically ungovernable? Or are they not interested rather in seeing Italy giving guarantees, to them also, of economic and political efficiency and security?"

The Italian CP was in a position to make such an offer largely because of the defeat of the ruling Catholic party in the May referendum on divorce. The CP sought in every way possible to avoid a confrontation on this question. The growth of the women's liberation movement, also opposed by the Communist party, helped to force an open challenge to Catholic morality.

In Portugal, the pro-Moscow Stalinists had a chance to prove their capacities as a "stabilizing factor." When the dictatorship fell abruptly on April 25 because of contradictions within the bourgeoisie itself, the Communist party was the only force ready and willing to channel the masses behind the Bonapartist military officers who ousted the Caetano regime.

It was the Communist party essentially that enabled the bourgeois military government to contain the mass ferment that boiled over when the dictatorship was removed. By this, it paved the way for a bourgeois clampdown on the entire left, including itself.

At the end of September, the "democratic" and "patriotic" general so much praised by the CP in the first months after the April coup nearly succeeded in carrying out a rightist putsch. At the last minute, to save itself and to avoid being bypassed by more militant groups, the CP agreed to mass mobilizations against the rightists.

However, although the defeat of the Spinola putsch slowed the government's turn to the right somewhat, the crackdown on the left and "irresponsible strikes" soon resumed, with the CP supporting the government's "austerity and hard work" schemes. The party general secretary, Alvaro Cunhal, made it clear that the CP had no intention of following up on the example of the "people's militias" (as Spinola called them) that blocked the September putsch. He was widely quoted as saying the CP didn't need arms because the weapons were "in

good hands" already, that is, in the hands of the "democratic" army.

Although the Portuguese bourgeoisie was forced to make more concessions to the nationalist movements in Africa than some elements such as Spínola apparently wanted, the colonial question was far from solved in 1974.

In Greece, the Communist party's popular-front strategy suffered a rapid and grave setback. The old rightist political boss Constantine Caramanlis refused to include either of the two Communist factions in his cabinet. Instead, he took advantage of the CP's early support to prepare a Bonapartist plebiscite in which voters were given a choice between him and dictatorship. His revived rightist parliamentary party won 55 percent of the vote in the November elections.

The two CPs, which were forced by Caramanlis's maneuver to join in a bloc and try to hold their working-class support, got only a little more than 9 percent at the polls, the worst electoral showing of the Greek Stalinists in decades.

Another factor, apparently, that helped to persuade the Kremlin-recognized "exterior" CP to bloc with the excommunicated "interior" faction was Moscow's decision to step up the pressure for popular fronts and to win more of a role for the Stalinist parties in parliamentary politics. This is apparently one of the aspects of its strategy of détente for capitalist Europe. To achieve this, the Kremlin has been compelled to make concessions both to the more independent elements in the Stalinist camp and to the Social Democrats.

The mid-October meeting of the Communist parties in Warsaw confirmed this policy. In particular, the Kremlin official in charge of relations with the West European CPs, Boris N. Ponomarev, stressed the importance of CP participation in the "democratization" in Portugal and Greece.

Reformist Crutch

As the economic crisis has deepened in Europe, the reformist workers parties have gained a new momentum from the growing discontent and at the same time have become more useful to the bourgeoisie as a means of getting the workers to accept "austerity" measures. In Portugal, this contradictory role of the reformists has been the clearest and its limitations most quickly demonstrated. In Italy also,

the dual role of the reformists has been crystal clear. In France, the reformist parties in the Union of the Left were most successful in creating illusions.

In some countries where big Social Democratic parties have been used many times before to persuade the workers to sacrifice their interests for the sake of "the national welfare," Communist parties have taken over some of the role that was earlier played by Social Democrats. This has been the case in Britain, where left bureaucrats and activists affiliated to the CP played a leading role in the unions' resistance to Tory antilabor legislation. In Denmark, CP shop stewards held the initiative in the November mass demonstration outside parliament. In Norway, an alliance of left Social Democrats and pro-Moscow Stalinists seems to have emerged as a significant force in the electoral arena.

Possibility of Sudden Upsurges

If the international capitalist economy continues to move toward a slump at the present rate, these reformists and left reformists will very quickly be put to a decisive test before the masses. In these conditions, revolutionary nuclei can make substantial gains if they put forward a program corresponding to the needs of the masses, and in particular its most oppressed sectors.

On a whole series of social questions such as the oppression of women, of nationalities, of foreign workers, and of youth, the Communist parties have already been outdistanced by mass struggles. This occurred particularly among high-school students in 1974.

In industrial and other economic struggles, the established apparatus of the CPs has put them in a relatively better position. But the coming year may see some sudden upsurges among the workers that both the left and right reformists will have a difficult time controlling. Reformist methods of fighting can often be shown up rather easily as inadequate in a period of sharp economic crisis. And the CPs' détente strategy of alliances with the Social Democrats, and the opening of some Social Democratic parties toward the radical youth in an effort to gain more leverage against their prospective popular-front partners, will make it more difficult to maintain tight bureaucratic control over any mass movement.

The coming year may see even more acute revolutionary tests than the May-June 1968 upsurge in France. In particular, the Portuguese situation has developed rapidly since April.

In Greece, the vote against the monarchy in the December 8 referendum has shown that Caramanlis's victory did not reflect a general conservative trend. Although the Greek bourgeoisie has been able so far to keep the mass upsurge in Greece under tighter control than its counterpart has in Portugal, the explosive potential may be even greater because of the country's strategic position.

In Spain, the bourgeoisie remained deeply divided over how to achieve a stable political formula to rule a country that has changed greatly over the last decade. Powerful right-wing elements violently opposed making any concessions to parliamentary democracy.

The Arias government carried out a harsh repressive drive in 1974, not only against the left but against petty-bourgeois democratic groups. The first part of the year was marked by the execution of the anarchist Puig Antich, the latter part, by arrests of the Democratic Council of Catalonia.

At the same time, a number of sharp workers struggles developed, including a rapidly spreading strike wave in the Barcelona area in July. In December, 200,000 workers and students walked out in the Spanish-ruled part of the Basque country in support of political prisoners.

In 1974, a number of weak spots showed up in the capitalist order in Europe that promise to widen in 1975. The Mediterranean was more than ever the "soft underbelly of Europe," but conditions also seemed to be building up for a new explosion in Ireland. At the same time the pattern was one that could lead to upsurges in unexpected places. It seems certain that as the general economic crisis develops, the unevenness in the European area will increase even more dramatically, as will the variety of issues that can trigger explosions. □

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In the United States, a Year of Deepening Radicalization

By Dick Fidler

At the halfway point in 1974, the editors of *Business Week* wrote: "Economists will remember 1974 for many things: for the squeeze on energy, for the breathtaking rise in prices, and perhaps for events yet to come. But mainly they will remember 1974 as the year the forecasters blew it."

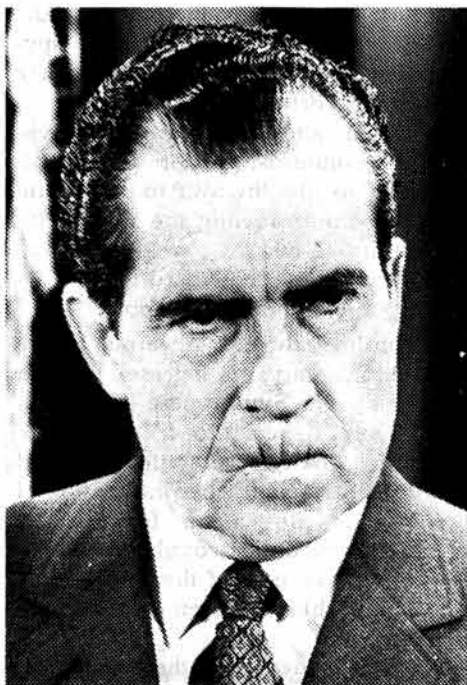
By the end of the year, even the Ford administration had reluctantly acknowledged that—contrary to last year's forecasts—the United States was deep into a recession that could become the worst in thirty years. More than six million workers—close to 7% of the labor force—were officially listed as unemployed, and government economists were openly predicting that the rate might reach 8% or even 10% in coming months.

Industrial output in real terms, adjusted for inflation, was 4.3% below a year earlier; automobile production was down to an annual rate of seven million units, which would be 4.4 million fewer cars than were produced in 1973. Plant and equipment orders were off 8.2%, and industrial-materials prices, off 4.8%—sure indicators of a deepening downturn.

Meanwhile, retail prices, up 12.2% for the year, continued to rise, with little sign of slackening under the pressure of the recession.

Early in 1974, high fuel prices and rationing produced some indications of the kind of reactions that could result from further attacks on workers' living standards. A strike by independent truck drivers that blocked roads and tied up industry in about twenty states forced concessions from the White House, but only after the National Guard had been called out in several states. The truckers' demands for a rollback in diesel fuel prices and an immediate audit of oil companies' books reflected widespread awareness that the "energy crisis" was a result of profiteering by the trusts and not actual shortages in oil reserves.

Inflation and job security were key issues in strike struggles across the country. In the year's biggest labor



NIXON: 58% of the population favored trying him on criminal charges.

struggle, rank-and-file miners' delegates resisted intense pressure from the government, the mass media, and their own union's top leadership, when they rejected a proposed settlement and sent their negotiators back to bargain for better wage and safety concessions.

One reason why the experts were slow to perceive the impending recession (apart from the usual shortsightedness of capitalist economists and politicians) was that throughout the first half of 1974 the ruling class was preoccupied with the problems of getting rid of Nixon and assuring the succession of Ford.

By the beginning of 1974, it was becoming apparent that the mounting evidence of Nixon's complicity in the Watergate burglary and subsequent cover-up would force his removal from office. What was not so clear was whether he would resign—as a growing number of newspapers and politicians were demanding—or whether the ruling class would have to re-

move him through impeachment and trial by Congress.

For months, the ruling class debated what to do about Nixon, while the White House fought a desperate rear-guard battle—refusing to comply with subpoenas to produce tapes, invoking claims of "executive privilege" and "immunity," yielding only when the alternative was an even greater loss in credibility. Transcripts of taped Oval Office conversations yielded up by Nixon in April portrayed the White House gang as obscene connivers whose main concern was "beating the rap" and paying off potential blackmailers. The actual tapes, containing sequences marked "[inaudible]" in Nixon's transcripts, revealed even more incriminating evidence of the president's complicity in the cover-up.

Nixon's remaining support eroded rapidly, with even conservative Republican members of Congress publicly urging him to resign in order to avoid the spectacle of impeachment.

In late July the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that Nixon had to release the remaining tapes. Nixon's acknowledgment, as he released the tapes August 5, that he had been actively involved in the Watergate cover-up since the break-in itself destroyed what remaining support he had in Congress. On August 8, he resigned and Ford was sworn into office.

The ruling class responded with audible sighs of relief. The major theme was "The system works."

In the weeks immediately following Ford's accession to the presidency, the stock exchange registered sharp losses. The Dow Jones Industrial average dropped far below Watergate lows, reflecting deep concern over the state of the economy and the new administration's ability to improve the situation.

The campaign to present the new occupant of the Oval Office as some sort of "Mr. Clean" collapsed a month after it was launched, as the real reason why Nixon had picked Ford as

his successor emerged. At Ford's first presidential news conference August 28 he pledged he would let legal proceedings against all those involved in Watergate take their course. Then, on September 8, he granted Nixon a full pardon. The decree covered all federal crimes the former president "committed," "may have committed," or may have "taken part in" during his five and a half years in the White House.

The public was outraged. (Polls had showed 58% of the population in favor of trying Nixon on criminal charges.) Letters, telegrams, and phone calls of protest flooded the White House. Judges registered their protest by setting other criminals free.

A deep pessimism about the quality of U.S. political leadership pervades the more informed circles of the ruling class. A *New York Times* editorial December 8 complained that "the cloud of nonleadership hangs over the nation's key activities like polluted air."

Public disenchantment with Ford has risen rapidly. A Gallup poll released November 27 revealed that Ford's popularity has fallen to its lowest point to date, "in part because of discontent over the economy." Only 47% approved of the way Ford was handling his job, down from a high of 71% in August.

Nelson Rockefeller encountered difficulty on his way to the vice-presidency when it was revealed that he had dipped into his millions to line the pockets of various officeholders while governor of New York State.

The ruling class's inability to stem or reverse the radicalization in U.S. society was underscored repeatedly in 1974. Following an eight-and-a-half-month trial, two American Indian leaders, Dennis Banks and Russell Means, were acquitted of all charges arising from the 71-day seizure of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973. The judge, citing evidence of FBI wiretaps and lying by government agents as reasons for his decision, alluded in his statement to Watergate, his disillusionment with Ford and the Nixon pardon, and his own opposition to the Vietnam war.

Revelations of White House "plumbers," wiretaps, break-ins, and "enemies lists," were followed by disclosures of secret plans for illegal attacks on the Black and antiwar movements. Court actions forced the FBI to release directives by J. Edgar Hoover showing

how the government had sought to "disrupt" and "neutralize" the Black Panther party, the Socialist Workers party (SWP), and other groups. Evidence mounted of government complicity in the murders of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and Black Panther leader Fred Hampton. The SWP and Young Socialist Alliance won substantial backing for their lawsuit demanding a halt to harassment, spying, and armed attacks on the party and its supporters.

A smear attack by nationally syndicated columnist Victor Riesel, attempting to link the SWP to individual terrorism and labeling the Fourth International "a new . . . wealthy terrorist international," collapsed without inspiring any significant support.

A similar fate met attempts to use the kidnapping of heiress Patricia Hearst by the "Symbionese Liberation Army" as an excuse to drum up support for wiretap legislation, capital punishment, and further infiltration of the radical movement. In fact, the Hearst abduction brought forth allegations that one of the key participants had himself been a police informer.

Further evidence of the radicalization under way in U.S. society was provided by a study of changing attitudes among U.S. youth, funded by the Carnegie and Mellon foundations and the Rockefeller Fund. Based on thousands of interviews with college and noncollege youth sixteen to twenty-five years of age, the survey by the Daniel Yankelovich research organization drew attention to what it termed the "vast changes in the complexion and outlook of an entire generation of young people."

The survey attributed the shift in social attitudes to the impact of the Vietnam war and "the diffusion of a set of new values that incubated on the nation's campuses in the 1960's. . . ." Among its findings, as reported in the July 29 *Intercontinental Press*, were the following:

" . . . more than six out of ten young adults today believe that the society is democratic in name only. They believe that 'special interests' run the political machinery of the nation. . . ."

"Four out of five are critical of the nation's foreign policy, and predict that involvements similar to Vietnam are inevitable. . . ."

"More than 90 per cent of all young people hold that business is too con-

cerned with its own profits, and insufficiently concerned with serving the public."

In addition, the Yankelovich survey reported that close to half of non-college youth—almost double the proportion in 1969—believed that "big business needs reform or elimination."

This survey was based on data collected in the spring of 1973, before the meat boycott, the truckers' struggle, and before the explosion of the Watergate scandal.

In July the U.S. Bureau of the Census released statistics showing that in the early 1970s the wage gap between white workers and Black workers was widening, reversing the trend of declining differentials during the late 1960s and raising the prospect of a renewal of struggles by Blacks for jobs and civil rights.

A key struggle involving the rights of all Blacks is now taking place in Boston, where a court order desegregating predominantly white schools has been opposed by a wave of violence from white racists. The rock-throwing mobs that have confronted Black children being bused to their schools were egged on by Ford, who denounced the federal court's busing ruling.

Black leaders responded by demanding federal troops to halt the lynch mobs and enforce the desegregation ruling. On December 14, more than 10,000 persons marched in Boston to demand that the racist antibusing drive be stopped. Massive mobilizations of the Black community, if successful in defeating the racist offensive in Boston, could prepare the way for a new stage of struggles by the most oppressed sector of the U.S. working class. □

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Asia in 1974: A Caldron of Discontent

By Peter Green

Under the impact of the worldwide economic crisis, a new wave of struggles broke out in Asia in 1974. No country remained insulated, but the effects of the crisis could be seen most dramatically in the semicolonial countries. Already ground down to a subsistence level by imperialism, the workers and peasants there have been hardest hit.

For millions in Asia the spiraling inflation and developing recession meant not merely hardship but starvation. Famine on a massive scale threatens whole populations. On the Indian subcontinent hundreds are already dying each day.

Famine on a Continental Scale

Food riots, demonstrations, and strikes against rising prices and the government's inability to provide an adequate system of food distribution spread from one Indian state to another throughout 1974. Workers in Bombay and the rest of Maharashtra state held a twenty-four-hour general strike January 2 to protest the inflation that had sent prices of fuel and basic foodstuffs soaring by more than 20% in six months. It was the biggest such action ever held there; the whole state was paralyzed.

At the beginning of the year agitation throughout Gujarat over several months led to the overthrow of the state government. Begun by student protests over hikes in meal prices, it quickly developed into a mass movement demanding more food, lower prices, and an end to government corruption. The police, the paramilitary Border Security Force, and eventually the army were sent in, killing more than eighty-five demonstrators.

A statewide general strike in Bihar on January 21 was followed by massive student protests in March in which eighty persons were killed. About 500,000 demonstrators rallied in the state capital of Patna on June 5 and demanded the dissolution of the state assembly and the dismissal of the corrupt Abdul Ghafoor Ministry. All the

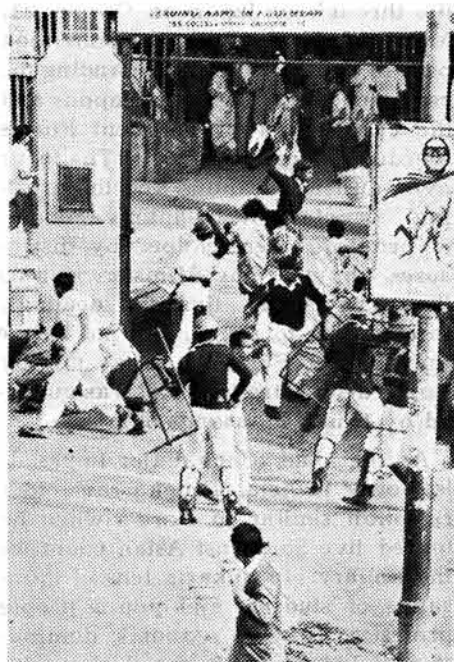
machinery of government ground to a halt. Everything, that is, except the repressive apparatus. One of the regime's few remaining props was the pro-Moscow Communist party of India, which charged that the actions were motivated by "reactionary trends." In October, the state was paralyzed by a three-day general strike.

In May the longest national rail strike in the country's history, lasting twenty days, was broken only after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi arrested between 30,000 and 50,000 railway workers. A reign of terror was unleashed against workers and their families. In protest of the arrests, one-day general strikes shut down Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta, and Madras.

The regime responded to this rising level of struggle with brutal repression. Tens of thousands of political prisoners were reported to be in Gandhi's jails. "What is happening in Uttar Pradesh, in Bihar and in other parts of the country," a *Washington Post* correspondent reported, "is that bitter, dissatisfied, hungry, unemployed, frustrated Indians are beginning to realize that they might be able to win in the streets what they cannot gain at the polls."

If anything, the famine in Bangladesh was even worse than in India. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's regime reacted with brutal repression. When the major opposition party called a one-day general strike in protest, completely shutting down the country on January 20, the government rushed in a Special Powers Act giving it greatly expanded powers. The opposition continued to organize large rallies and demonstrations in the face of repeated violence from the regime. More than 12,000 political prisoners are now in Mujib's jails.

Sri Lanka has also been a victim of the worldwide economic crisis, and its government has cut rice and flour rations. The popular-front regime still holds without trial about 6,000 political prisoners jailed after the 1971 crackdown on the young rebels of the



Bihar: Gandhi ordered savage repression to stop inflation protests.

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP—People's Liberation Front).

Inflation has hit harder in Japan than in most other capitalist countries. At the beginning of the year wholesale prices were up 35.4% over the previous year and consumer prices, 26%, while profits had risen an estimated 80%. Worker militancy increased.

"Japanese businessmen are jittery these days, and with good reason," reported the March 9 *Business Week*. "This year's *shunto*—the annual spring campaign for higher wages by labor unions—is developing into the most shattering collision between labor and management in Japan's post-World War II history."

The forecast proved correct. Government employees staged a massive walkout March 1, together with transportation and private-industry workers. This first round of the spring offensive involved more than half a million workers. In the second round, on March 26, 2.4 million workers went on strike. After a three-day general

strike that began on April 10 and involved an estimated 6.3 million workers—the largest strike in Japanese history—workers won wage increases averaging 30%.

Revelations of the existence of a secret pact allowing Washington to transport nuclear arms on Japanese territory touched off huge protest rallies throughout Japan on October 21. More than two million persons took part in demonstrations demanding the removal of U. S. nuclear weapons and the cancellation of President Ford's scheduled November visit. The furor over nuclear weapons and the growing discontent over Japan's economic problems were capped by disclosures about Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's shady financial dealings, forcing him to resign. But not before the visit of Ford, who was met by angry demonstrations and was guarded by tens of thousands of police.

As the head of the major imperialist power in Asia, Tanaka ran into a reception similar to Ford's when he toured five Southeast Asian countries in January. In Jakarta tens of thousands of students and young people protested Tokyo's economic domination of Indonesia. In the clashes with Suharto's troops that followed, ten persons were killed, more than 100 were wounded, and about 170 were arrested.

In the largest demonstrations since the overthrow of the military regime in October 1973, 5,000 Thai students turned out to protest Tanaka's visit to Thailand. They demanded an end to Japanese economic penetration of the country and an end to CIA activity in Thailand.

About 70,000 workers in Thailand's textile works—the largest manufacturing industry in the country—staged a week-long strike in June and won an increase in the minimum wage. It was the largest labor action since the illegal strikes in May 1973 under the old military dictatorship.

Hong Kong, facing a rise in the cost of living of 18% in the first three months of 1974 alone and with about 10% of the labor force laid off, witnessed the first public protest meeting by workers since the upsurge in 1967 was defeated. About 3,000 workers turned out for a rally protesting inflation May 5, in spite of opposition from the Maoist trade-union bureaucrats. The sponsors of the rally were mainly students and young workers.

Food shortages, unemployment, and inflation set off protests in Burma as well. In May, dockers at Akyab refused to load rice for export, saying it was needed to feed people at home. Strikes and sit-ins took place in many cities. In Rangoon, workers at the railway engine workshops struck June 3, setting off strikes at other



PARK: Banned all criticism of his dictatorial regime.

factories. They held the negotiating team from the government and from the bosses hostage until twenty-three arrested strike leaders were released. Twenty-seven persons were reported to have been killed when troops attacked some of the factories on strike.

In Australia and New Zealand, with economies hit hard by inflation and heading toward recessions, the Labor governments have attempted to impose wage controls in one guise or another while allowing the capitalists to reap record profits.

Unemployment in Australia is now at 3.6 percent, the highest level since the Depression of the 1930s, and the real rise in the cost of living was more than 20 percent this year. Australian workers reacted with increasing militancy—by the first eight months of the year a record number of workdays had been lost by strikes. In Western Australia, when dictatorial antiunion laws were introduced by the conservative state government, 100,000 workers protested with militant demonstrations and a one-day general strike.

Tens of thousands of New Zealand workers went out on strikes and protest marches in July when the Labor government jailed Bill Andersen, secretary of the Northern Drivers Union.

In both Australia and New Zealand, large demonstrations were held in support of the right to abortion.

National Liberation Struggles

Nearly two years after the Vietnam accords were signed in Paris in January 1973, the war continues. By June of 1974 more than 185,000 persons had been killed or wounded since the "cease-fire," and an estimated 200,000 political prisoners were being held in Thieu's jails.

Since Washington was compelled to withdraw its ground troops from Vietnam, it is now relying more on airpower from secure bases off the shores of Asia. The base on Diego Garcia in the middle of the Indian Ocean has been built up, and the Pentagon is planning a similar facility on the Pacific island of Tinian, near Guam.

Responding to repeated land-grabbing operations by the Saigon regime, military action by the Provisional Revolutionary Government forced Thieu to vacate many of the outposts he had set up in PRG territory.

In the Saigon-controlled areas, a new opposition emerged to challenge Thieu. The People's Anticorruption Movement to Save the Country and Restore Peace began in Hue in September as a campaign by Catholics against the corruption of the regime, but it soon addressed broader issues. As demonstrations spread to Danang, Saigon, and other areas, the Catholics were joined by journalists, lawyers, and the main veterans organization. Important Buddhist groups added their weight to the campaign, and a new opposition group, the National Reconciliation Force, was set up. The demand for Thieu's ouster became the focus of the campaign.

At first Thieu tried phony concessions and removed four of his cabinet ministers. That failed to satisfy his critics. "The people demand peace and reconciliation, not a cabinet reshuffle," said Senator Vu Van Mau, a leader of the National Reconciliation Force. When the dismissal of 377 lower-ranking army officers and the transfer of three corps commanders failed to halt the campaign, Thieu reverted to repression.

In Cambodia, student protests erupted in Phnompenh during May and June, and two demonstrators and two government officials were killed when riot police attacked a school occupied by students. They were protesting the new draft law, high inflation, and government corruption.

A third Laotian coalition government was formed on April 5. In November, the southern capital of Pakse was brought to a standstill by student demonstrators who occupied a key bridge in the center of the city for more than a week. The military commander of the region declined to intervene: "One must be careful with students," he said. "Do not expect me to send troops to shoot at them; I do not intend to end up like the ousted Thai trio."

But that was the exception. Throughout Asia, the dictatorial regimes supported by imperialism resorted more and more to naked repression.

South Korea's President Park Chung Hee attempted to wipe out opposition to his dictatorship. In January and April he issued four "emergency" decrees, banning all discussion and criticism of the constitution and prohibiting dissent against the government and its policies. The decrees carried penalties ranging from imprisonment to death, established secret courts-martial, and permitted arrests without warrant. At least 171 persons were convicted under the decrees, including prominent intellectuals, poets, writers, student leaders, politicians, and members of the clergy. Many were tortured.

After an attempt on his life August 15 in which his wife was killed, Park lifted two of the decrees. Large protests again occurred, however, particularly in the weeks preceding Ford's November 22 visit. The Catholics and students were joined by journalists, who struck in protest over a censorship decree that banned reports on the opposition protests. In October, Park shut down half of South Korea's universities.

In the Philippines, after Muslim rebels took control of the city of Jolo on February 7, President Marcos's armed forces leveled the city with napalm, bombs, and indiscriminate shelling. Civilian casualties were estimated by the Muslims at 3,000. On the other side of the continent, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Paki-

stan was waging a similar war of terror against the rebelling Baluchi people. It was reported that 800 persons had been killed in bombing raids in Baluchistan during one week in June. The beginnings of struggles for national self-determination were seen



TANAKA: Driven out of office.

in Timor and New Caledonia also.

In Papua New Guinea the date for formal "independence" from Australian imperialism was pushed back to sometime "in the first half of 1975." Separatist movements became more vocal, with Papuan House of Assembly member Josephine Abajjah leading a militant inflation protest of 2,500 women in Port Moresby in June.

Most of the struggles that have erupted throughout Asia in the past year have done so despite the efforts of the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking Communist parties. The Communist parties following Moscow's lead have attempted to defuse struggle after struggle, as in India, where the CPI put itself in open alliance with Gandhi's Congress party. The Maoist leaderships have played a similar role.

Peking's diplomatic courtship of bourgeois regimes has continued at the expense of the interests of the revolution in Asia. The Thai defense minister returned from a trip to Peking in February boasting, as the *New York Times* reported, "that China had stopped supporting insurgents in Thailand, Laos and other Southeast Asian countries."

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdul

Razak returned from a similar trip and said in Kuala Lumpur June 2 that the Chinese had assured him they would not interfere in his drive against the pro-Peking Malaysian rebels. The insurgents were an internal Malaysian problem "for us to deal with as we think best," Razak said he was told. He ordered the rebels to surrender.

China itself was caught up in a massive campaign to "criticize Lin Piao and Confucius." The Maoists' main targets appeared to be the leaders in the upper ranks of the army who might still harbor some sympathies for the deposed Lin, and the millions of rebel youth and intellectuals deported to the countryside at the end of the Cultural Revolution.

After it seemed that the anti-Lin, anti-Confucius campaign might be getting out of the hands of the Maoist leadership and disrupting the economic life of the country, the bureaucracy redirected it toward an emphasis on production.

But in spite of the betrayals of the Maoist leadership, the tremendous gains made possible by a nationalized planned economy stand in vivid contrast to the mass starvation in India and Bangladesh. □

Whip Inflation When?

As part of his crusade to "Whip Inflation Now," President Ford announced recently that he was going to "zero in on more effective enforcement" of antitrust laws. To show he meant business, on November 20 the government filed an antitrust suit to break up the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, the world's largest privately owned corporation, with assets of \$67 billion and a 1973 profit of nearly \$3 billion.

AT&T has a virtual monopoly on the telephone systems in the United States, and the White House argued that breaking the huge company up into smaller units would encourage more competition and thus provide lower prices for telephone services. AT&T, naturally enough, is vigorously resisting the suit, contending that more competition would lead to higher service fees through less efficient operations.

This burning argument may be settled sometime in 1984: legal experts estimate that the suit will take ten years to complete, at the bare minimum. They point out that a similar antitrust suit against International Business Machines has been in the courts for nearly six years, with no end in sight.

Continued Talk of Another War in the Arab East

By Michael Baumann

During 1974, officials in Washington continued to talk about the "inevitability" of another war in the Arab East. Two basic facts account for the persistence of this warmongering.

The first is that no "peaceful" settlement can both satisfy the demand of the Palestinian people to regain their homeland and at the same time maintain the existence of Israel as an exclusively Jewish colonial-settler state.

The second is that Wall Street considers it unlikely that it can force the Arab oil-producing countries to roll back their prices significantly and accept a reduced share of the income from their own oil resources except under military duress.

An added incentive from the viewpoint of the Pentagon is Israel's increasing international isolation. The growing international support for the Palestinian liberation struggle was dramatically demonstrated by the October 14 United Nations General Assembly vote to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the "representative of the Palestinian people" and to invite it to participate in the Assembly's debate on Palestine. The vote in favor of the motion, which Israel strongly opposed, was 105 to 4. Israel's only allies were the United States, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic.

The reception accorded PLO leader Yasir Arafat when he spoke before the UN November 13 was another indicator. Arafat was greeted by a standing ovation, spoke before a full hall, and was interrupted by applause. The Israeli delegate spoke before a half-empty room; a large number of delegates left as soon as Arafat finished speaking.

Israel has serious internal problems as well. The economy has been in deep trouble ever since the October 1973 war. Its huge war budget, combined with the effects of the international economic slump, has made things worse.

Austerity measures passed in July were not sufficient to slow down inflation, which is currently estimated at

more than 35 percent a year. More drastic steps were taken November 10, including a 43 percent devaluation of the Israeli pound and price increases of up to 200 and 300 percent on basic food items. Israeli workers took to the streets three days in a row to protest and to demand cost-of-living compensation for the increases.

In the West Bank, Palestinians held demonstrations nine days beginning November 13, as Arafat spoke at the UN. The mobilizations, which were the largest since 1968, were repressed in blood by Israeli troops. More than 500 demonstrators were arrested.

The Israeli government responded by pressing for faster delivery of U. S. arms, mobilizing part of the reserves, and threatening that it had the "potential" to make atomic weapons.

Some observers believe that Israel already has such weapons. William Fulbright, who as chairman of the U. S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee is in a position to know, said in a November 2 speech that Israel "is generally assumed to have acquired nuclear weapons, and if Mr. Joseph Alsop*—whose Israeli connections are excellent—is to be believed, Israel is prepared to use those weapons. . . ."

Since the October war, Israeli officials have repeatedly used 1,000-pound conventional bombs. Among the targets were the densely populated Palestinian refugee camps at Ein al Helweh and Nabatieh, which were bombed May 16.

These raids, part of a long series of Israeli attacks across the border in Lebanon, were best described by

*Alsop, a nationally syndicated columnist, wrote in the October 7 *Washington Post* that it is "quite certain that the Israeli armed forces have now built up a small supply of nuclear weapons made in a secret desert facility. The Arabs know this well, and Prime Minister Rabin intended the Arab leaders to remember this when he promised brutal city-for-city reprisals for Arab attacks on Israeli cities."

Israeli Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur, who termed them an attempt to make south Lebanon "unlivable." In this the Zionists have been at least partially successful. The Council of the South, a Lebanese organization that aids refugees, estimates that nearly half of south Lebanon's population has been forced to flee their homes.

The Kurdish Struggle

Iraq is a second area in the Arab East where a struggle for national liberation is under military attack. Since March 18 the Kurdish national minority has been under heavy fire from the armed forces of the Baghdad regime.

The Kurds, a non-Arab Muslim people, make up about one-quarter of Iraq's population of more than ten million. Kurdistan, their homeland, covers a territory of more than 150,000 square miles in Iran, Iraq, the Soviet Armenian Republic, Turkey, and Syria. Numbering about ten million altogether, the Kurds live in extreme poverty in some of the most underdeveloped areas of these countries.

In Iraq, the Kurds have a long tradition of struggle. The current revolt stems from the Baghdad regime's refusal to carry out provisions of the autonomy agreement worked out in 1970. That agreement, which established an armed truce after almost a decade of open insurrection, appeared to offer a number of concessions. However its final version, issued unilaterally by Baghdad on March 11, fell far short of what the Kurds demanded. The Kurds charge that instead of granting them "autonomy in the framework of the Iraqi Republic," the final version offered no more than limited self-rule and left all real power in the hands of the central government.

They also charge that it ignored a number of their other demands, including (1) a democratically elected national parliament, (2) a locally administered budget proportional to

their representation in the population, (3) administrative control over Kirkuk, an important oil producing center that is geographically, ethnically, and traditionally part of Kurdistan, and (4) the right to retain the Pesh Merga, the Kurdish guerrilla army.

Instead of granting these demands the Baghdad government, a coalition of the Baathist (Arab Socialist) and the Iraqi Communist parties, mobilized more than half the country's 90,000 troops and mounted a full-scale military assault against the Kurds.

Soviet-supplied Iraqi jets have carried out repeated bombing raids on Kurdish villages. The destruction of one Kurdish town, Qal'a Dizeh has been compared to Franco's bombing of Guernica. At least 100,000 Kurds have been forced to flee to refugee camps in Iran. According to a report in the November 27 *Times* of London, the war has displaced a total of more than 600,000 Kurds.

Press reports at the end of November indicated that the Iraqi army and air force, while unable to gain a decisive victory, have succeeded in pushing the Kurdish forces back into the mountains near the Iranian border.

'De-Nasserizing' Egypt

Following the troop-disengagement agreement with Israel in January, foreign investors began to show renewed interest in Egypt. Interest increased when President Anwar el-Sadat promised to "liberalize" the economy, more than 75 percent of which had been placed under state ownership by Nasser.

As a token of his willingness to come to terms with foreign capitalists, Sadat began by denationalizing in December 1970 some of the foreign holdings Nasser had seized. In addition, he relaxed state control over foreign trade, promised foreign businessmen they would have no difficulty in taking their profits out of the country, and intimated that he was considering reopening the Cairo stock exchange. He also suggested that it might be possible to permit up to 49 percent private ownership in companies under state control.

The scope of the openings for imperialist investments in Egypt is indicated by Sadat's plans for reopening



Jerusalem Post

Jerusalem, November 22: Palestinian students led many of the West Bank demonstrations demanding end to Israeli occupation.

the Suez Canal and rebuilding the bombed-out cities along its banks. More than \$7 billion will be needed to finance this project alone.

Chase Manhattan, the Rockefeller family bank, has already moved in, setting up shop in Cairo. Three other big U.S. banks have been granted permission to open offices in Egypt as well.

A new investment law, passed in July, offered additional inducement to Western entrepreneurs. It freed foreign companies from a rule requiring 51 percent Egyptian ownership, from taxes on machinery imports, from mandatory worker participation on boards of directors, and from social security rules. Companies that feel the Egyptian minimum wage of \$20.50 a month is too high will not be compelled to pay it.

Iran: Shah Spills More Blood

In Iran, the shah's dictatorial regime continued to ruthlessly suppress struggles for democratic and trade-union rights. On February 18 and 19, he placed eight political opponents, including poet Khosrow Golsorkhi, before the firing squad.

In June, Parviz Hekmatjoo, a member of the central committee of the exiled Communist party, died under torture after eight years' imprisonment.

In September it was learned that the shah had murdered fourteen Iranian workers. In Tabriz, Mohammad-Saleh Jahani, an elected representative of the

transport workers, was killed under torture by agents of SAVAK, the shah's secret police. In Tehran, thirteen strikers at the Irana and Khavar manufacturing company were killed in a confrontation with SAVAK agents. Another strike, staged by the oil refinery workers in Abadan and Tehran, is reported to have lasted about five days before it was crushed by refinery guards and the shah's police.

No information about these labor actions or other protests was carried in the shah's press.

Despite strict censorship, knowledge about the shah's bloody rule is spreading. On several occasions during the shah's visit to Australia and New Zealand in September, pickets turned out at his public appearances to demand the release of Iranian political prisoners.

In the United States, the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran organized a petition drive and public meetings to demand the release of Vida Hadjebi Tabrizi and Dr. Ali Shariati, two of the many artists, intellectuals, and writers now in the shah's jails.

Iranian intervention in Dhofar to help crush the liberation struggle has been protested by parents of soldiers killed there and by the student movement. In addition, antiwar graffiti have begun to appear on city walls. One such slogan, seen in Raam-Hormuz in southern Iran, said: "Why send our children to death in Dhofar? Our soldiers must not die there." □

The Dividends of Détente

By Michael Baumann

Two and a half years ago, in the seventh year of intense U. S. fighting in Indochina, Nixon and Kissinger negotiated a far-reaching deal with the ruling bureaucracies in Moscow and Peking.

In return for lowered trade barriers, long-term credit arrangements, and access to U. S. technology, Moscow and Peking agreed to go to new lengths to help stabilize the world capitalist structure. Brezhnev even opened the door to huge deals with guaranteed long-term profits for capitalist investors.

In Vietnam, this meant Moscow's and Peking's agreement to use their influence to restrain any revolutionary upsurge as U. S. troops were withdrawn. In the Arab East, it meant Moscow's assistance in imposing a settlement favorable to imperialism.

The pact was sealed in Peking and Moscow in February and May 1972, when the Stalinist bureaucrats toasted Nixon as U. S. planes bombed Cambodia and North Vietnam.

The détente provided certain advantages to each side. The Pentagon, after failing to stop the Vietnamese revolution by military means alone, secured another, less costly way of blocking its advance.

The conservative ruling castes in Moscow and Peking gained stabilization of an area in which a revolutionary upheaval could have serious consequences for them at home. In addition, access to U. S. goods and technology would enable them to ease some of the immediate social pressure stemming from their bureaucratically mismanaged economies.

Throughout 1974, Soviet and U. S. officials extolled the virtues of détente. Moscow held that the danger of another world war could be eliminated by "making détente irreversible." Nixon and his successor trumpeted the deal as one of their noblest achievements.

At a state banquet held in Moscow June 27 to honor Nixon and Brezhnev's third summit meeting, Brezhnev hailed the gathering as contributing to



Ford and Brezhnev: Making nuclear arms "more respectable."

"the reduction—and subsequently the complete removal—of the possibility of war between our two states."

Nixon, not to be outdone, replied, ". . . motivated by that desire, the desire to avoid war, we have begun the process of limiting nuclear arms."

Increased Danger of Nuclear War

The reality is not so rosy. To the extent that Moscow's pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" grants Washington the "right" to carry out "limited wars" in its own sphere of influence, the détente sharply increases the possibility of nuclear war. As Nixon showed when he rattled the H-bomb during the October war in the Arab East "limited war" can be very easily escalated into a nuclear conflict.

Instead of limiting the production of nuclear arms, as Nixon claimed, the détente has actually enabled the Pentagon to step up the arms race. In practical terms, the Vladivostok agreement reached by Ford and Brezhnev November 24 allows the

Pentagon to continue building up its nuclear arsenal. A limit of 2,400 nuclear missiles and bombers was set, but all that means is the production of still more fiendish weapons.

As one congressional critic, Senator Edmund Muskie, pointed out in a rare moment of honesty, a chief function of arms talks is to make nuclear weapons "more usable, more respectable."

Apart from giving free rein to the arms race, the détente passed several other tests the Western imperialists put to it in 1974. In Western Europe, buffeted by both recession and inflation in the most serious economic crisis since the second world war, Moscow limited its response to pushing popular-front schemes to stabilize capitalist rule.

In the Arab East, Brezhnev allowed Ford and Kissinger's threats against the oil-producing countries to pass without comment.

In Vietnam, Moscow and Peking put pressure on the Hanoi leadership to concentrate on economic development in the north at the expense of the liberation struggle in the south.

In the Soviet Union itself, the détente enabled the Kremlin rulers to step up the repression of dissidents. Relieved of concern that the Western "democracies" would make any serious protest, Moscow cracked down harshly.

On February 13, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was arrested, exiled, and stripped of his Soviet citizenship. The action followed by less than two months the publication in Paris of the Russian text of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, an exposé of the Stalinist labor camps.

On February 19, it was learned that Leonid Plyushch, a founding member of the Initiative Group for the Defense of Human Rights, was near death from the massive doses of drugs administered him in the Dnipropetrovsk prison-hospital.

Several weeks later, word reached the West that Vladimir Moroz, a dissident Ukrainian historian confined in Vladimir prison, had "repeatedly been assaulted by criminal cellmates (criminal and political prisoners are integrated), wounded several times and refused proper medical care by the prison authorities."

To back up his demand that he be transferred to a labor camp, Moroz began a hunger strike July 1. He continued it, with wide publicity in the West, until November 22, when Soviet authorities agreed to improve the conditions of his confinement.

In May, Vladimir Bukovsky's mother reported that he was on the verge of death from hunger in a Soviet labor camp. His crime was to have sent abroad the "psychiatric diagnoses" of six dissidents being held in Soviet mental hospitals.

In September, Moscow bureaucrats sent in bulldozers, dump trucks, and water-spraying trucks normally used for cleaning streets to disrupt an unauthorized show of nonconformist Soviet art.

Despite the crackdown, new issues of the underground publications *Chronicle of Current Events* and *Ukrainian Herald* appeared. Physicist Andrei Sakharov, head of the Moscow Human Rights Committee, and Roy Medvedev, a dissident best known in the West for his unofficial history of Stalinism *Let History Judge*, remained free and were able to make their views known internationally.

On June 26, following an international campaign demanding his free-

dom, dissident communist Pyotr Griorenko was released after five years' confinement in various psychiatric prison-hospitals. His crime was to have spoken out in defense of the oppressed Crimean Tatars.

Increased Trade

Moscow's desire to obtain U.S. goods and technology is rooted in a long-range pattern—the declining growth rate of the Soviet economy. "From a growth rate of 6 percent a year in the Khrushchev era," Dick Roberts reported in the May 13 *Intercontinental Press*, "the rate dropped to 5.5 percent a year during the 1966-70 period, and to 3.5 percent in 1971. The wheat-crop failure [of 1972] drove the rate to below 2 percent."

Soviet productivity is still quite low by Western standards. For workers in basic industry, it is estimated to run between 60 and 70 percent of the productivity level in the United States. In agriculture, the contrast is even greater. Agricultural productivity in the Soviet Union comes to only 11 percent of U.S. farm productivity. One Soviet farmer can feed only seven people; a farmer in the United States can feed forty-six.

With the détente, trade between the two countries increased considerably, rising from \$225 million in 1971 to \$1.4 billion in 1973. The potential scope of U.S.-Soviet trade in the future can be gauged from an agreement that was announced in June—a \$20 billion, twenty-year chemical contract signed between the Soviet government and Occidental Petroleum.

The reactionary side of the transactions in which the Stalinist bureaucrats engage was shown by the Polish regime's shipment of 27,000 tons of coal to Britain in January, during the miners' strike. The shipment was part of the 500,000 tons the British government had contracted for when the miners began their ban on overtime work in November 1973. This back-stabbing deal was nothing new for the Polish bureaucrats—in 1970 and 1971 they sold coal to the Franco dictatorship during strikes by Spanish miners.

Poland was also the site of the only major workers struggle in Eastern Europe this year. In August, several thousand dock workers in the Baltic ports initiated a strike movement to

protest a speedup scheme that tightened work rules and linked pay to productivity. Although after a week of protests the Gierek regime agreed to scrap the measures, the actions showed that few if any of the issues that led to the workers' insurrection of December 1970 had been resolved.

As the year ends it is clear that the U.S.-imposed economic blockade on Cuba is on its last legs. Both Canada and Argentina defied the embargo in 1974.

Diplomatic isolation of Cuba is lessening as well, with the number of Latin American and Caribbean states now maintaining relations with Havana rising to nine. Twelve members of the Organization of American States, only two short of the required two-thirds majority, voted November 12 to end the economic and political blockade against Cuba.

In the international arena, Cuba strongly defended the oil-producing countries against Ford and Kissinger's threats of economic war.

This stood in sharp contrast to the position taken by the Stalinist bureaucrats in the Kremlin and the other East European capitals. While Castro called September 28 for unity behind the oil producers, the East European bureaucrats chose to escalate the rhetoric of "peaceful coexistence," striving to demonstrate their desire to continue the détente with the new administration in Washington.

This, for example, was the attitude conveyed by Polish Communist party leader Edward Gierek during his visit to Washington in early October. As Ford prepared the American public for possible military action against the Arab oil-producing countries, Gierek, a disciple of détente, devoted his speeches to praise of the "general improvement in international relations." □

Let Them Eat Potato Chips

Orval Hansen, a congressman from Idaho, one of the United States' leading potato-producing states, spoke in the House of Representatives December 4 on the world food crisis. After mentioning growing famine in many parts of the world, he stressed the need for an immediate solution to end starvation. "We have such a solution at our fingertips," he announced, "the American potato in dehydrated form."

A New Rise in the African Revolution

By Ernest Harsch

The famine that has ravaged many countries in Africa in the past six years continued to worsen in 1974. An estimated one million persons have now died in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa—Mali, Niger, Chad, Senegal, Upper Volta, and Mauritania—because of this scourge. At least another 400,000 starved to death in Ethiopia since the famine spread to that country in 1973.

Entire sections of the population poured into the crowded relief camps and slums of the cities and towns. The social fabric of some of the stricken countries reached the breaking point.

The response of ruling circles was in general to search for scapegoats and to resort to repressive measures. The military in Upper Volta took over total control of the country in February. In Niger, following a series of labor strikes and several protests by students and teachers blaming the regime of Diouri Hamani for the famine, a military coup in April ousted the discredited government.

The Fall of the 'Lion'

The social turmoil in Ethiopia was profound. The famine and drought in the northern provinces of Tigre and Wallo, which later spread to the south, revealed like nothing else could the utter bankruptcy of Ethiopia's backward, semifeudal agrarian system and the regime that represented it.

In a country of twenty-six million, a handful of rich landlords, aristocrats, church figures, and feudal barons owned a full 90 percent of all cultivated land, with the vast majority of the peasantry either working on subsistence plots, as sharecroppers, or as landless laborers. In many parts of the country, the peasants had to pay between 60 and 70 percent of their crops as rent. Some were even bound to the land by feudal ties. Over this archaic system sat Emperor Haile Selassie, who was hailed by his retainers as the "King of Kings," the "Elect of God," and the "Conquering Lion



SELASSIE: From palace to mud hut.

of the Tribe of Judah." He was also the biggest landowner of them all.

Although the drought was a contributing factor, it was Ethiopia's stagnant agriculture that in reality doomed hundreds of thousands to death. Selassie's regime denied the existence of the famine for months in order to justify its increase of grain exports.

It was against this background that the mass upsurges first erupted in February. The unrest began with strikes and demonstrations by workers and students in Addis Ababa. Within days there were mutinies by military units in Asmara, Massawa, and Addis Ababa, involving at least 10,000 troops and winning the support of most of the ranks and junior officers. These initial protests forced the resignation of Selassie's cabinet.

Over the next few months, the groundswell of discontent touched virtually every oppressed layer of Ethiopian society. Addis Ababa continued to be rocked by demonstrations and strikes. Tens of thousands of Muslims marched to protest religious dis-

crimination. Women demanded equal pay and rights. Veterans called for pension increases. The Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions held a three-day general strike to back their demand for a higher minimum wage. Students and teachers demanded the ouster of the new cabinet, education reform, and "land to the tillers." Even priests demanded pay raises. In April, mass protests and strikes spread to Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, which has been struggling for its independence from Addis Ababa for more than a decade.

Peasant revolts swept the countryside, especially in southern Ethiopia. Landlords, government officials, police chiefs, and unpopular military officers fled the rural areas and provincial towns. There were reports that in some areas new popular formations arose that tried to fill the political vacuums left by the fleeing officials. Mass meetings were held in schools and market places in the larger towns and villages. The April 16 *Le Monde* reported: "... in certain provinces, for example in Kefa... 'revolutionary committees' seem to be trying to substitute themselves for the local authorities."

The rebel troops emerged as the most significant, organized, and disciplined force in opposition to Selassie. The initial mutinies reflected a genuine dissatisfaction with Ethiopia's continued backwardness. The initiative for the military revolts came from the ranks and the junior officers and were directed against corrupt officials and administrators, unpopular military commanders, and finally against Selassie himself.

The demands raised by the troops in the first weeks of the upsurge included freedom of the press, release of political prisoners, the right to form political parties, liberalization of labor legislation, free and universal education, "land to the tillers," and trials for the ousted officials. Some leaflets even called for the legalization of the Eritrean Liberation Front, one of the two guerrilla groups fighting Addis

Ababa's control over the area. It was such demands of the rebel troops that won initial support from the students and workers.

But there were sharp differences among the various currents within the military that occasionally led to armed clashes. The nature of those differences are still not clear. The formation of the armed forces coordinating committee (later called the Dergue) helped contain the differences and direct the rebel troops in a more organized fashion.

Step by step, the Dergue isolated Selassie. The arrests began with a few generals, former cabinet ministers, and ousted provincial governors; they gradually struck closer and closer to the sacred personage himself. The turning point came on August 16 when the various military units marched through Addis Ababa in a show of strength, abolished Selassie's highest advisory body, the Crown Council, and placed the emperor under virtual house arrest.

The Dergue administered the final blow on September 12 when it deposed the "Lion of Judah," ending Selassie's fifty-eight year rule. He was taken from the palace in a police van and reportedly confined to a mud hut. The Dergue dissolved the parliament and arrested scores of aristocrats, officials, landlords, and generals. During the night of November 23, almost sixty of these officials were executed.

At the same time that the Dergue moved against Selassie, however, it also sought to contain the mass upsurge. As early as May, military units broke strikes in Addis Ababa. After ousting Selassie and forming a new regime, the Dergue outlawed strikes and demonstrations, tried to disperse the students into the countryside, and sent more troops into Eritrea.

The continuation of differences within the Dergue was highlighted by the ouster of Lieutenant General Aman Michael Andom as its chairman and his subsequent death on November 23.

The economic and social conditions and the widespread unrest that led to the downfall of Selassie still remain. In addition, the famine and drought continue to affect parts of the country.

An Empire Totters

The April 25 coup in Lisbon, led by General António de Spínola, was

December 30, 1974

a de facto admission by the Portuguese imperialists that they could no longer hang on to their centuries-old empire by direct colonial rule. It also provided a new impetus to the independence struggles in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique.

Lisbon's African wars, which had dragged on for almost a decade and a half, had become an increasingly expensive drain on the imperialist center. They tied up 150,000 troops and accounted for up to 50 percent of the government budget. Just as important, antiwar moods began to spread widely among the Portuguese population. To save Portuguese imperialism, it had become necessary to grant a few formal concessions and introduce subtler forms of rule.

Lisbon's immediate aim was to halt the fighting without having to give up any real ground. At first Spínola offered various vague assurances that the colonies would be given a greater degree of "autonomy" within a Portuguese federation and stated that the guerrilla forces would be allowed to function legally if they laid down their arms. But the independence forces didn't swallow Spínola's bait.

Moreover, the coup had repercussions that quickly moved beyond Lisbon's control. The anticolonial struggles took on new life, and the African masses began to gain greater confidence in their ability to oppose imperialist domination. A wave of strikes by African workers broke out in Mozambique and Angola. The guerrillas gained greater support and launched new offensives. Many of the Black troops that had fought with the Portuguese deserted to the liberation forces. Mass uprisings swept parts of northern Mozambique in August.

At the same time, demoralization spread among the Portuguese troops, and units often refused to go into combat against the guerrillas. The "third force" groupings that arose in Angola and Mozambique, and that favored continued Portuguese domination in some form, failed to gain enough support from the African masses to offset the influence of the independence forces.

Lisbon was forced to give even more ground to the liberation movements. It ended its direct colonial hold over Guinea-Bissau and promised to do the same for Mozambique. Despite the formal concessions, however, Lisbon's original plan remained: to hang onto

as much as possible, even if that meant sacrificing some parts of the empire and maneuvering cautiously in the others. Spínola's ouster as head of the regime on September 30 changed nothing fundamental in Lisbon's long-term strategy.

Lisbon granted independence to mainland Guinea-Bissau, which was the least important of Portugal's African possessions, on September 10. It began withdrawing the Portuguese troops and turned the administration over to the PAIGC (Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné-Bissau e Cabo Verde—African party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands).

But the Portuguese junta still retained control of the strategic Cape Verde Islands, which the PAIGC had always insisted were an integral part of the country. Under threats of continued warfare and the pressure of the United Nations, the PAIGC dropped its demand that the Cape Verdes and mainland Guinea-Bissau be granted independence at the same time. Although Portuguese officials have said that a provisional government composed of the PAIGC and other, rival groups would be set up in the Cape Verdes to prepare for their "independence," the inclusion of parties opposed to the PAIGC would give the Portuguese imperialists much more room to maneuver and the opportunity to use some of the groups for its own purposes.

In Mozambique, Lisbon set up a coalition "government of transition" with Frelimo (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique—Mozambique Liberation Front) which is to rule the country until June 1975, when the Portuguese regime has pledged to grant Mozambique its independence. While Frelimo received more cabinet posts than the Portuguese, the key areas of defense and foreign affairs were left in Lisbon's hands. During the "transition period," the police will continue to function under Portuguese control and the colonialist troops will remain.

This arrangement clearly leaves the Portuguese imperialists in a strong position. By drawing Frelimo into the regime and concluding a cease-fire, Lisbon gained valuable time. It can use the "transition period" to strengthen the numerous "third force" groups opposed to Frelimo and to pressure Frelimo itself into going along with Lisbon's neocolonialist schemes.

So far, Frelimo has cooperated with

the Portuguese. During the Black rebellions in the shantytowns of Lourenço Marques following the collapse of the attempted rightist coup in September, and then again in October, Frelimo helped the Portuguese troops restore order by patrolling the African neighborhoods and calling on the African population to "calm down." Frelimo also used its influence to try to end the wave of strikes that had swept the country since the Lisbon coup. When the coalition regime was installed September 20, Frelimo President Samora Machel said, "In this situation and phase in the life of our country, strikes have no place."

But even if Frelimo does go beyond the neocolonialist limits set by the Portuguese, Lisbon's options are still open. If it can't use its own troops, the rightist settler groups, as well as some of the Black neocolonialist organizations, would be willing to cooperate. The possibility of direct military intervention by South Africa is also an ever present danger.

Lisbon's grip on Angola, the largest and richest of its African colonies, remains the firmest. The Portuguese settler population in Angola is much larger than in Mozambique and the rivalry of the three guerrilla groups gives Lisbon the chance to pit them against each other. The three groups are the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola—People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), the FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola—National Front for the Liberation of Angola), and UNITA (União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola—National Front for the Total Independence of Angola).

Angola's vast natural wealth—oil, iron, diamonds, gold—makes it a prime target of the imperialists. Gulf Oil has petroleum concessions in Cabinda, an enclave just north of Angola proper. Other U. S., Portuguese, French, and Belgian oil companies are exploring along Angola's coast. A few political groups have already sprung up that favor the enclave's separation from the rest of Angola.

Among the others interested in the Angolan spoils is the regime in Zaïre, which has received nearly \$50 million in military aid from Washington since 1962. Zaïre President Mobutu Sese Seko supports the FNLA and has supplied the guerrilla group with significant military aid. In any neo-

colonialist setup in Angola, Lisbon and the U. S. oil interests will try to use Mobutu's influence on the nationalists to help maintain their economic interests.

Even if Lisbon ends direct colonial rule over all its African possessions, the former colonies will still face imperialist domination—unless capitalism itself is overthrown in those countries. Without a socialist revolution, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola will not differ essentially from all the other "independent" Black African states, which, despite the "socialist" rhetoric of some of the African leaders, have not solved their pressing social and economic problems.

But the events in Mozambique and Angola need not necessarily stay within neocolonial channels. The revolts in the Black shantytowns of Lourenço Marques and Luanda are only a small indication of the explosive situation in those countries, which may yet spill beyond the framework of the capitalist system.

Moreover, many of the "independent" African countries have also been touched by unrest this year. There were student protests in Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Congo (Brazzaville), Niger, Zambia, and Tanzania. In Chad, the guerrilla war led by Froinat (Front de Libération Nationale—National Liberation Front) continued. Students and workers staged a series of demonstrations and strikes in Kenya.

Shock Waves in Southern Africa

The pressure of events in the rest of Africa, particularly in the Portuguese colonies, has also been felt by the white minority regimes in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and South Africa. Any advances made by the liberation movements in the rest of Africa are sure to encourage the oppressed African majorities in the two white-ruled countries to press their struggles even harder.

The active opposition to the racist Rhodesian regime in Salisbury had already been on the rise before the Lisbon coup. The guerrilla actions in northern Zimbabwe intensified and began to spread southward toward Salisbury itself. There were cases of disaffection among the African troops under Salisbury's command and among the traditional tribal chiefs who have supported the regime in the

past. The demoralization of the white population grew.

Prime Minister Ian Smith's regime responded with more repression. It doubled the draft and announced the formation of handpicked "militias" to patrol the tribal trust lands. Free-fire zones were set up in areas affected by guerrilla activity. In July, Salisbury began the forced removal and resettlement into "protected villages" of tens of thousands of Africans.

In South Africa, 10,000 textile workers struck in Durban in January; and in March workers at British Leyland in Durban walked off their jobs. Hundreds of Blacks staged protests in support of Frelimo in Durban and northern Transvaal in September.

Under the impact of the colonialist defeat in Portuguese-ruled Africa, and the continued unrest within Zimbabwe and South Africa, the white racist regimes have begun to make diplomatic overtures to some of the Black states in an effort to help stabilize the area. In October, Zambia President Kenneth Kaunda responded to a speech by South African Prime Minister John Vorster calling for "peaceful cooperation" in southern Africa. Kaunda said that Vorster's speech was "the voice of reason for which Africa and the rest of the world have been waiting." The South African regime also announced that it would make a few token concessions in its apartheid policy.

Salisbury joined the drive to try to defuse the explosive atmosphere. On December 11 it announced that a cease-fire had been reached with the Zimbabwe guerrillas and that a constitutional conference would be held sometime in the future to discuss greater Black representation in parliament.

These sudden diplomatic moves, however, were only for show. The concessions announced so far do not fundamentally alter the oppression of the African masses by the white minorities. Their only purpose is to try to dampen the unrest and delay the inevitable confrontation. □

Ho Chi Minh Trail, Brantford, Canada

The city council in Brantford, Canada, has named a new street in the city's industrial area Ho Chi Minh Trail, rejecting the other suggested name, Widget Street.

The manager of a carpet company, which would have to use Ho Chi Minh Trail as its business address, is not happy with the new name. "It seems very out of place," he said.

Argentina Key for Upturn in Latin America

By Gerry Foley

Bourgeois nationalism was the predominant theme in Latin America in 1974. After the defeats of the workers movement in 1973 in Chile and Uruguay, the most important process was in the Argentine labor movement, which, although it went on the defensive in 1974, was not decisively defeated. In Argentina, a demagogic bourgeois nationalist government continued to hold the allegiance of the bulk of the workers. Following the overthrow of the Allende government, the bourgeois nationalist Peruvian junta became the main model of "anti-imperialism" for the pro-Moscow Communist parties. At the same time, in Colombia and Venezuela liberal regimes with a mild nationalist coloring took office.

There was also sharpened competition between Argentina and Brazil for Bolivian and Paraguayan natural resources. On the whole, Argentina lost. In the same period, the Banzer junta in Bolivia started up a new campaign for an outlet to the sea, arousing fears in the Argentine capitalist press that Bolivia might become a pawn in a Chilean-Brazilian attack on Peru.

To gain a little anti-imperialist and progressive luster, a series of Latin American countries began to make overtures to Cuba and call for ending the Organization of American States sanctions against Havana. An Argentine delegation arrived in the Cuban capital in February to negotiate a number of trade agreements, including the sale of badly needed cars and trucks to the blockaded country.

The new presidents of Colombia and Venezuela, Alfonso López Michelsen and Carlos Andrés Pérez, made a joint statement on August 3 that their governments intended to renew relations with Cuba.

Mexican Foreign Minister Emilio Rabasa met with Kissinger on June 8 and Ford on August 29. He announced that he discussed ending sanctions against Cuba with the two U. S. chiefs and that Washington was not planning to oppose lifting the



Excelsior

blockade. The "liberalizing" government of President Luis Echeverría Alvarez apparently wanted to present itself as the mediator between Washington and Havana.

Actually the way to "peaceful coexistence" between Havana and Washington had been opened by the visit of top Kremlin bureaucrat Leonid Brezhnev to the island in February. In its communiqué on the occasion Havana endorsed almost every one of the Soviet foreign policy positions, even including support of "peaceful and democratic" reunification of Korea. The Soviet press claimed that Brezhnev's visit had increased the international prestige of the Castro government and hinted that as a result the isolation of Havana was breaking down.

Obviously the Kremlin thought the time had come to include Cuba in the

détente. This meant (1) a commitment by Castro to "peaceful coexistence"; (2) diplomatic concessions to Havana from the U. S. The trade embargo had already been breaking down, owing to increased capitalist competition and a trend toward more independent economic policies in a number of countries.

However, at the OAS meeting in Quito November 12, the United States chose to use indirect pressure to defeat a motion for ending the blockade. The head of Washington's delegation, Under Secretary of State Robert S. Ingersoll, lectured the Latin American representatives: "for some of us, evidence of Cuban hostility is fresh in our minds."

Ingersoll may have been thinking of the speech Castro gave September 28 in Havana while a delegation of U. S. senators was in Cuba, seemingly there to test the Castro government's devotion to "peaceful coexistence." The Cuban leader blasted Washington for its now partially admitted role in overthrowing the Allende government. He put the blame for the world economic crisis squarely on U. S. imperialism and denounced the attempt to make scapegoats of the oil-producing countries.

Washington apparently got the impression that its old enemies had not yet been thoroughly domesticated and might inflict a few more nasty scratches if the opportunity presented itself. In any case, the United States seemed to want more assurances that Cuba had really entered into the spirit of the détente before making any concessions.

However, if the Cuban leaders were not ready to go along entirely with "peaceful coexistence," their fight against U. S. imperialism took a more limited nationalistic form. Havana's strategy in 1974 was dominated by maneuvers with the Peronist regime, the Peruvian junta, and the government of Brigadier General Omar Torrijos Herrera in Panama.

All of the bourgeois nationalist gov-

ernments tried to base a great deal of demagoguery on a few concessions to the workers and a few positions seized from imperialism. The demagoguery of the Panamanian government was the most militant-sounding, perhaps because of this regime's direct confrontation with the United States over the Panama Canal, the small Central American country's main potential source of income.

As a general rule, demagoguery requires repression, since the more dependent a government is on false pretenses, the less it can afford to have independent voices pointing out the facts. Thus, the amount of repression under these bourgeois nationalist governments has tended to be in proportion to the gap between the demagoguery and the actual progressive achievements of the regime.

The largest measure of political democracy was in Venezuela, where the new government was buoyed up by rising oil profits. However, in conditions of relative freedom for political debate, a large stratum seemed to be drawing the lessons of the failure of previous reformist experiments, in particular the one in Chile.

Calling for no confidence in the bourgeois parties, a left-centrist split-off from the Communist party, the MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo—Movement Toward Socialism), got 200,000 votes in the December 9, 1973, presidential elections. At the same time, the Communist party's popular-front proposals fell flat. On May 6, the CP suffered its second major split in the last three years.

In Colombia, where the new regime lacked the benefit of a booming oil industry, the "progressive" luster of the López Michelsen government faded more rapidly than that of its counterpart in the neighboring country. The new government began immediately to promote a wage freeze, or "Social Pact," patterned after the one pushed by the Peronists in Argentina.

Worldwide inflation bit deeply into the meager standard of living of the Colombian masses and in the latter part of the year provoked violent protests. Mass mobilizations were spearheaded by student demonstrations against inadequate funds for the universities but quickly spread among workers, peasants, and shantytown dwellers. By the end of the year at least eight persons had been killed in clashes with the police. The government established a curfew in the

centers of unrest, and López Michelsen threatened to imitate the Peronists a second time by declaring a state of siege.

In Mexico, where the effects of world economic crisis also hit hard, the government did not need to imitate the Peronists. The Mexican regime has the most experience of any in Latin America in the use of nationalist demagoguery and rightist terrorist groups to silence opposition. In October, the government's unofficial police murdered Antonio Maldonado, an 18-year-old member of the Liga Socialista (Socialist League, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International).

In Peru, the repression increased in 1974 with the virtual elimination of any independent press. In November, the Velasco Alvarado regime deported a number of journalists and jailed five lawyers who pointed out the difference between the government's anti-imperialist pretensions and the concessions it made to Japanese big business in an oil deal. The government also jailed Laura Caller, a lawyer who has defended the victims of capitalist repression for thirty years.

These new repressive moves indicate that the anti-imperialism and reformism of the junta is becoming exhausted.

In Bolivia, the demagoguery of the Banzer regime was undiluted with the slightest reforms or anti-imperialist steps. In the early part of the year, the government was still suggesting that it intended to hold elections. The right-wing military officers raised the slogan that the country should forget about elections and prepare for a great national effort to win "Bolivia's right to the sea."

It is not yet clear how the oil boom will affect Bolivia. The oil fields are in Santa Cruz province, which differs sharply from the rest of the country in its racial composition and economic structure. Brazilian interests are strong here.

However, there could be no doubt about the effect of inflation on the poor Indian masses of the Bolivian highlands. When the government increased the price of staples by 100 percent on January 21, 1974, violent protests exploded among the workers and urban poor. Among the peasantry, the main support of the conservative governments in the last period, the protests led to a rebellion in the Cochabamba area that rocked

the Banzer regime.

The government, which had begun to splinter in 1973, suffered more internal crisis in 1974.

In June, there was a new attempt to overthrow Banzer by a military coup. Two regiments were reportedly involved and there was some sharp fighting. In early July, the dictator dismissed his civilian advisors and appointed an all-military cabinet.

The international economic crisis seems to be withering the last illusions about the Brazilian "economic miracle." Already sharply reduced by the prolonged wage freeze imposed by the dictatorship, the real living standard of the workers and poor was cut more rapidly by increasing inflation. Even the narrow middle-class layer that benefited from the "economic miracle" began to suffer.

By denouncing the deterioration in living standards and the increase in poverty, the token opposition party was able to win two-thirds of the vote even in the generals' stage-managed elections in November. The government party lost heavily everywhere.

The elections had no effect on the actual exercise of power, since the elected bodies are only window dressing. But the resounding repudiation did present a problem for the regime in its search for an effective political formula to legitimize conservative rule.

On the one hand, the election result increased the fears of the right-wing generals that any loosening of the dictatorial grip would lead to the overthrow of the reactionary regime. Liberal figures began to receive warnings similar to those sent out by the rightist death squads in Argentina.

In fact, the military's chances for consolidating its victories of the last ten years by getting the masses to accept a conservative parliamentary or semi-parliamentary setup seemed to be dimming. However, prolonging open dictatorial rule indefinitely could prepare the way for an uncontrollable explosion.

From the beginning of the year, there were signs of a revival in both the student and workers movement. At the same time, the government faced growing international protests against its brutal repression.

The bourgeois nationalist regime that sowed the greatest illusions, the Peronist government in Argentina, was also the one that most brutally

Intercontinental Press

disillusioned its supporters. By the end of the year, "el lider's" most enthusiastic and loyal followers, the radical Peronists who kept his movement alive under two military dictatorships, were being hunted down by the government's official police and its parallel-police murder gangs. Many of the victims were youths who waged a guerrilla struggle against Perón's enemies.

For example, a December 14 United Press International dispatch reported the discovery of four bodies wrapped in a red flag in a Buenos Aires garbage dump. The police identified two of the victims as high-school teachers who had been arrested for painting guerrilla slogans on a wall and later released.

"This garbage dump has been used to dispose of at least 207 bodies this year," the dispatch said. "The bodies of two left-wing reporters were found in this area on October 13."

The campaign of extermination against the Peronist left began with Perón's return to the country in June 1973. In September of that year the old demagogue "declared war" on "Marxist infiltrators." In 1974, the campaign escalated. In this atmosphere the police chief in Córdoba staged a minicoup at the end of February to oust the left Peronist provincial government. The overturn was endorsed by the caudillo, although he appointed a moderate governor at first to soften the blow.

During the police coup, there was a general roundup of the left. Some twenty-eight members of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers party, a sympathizing group of the Fourth International) were jailed. Although they were released unharmed in a few days, the rightist gangs began to extend their campaign to the PST.

On May 7, a 26-year-old party activist, Inosencio Fernández, was gunned down in Buenos Aires. He had been one of the organizers of a slate opposing the right-wing Peronist bureaucracy in the metalworkers union. A thousand persons marched in his funeral procession, including workers from his factory and delegations from many others.

On May 30, a death squadron kidnapped three members of the PST in the Pacheco section of Buenos Aires, tortured them, and gunned them down. Their names were Antonio Mo-

December 30, 1974

ses, Oscar Dalmacio Meza, and Mario Zidda. Nineteen .45 caliber, thirty 9-millimeter, and four .22 caliber cartridges were found by their bodies.

Between 4,000 and 5,000 persons



PERON

attended a rally in front of the PST central headquarters in Buenos Aires June 1 to commemorate the assassinated Trotskyists. Delegations were present from the printers union, several metalworkers locals, and from shipyards in La Plata and Ensenada.

In July the murder gangs assassinated Rodolfo Ortega Peña, a left-wing legislator who broke with the Peronist bloc after the right turn. In September they assassinated Atilio López, the former deputy governor of Córdoba and a hero of the underground Peronist trade-union movement.

Also in September, the right-wing Peronist trade-union bureaucracy succeeded in ousting the independent militant leadership of the automotive workers union in Córdoba. The main leader, René Salamanca, was accused of harboring guerrillas in the union headquarters and forced to go into hiding.

On September 6, the Peronist Montoneros officially resumed their guerrilla struggle, this time against a Peronist government. On October 9, the police in Córdoba raided the headquarters of the light and power workers union, the last stronghold of the

independent militant tendency. They claimed the offices were being used as a guerrilla base. The union head, Agustin Tosco, managed to escape and went into hiding.

At the same time, the police raided the headquarters of the PST and the Communist party. Both offices were smashed; everyone present was arrested and beaten. A young woman at the CP headquarters died. The cops claimed it was an unfortunate case of sudden kidney failure.

Right-wing interventors purged the universities of left and liberal professors. Parallel to this, rightist gangs demanded the resignation of suspect educators under threat of assassination.

On November 1, a group who claimed to be police dragged Rubén Bouzas, a 20-year-old member of the PST, from his home in a Buenos Aires suburb. His body was found the next day, riddled with shotgun blasts. On the same night, another PST member, Juan Carlos Nievas, was kidnapped and shot to death. On November 3, César Robles, a member of the Executive Committee of the PST, was seized by a rightist gang. His body was found a few hours later riddled with machine-gun bullets.

As the Peronist right turn speeded up, there were a whole series of bombings and shootings at PST headquarters, as well as a number of beatings of party members by rightist goons.

In a commemorative rally for Nievas and Rubén on November 5, PST leader Juan Carlos Coral said: "We are not going to respond to these massacres by creating special formations; we are going to build a mass response. We are going to continue with our kind of struggle, to win the minds of the working-class vanguard."

On November 6, the Peronist government declared a state of siege. The minister of the interior claimed leftist guerrillas had threatened to assassinate schoolchildren and that the government would resort to any means to defend "the peace of the Argentine home."

The first action by the police under the new rules was to raid the PST national headquarters. They arrested nine persons, who were charged with possessing "arms of war." A series of raids on other PST offices and CP headquarters occurred, with further arrests. The death squadrons con-

tinued their work, concentrating on lawyers for political prisoners.

Following institution of the state of siege, the government mounted a massive campaign against the guerrillas, arresting hundreds of persons. By the end of November, it was claiming that it had smashed these organizations. Nonetheless, on December 6 the government called for the creation of a security superagency directly under the president.

The working-class movement was relatively quiescent as the rightist offensive escalated in the latter part of the year. The repression took its toll, but the majority continued to hold illusions in the government. The regime also mixed a few demagogic measures in with its repressive campaign, such as special bonuses after Perón's death and nationalization of the distribution of petroleum products.

Common Market restrictions on the importation of Argentine agricultural products was a hard blow to the bourgeoisie's hopes for expansion, as were a number of other economic defeats.

Furthermore, the workers movement did win a series of victories in 1974. The most promising was the defeat of the Peronist bureaucracy by the workers in the Villa Constitución foundry complex in mid-March. This victory was confirmed at the end of the year when the militant slate won the union local elections.

How quickly the masses of Argentine workers will shed their illusions in Peronism and mobilize against the reactionary offensive is the central question in 1975 for Latin America. The situation in all of the southern part of the continent depends on this. Throughout the area, explosive pressures have been building up under a heavy crust of repression.

In both Uruguay and Chile, the dictatorships established in 1973 have presided over economic disasters, with savage cuts in the standard of living of the working masses. Even the petty-bourgeois masses that supported the Chilean coup have been hard hit by inflation and the sharp contradiction of the internal market. Signs also appeared of a division in the bour-

geoisie itself. The continuation of the brutal terror was an indication of the jitteriness of the regime. In Uruguay, the military dictatorship is almost universally despised.

But the Argentine working class, proportionately the largest and best organized in the area, still had by far the best opportunities to mobilize and defeat the repression. And only in Argentina was there a well-established nucleus of a revolutionary workers leadership.

After the experiences in Chile and Uruguay in 1973, this year Argentina has been the country where popular frontism was most roundly exposed. The Communist party supported Perón in the September 1973 elections. On the left, only the Trotskyists offered a working-class alternative. The discussion in the Latin American left on the failure of popular frontism and bourgeois nationalism is certain to continue in 1975. If a revolutionary alternative can be demonstrated in Argentina, a new period may open up for the Latin American revolution. □

Index—Volume XII

No. 1, January 14, through No. 47, December 30, 1974

Authors

Abdallah, Kamarouline		Santiago Snipers Shoot at Refugees in Embassies	86
The Struggle for Independence of Comoro Islands	356	Hundreds of Thousands Perish in Ethiopia Famine	145
		100 Reported Killed in Cochabamba Uprising	177
Almhjell, Eva		Exile of Solzhenitsyn a Warning to All Dissidents	195
Tracing the History of Norwegian Feminism (BR)	670	Yevtushenko Defends Solzhenitsyn Against Slanders	240
		"Marcha" Editor, Uruguayan Novelist Arrested	263
Aranda, Eugenia		Origin of "New Portuguese Letters"	868
Wily Political Boss in Mexico Outfoxes Kidnappers	1195	Baumann, Michael	
Mexican Workers Find They Need a Wage Hike	1322	U. S. Funds, "Advisers" Continue Vietnam War	281
Azad, Ibne		IMG Campaign Scores Encouraging Gains	314
Has Bangladesh a Future?	1470	U. S. Press Debates Meaning of Hanoi Speech	341
Barberena, Candida		Kurds Reject Baghdad's Autonomy Plan	374
Savage Sentences Given Carabanchel 10	15	Why Sadat Is "De-Nasserizing" Egypt	454
		Meir's Cabinet Becomes a Casualty of October War	467
		Washington "Finds" More Millions for Thieu	514
		"Coup" Attempt in Egypt Stirs Diplomatic Pot	533
		Portuguese Junta Calls for "Order and Tranquillity"	579

(BR) indicates a book review

Israeli Terrorists Bomb Palestinian Camps	643	Delepine, Edouard	
Israeli Terror Bombings Claim New Victims	677	GRS View of Left Unity in Martinique	1504
Palestinians Lose in Syria-Israeli Accord	715		
Nixon-Kissinger Road-Show Draws Large Crowds	818	Deutscher, Tamara	
Israelis Escalate Terrorist Bombing Raids Against Lebanon	856	Pyotr Grigorenko's Fight for "Leninist Principles"	546
Zionists Threaten Invasion of Lebanon	886		
Clampdown on Palestinians in Lebanon	936	Dillon, David	
Cairo Assures Investors of Safety, Profits	1018	Rallies Protest Police Murder of Kevin Gately (with Tony Hodges)	890
CIA Admits Role in Overthrowing Allende	1155		
The Strange Nixon Pardon— Why Did Ford Do It?	1190	Dmytryshyn, Ned	
Arab Summit Meeting Endorses PLO	1466	Ojibways Dramatize Claim to Stolen Land in Canada	1284
Mounting Talk of War in Arab East	1539		
		Doag, Jimmy	
Beauvais, Jean-Pierre		Irish Prisoners Ask Stepped-Up Protests	507
Chile After the Coup d'Etat	19		
Chilean Junta Faces Mounting Difficulties	178	Doughney, Jamie	
World Capitalists Eye Profits in Chile	438	Victoria Right-Wingers Expel Socialists From Young Labor Association	310
		Thousands Hear Mandel in Australia	1323
Bensaid, Daniel			
After the French Elections: What Next?	722	Evans, Les	
		Maoist Campaign Aimed at Army Command	545
Blackburn, John		Anti-Confucius Drive Hits at Rebel Youth	663
10,000 Protest British Aid to Chile Junta	649		
		Feeley, Dianne	
Blanco, Hugo		U.S., Iran Extending Indian Ocean Bases	200
Portuguese CP, Guardian of Capitalism	806	Washington Pushes Plans for Base in Indian Ocean	453
First Crisis of Portugal's Cabinet	1066		
Angola's White Racists Intensify Terrorist Action	1125	Felekis, Giannis	
		How Caramanlis's Cops Uphold "Law and Order"	1122
Bober, Arie			
The October War and Israel's Economic Crisis		Fidler, Dick	
Part 1	460	Students Mobilize Against Fontanet Law	409
Part 2	487	Gaullists Seek Heir to Pompidou	468
Part 3	523	Krivine Presses for Piaget as Far-Left Candidate	509
Part 4	556	Krivine Campaigns for Revolutionary Alternative	535
		Krivine Speaks for Socialism in Election	589
Boe, Jan Bjarne		How the Far Left Met Mitterrand's Candidacy	628
Trotsky's Exile in Norway	92	OCI Plumps for Mitterrand on Both Rounds	629
		"Lutte Ouvriere": From Indifference to Support	631
Burton, David		Krivine's Assessment: The "Allende of France"	633
"Darkest Recess of Political Power" (BR)	61	"Revolution": Mitterrand Offers Some Hope But Not Much	634
		Maoists Reject Him in Both Rounds as Stooge for Moscow	635
Chandra, Kailas		Pablo: Interests of PSU Come First	636
The Bombay General Strike	85	Campaign Posed Issue of Self-Determination in Antilles	657
CPI, Communist Party (Marxist) Argue Over Brezhnev Visit to India	116	In the Aftermath of Round Two	680
Civil Strife in Gujarat and Maharashtra	416	Portuguese CP Restrains Worker Upsurge	710
Set Up Antigovernment Front in Bombay	485	Economic Crisis Shakes Italian Capitalism	822
		Italian Coalition Agrees to Attack Living Standards	858
Chang, Kate		Trade, Arms Race Are Focus of Moscow Summit	883
Mao's Campaign to Criticize Confucius and Lin Piao	792	Why Liberals Won Canadian Election	971
		Cubans Test Electoral "Pilot Project" in Matanzas	978
Cleaver, Bob		The Antimilitarist Battle in France's Armed Forces	1068
Rightists Attack Irish Martyrs March in Britain	552	Ethiopian Army's "Creeping Coup" Overtakes Selassie	1117
		Mounting Fear That It's a Worldwide Recession	1157
Coates, Ken		OAS Members Move to End Cuba Sanctions	1167
Voices of the Soviet Opposition (BR)	669	Ethiopia's Military Shows Selassie to the Door	1187
		CIA Job on Allende Approved by Ford	1191
Cole, Jon		Chile Revelations a Big "Surprise" to U.S. Congressmen	1238
Ottawa's Mistreatment of Chilean Refugees	727	Ford Declares Economic War on Oil Countries	1268
		Oil-Producing Countries Tell Off Ford	1315
Colquhoun, John		Threat of World Slump Alarms "Business Week"	1441
From Stalinism to Trotskyism in New Zealand	1453	Pentagon Plots War in the Arab East	1510
		Millions Stop Work in French General Strike	1592
Conway, James		A "Recession" in the U.S.A. — And It's Getting Worse	1604
Irish Agriculture: Britain Calls the Shots	1595	Moscow OKs Pentagon Plan on Nuclear Arms Race	1641
		What Ceiling in the U.S.-Soviet Arms Accord?	1676
Coral, Juan Carlos			
Peron's Real Heirs	1173	Filoche, G.	
Peronist Regime Clamps Lid on Workers' Rights	1350	Antilles Trotskyists Hold Founding Congress	118
Davis, Ray			
Wilson Faces Wave of Wildcat Strikes	1556		

Foley, Gerry			
Peron Escalates Repression After Guerrilla Raid	99	New Communist "Offensive" in South Vietnam?	1202
Price Hike Sparks Explosion in Bolivia	131	Thieu Faces a New Opposition	1295
Peron Opens "Dogmatic Stage of Revolution"	227	Park and Tanaka Patch Up Quarrel	1360
Peron Backs Ultraright Coup in Cordoba	259	Reveal White House "Tilt" Toward South Africa	1391
Left Peronist Leaders Surrender to Cordoba Coup	291	Two Million in Rallies Against Ford Visit to Japan	1427
Right-Wing Offensive Continues in Argentina	325	Growing Clamor to Get Rid of Thieu	1464
How Should Argentine Workers Fight Rightist Offensive?	376	South Korea Opposition to Park Steps Up Protests	1512
Uruguayan Trotskyists Active in Underground	479	Israeli Workers Protest Huge Price Hikes	1541
A New Pattern of Workers Struggles in Argentina?	499	Behind the U. S. Buildup on Diego Garcia	1549
Why Washington Is Relaxing Ban on Sales to Cuba	541	Palestinian Protests Sweep Occupied West Bank	1594
May 1 — The Celebration in Lisbon	611	Genoveva Forest Tortured by Franco's Police	1639
Portuguese Postal Workers Demand Free Unions	613	Banzer Sets Up "New Order" in Bolivia	1682
Lisbon March Supports Newspaper Strike	645	American Intellectuals Protest Terror in Iran	1700
Stalinists Back Warnings of Portuguese Junta	646		
African Students Seize Colonial Agency in Lisbon	675	Hamilton, Phyllis	
Meeting Discusses Future of Portuguese Revolution	759	British Trade-Union Bureaucrats Adopt Belly-Crawling Election Plan (with Patricia Fryd)	1248
Spinola Moving Toward Crackdown on Left	803		
Lisbon Patriotic March Draws Little Support	807	Hansen, Joseph	
Portuguese Junta Institutes Press Censorship	851	In Tribute to Jim Cannon	1109
After Peron, What Next for Argentine Bourgeoisie?	931	Should Federal Troops Be Used in Boston?	1562
Behind Fall of Portugal's Provisional Government	963		
Behind War Moves in Eastern Mediterranean	1011	Harding, Ted	
Greek Masses Rejoice Over Collapse of Junta	1061	Rumanian Regime Plans Chile Investment	120
The Developing Upsurge in Greece	1205		
Behind the Resignation of General Spinola	1267	Harris, Alan	
What the Reformist Left Saw in Spinola	1288	Why Troops Surrounded London Airport	113
Portuguese Masses Move Against Attempted Coup	1318		
Behind the Ultrarightist Attempt at a Comeback	1330	Harsch, Ernest	
Argentine Rightists Attack Key Cordoba Union	1347	"The Gulag Archipelago" (BR)	8
Revolts of Irish Political Prisoners Touched Off		Energy Crisis: More Profits for the Oil Giants	35
Widespread Solidarity Actions	1382	U. S. Imperialism and the World Energy Crisis	78
Goncalves Calls for Belt Tightening	1392	Oil Giants Press Attack on Pollution Restrictions	108
A Note on Careers of Bejar and Blanco	1433	Oil Profits and the Tax Game	141
Argentine Death Squads Slay Three Trotskyists	1459	Nationwide Protest Strike in Bangladesh	183
Portuguese General Tells Inside Story of Putsch	1481	Tokyo Responds to the Energy Crisis	208
Police Raid Buenos Aires Headquarters of PST	1507	Washington Orders "Allies" Back Into Line	232
The Two Greek CPs Set Up an Electoral Bloc	1520	Army Rebellion Ousts Ethiopian Cabinet	271
Right-Wing Peronists Step Up Witch-Hunt	1542	Mass Upsurge Continues as Selassie Retreats	295
Background to Trotsky's Letter on Tactics in		Strikes, Protests Continue to Rock Ethiopian Regime	323
Fighting Fascists	1630	Ethiopian Famine Spreading Through South	373
Witch-Hunt in Britain Against the Irish	1635	The Looting of Nigeria's Oil Wealth	444
Bonn's "Antiterrorist Campaign"	1667	U. S. Senate Hearings: Oil Companies Created Shortage	473
How to Defend Irish People Against Wilson's Witch-Hunt	1670	Smith Steps Up War Against Zimbabwe Guerrillas	518
		African Rebels Repeat Demand for Independence	581
Foroughi, Parviz		Lisbon Threatens to Step Up African Wars	615
Iranian Students Association Expels 30	1065	Time Running Out on Portuguese in African Colonies	647
		Lisbon Presses Talks With African Rebels	713
Frank, Pierre		Frelimo Rejects Cease-Fire Proposal	762
French Bourgeoisie Divided in Response to Social Crisis	559	Japanese Imperialism Today: Still Within	
Economic Issues Dominate French Election	587	Washington's Orbit (BR)	794
The End of Gaullism and Rise of the Masses	776	The Stakes in Angola: Iron, Diamonds, Oil	853
		Guinea Rebels Halt Talks With Lisbon	898
Fryd, Patricia		Ethiopian Rebel Troops Arrest Government Officials	937
The Stakes in the British Miners' Strike	246	Revolutionaries in Mao's Prisons (BR)	955
Dublin's Escalating Attacks on IRA	447	Anyone Can Join the "Nuclear Club" — I	1035
Protest Mounts in Britain Against Abuse of Irish		A New Leap in the Nuclear Armaments Race — II	1094
Prisoners	506	Everybody Knows Rockefeller, But Who, the	
Irish Prisoners in Britain Near Death	719	Hell Is Ford?	1115
British Trade-Union Bureaucrats Adopt Belly-Crawling		Guinea-Bissau Gains Independence	1162
Election Plan (with Phyllis Hamilton)	1248	Frelimo Agrees to Coalition Regime	1244
Since the Concentration Camp Rebellions in Northern		Where UN Goes Wrong on "Population Explosion"	1254
Ireland	1516	How to Make a Fast Buck Out of Starving Children	1324
		"Chile's Days of Terror" (BR)	1366
Fyson, George		"The American Radical Press, 1880-1960" (BR)	1412
New Zealand Unions in Massive Protests	1019	Millions in India Threatened by Famine	1478
Wide Support for New Zealand Abortion Clinic	1362	The New Famine: Made in the USA	
		Rise of Hunger Around the Globe — I	1587
Gearhart, Lee		Grasping Tentacles of American Agribusiness — II	1647
Defendants Win in Wounded Knee Trial	1282	Why They Slashed the Production of Food — III	1683
		Food Conference: No Relief to the Hungry	1591
Green, Peter		12,000 Political Prisoners Rot in Mujib's Jails	1642
China's Big-Character Wall Posters	1071	Behind Tanaka's Downfall	1643
South Korea's Park Steps Up Political Witch-Hunt	1119	More Ethiopian Troops Sent into Eritrea	1674

Herrera, Irving		
The French CP's Weekend Carnival	1488	
Hillson, Jon		
Why U. S. Maoists Fail to Form "New Communist Party"	212	
Hodges, Tony		
Subject of U. S.-Portuguese Talks Is Arms, Oil	17	
Heath Pushes Confrontation With British Workers	71	
Heath Aims Shrewsbury "Precedent" at Miners	134	
Lisbon Weighs "Africanizing" Colonial Wars	337	
Wilson's Strategy for Wage Restraints	690	
British Unions Oppose Arms for Chilean Junta	721	
Student Anti-Racist Demonstrator Killed in London	825	
London March for Freedom of Portuguese Colonies	857	
Rallies Protest Police Murder of Kevin Gately (with David Dillon)	890	
Rank-and-File Labour Conference Meets	894	
Gately Inquest Whitewashes Police	1121	
What the British Elections Revealed	1379	
Wilson Pushes "Austerity" for Workers	1474	
Wilson's 21-Gun Salute to South African Racists	1477	
Protest Mounts Over Wilson's South Africa Moves	1546	
"Bomb" Smear Denounced by IMG	1552	
Wilson's Budget Gives Profits Top Priority	1599	
Labour Abandons Victimized Building Workers (with Robin Hunter)	1601	
Hunter, Robin		
10,000 in London Voice Solidarity With Victims of Repression in Chile	1236	
4,000 March in London for Troops Out of Ireland	1465	
Labour Abandons Victimized Building Workers (with Tony Hodges)	1601	
Hussey, Mattie		
Scottish Labour Party Votes for Nationalist Assembly	1325	
Ilnytkyj, Oleh		
The Opposition Movement in Ukraine	702	
Jhaveri, Sharad		
Unrest Throughout India Over Skyrocketing Prices	458	
Indian Railway Workers Set General Strike	593	
Widespread Support for Indian Rail Strike	620	
Toward a Regroupment of Indian Political Parties?	627	
Stalinists Discern "Change" in Gandhi	725	
Divided Leadership Weakened Indian Rail Strike	766	
Gandhi Continues Antilabor Offensive	974	
Bhutto Lowers Iron Curtain on Baluchistan	1210	
Naxalite Suspects Tortured in Calcutta	1256	
Hot Debate in India Over CIA's Covert Activities	1321	
Bhutto Launches Military Offensive in Baluchistan	1355	
Gandhi's Forgotten Political Prisoners	1363	
Bihar Paralyzed by Three-Day General Strike	1386	
What Perspective for the Dalit Panthers?	1411	
New Right-Wing Party Formed in India	1463	
Roots of the Struggle in Bihar	1598	
Report on Prison Conditions Shocks Public	1678	
Johnson, George		
Kim Il Sung's Thoughts on "Reunifying" Fire and Water (BR)	744	
Jones, Alan		
Economic Impasse of British Imperialism	1085	
Karim, Fazlur		
Government Attack Destroyed Philippine City (with Jim Stentzel)	236	
Klarnat, Olaf		
Behind the August Strikes in the Baltic Ports of Poland	1558	
Klein, Anne		
Soviet Bureaucrats in Canada Circulate Slander of Moroz (with George Saunders)	726	
Kofteros, S.		
In Reply to the Soft Soap of the Greek Press	1278	
Krivine, Alain		
French Reformist Parties Jockey for Position	1609	
Labeau, Eddy		
For a Working-Class Vote in Belgian Elections	312	
How Reformists Saved Belgian Monarchy	346	
Loew, Raimund		
Swing to Left in Austrian Student Elections	269	
Lyons, Brian		
Reactionary Strike in Northern Ireland Poses Threat of Pogroms	718	
"War and an Irish Town" (BR)	1215	
MacDonald, Oliver		
Some Lessons for the Left in British Elections	333	
Maitan, Livio		
Recession in Italy Now in Full Swing	1688	
Mandel, Ernest		
The Common Market in Crisis	907	
Solzhenitsyn's Assault on Stalinism . . . and on October Revolution (BR)	1051	
The Crisis in the Automobile Industry	1406	
An Arab and Iranian Finance Capital Emerges For Belgium, Too, No Escape From Recession	1437	
Marshall, John		
Six Key Questions Facing British Workers	335	
Mason, Claudia		
New Zealand Prisoners Strike for Basic Human Rights	1212	
McIlroy, Jim		
What Is Behind "New Australian Nationalism"?	625	
Why Public Transport Is Falling Apart	1570	
Medvedev, Roy		
Review of "The Gulag Archipelago"	358	
Debate With Panin, Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn, and Others	1499	
Problems of Democratization and Detente	1657	
Meins, Holger		
"A Red Stomach Tube Is Used"	1709	
Miah, Malik		
Bangladesh's Mujib—Up to the Chin in Latest Flood	1211	
Minnerup, Gunter		
German Trotskyist Congress Plans Expanded Work	452	
Moreno, Nahuel		
Interviews With Peron	988	
Mulrennan, Brigid		
New Zealand Campaign for Victims of Repression in Chile	16	
Myers, Allen		
Nixon Sets New Confrontation Over Watergate Tapes	11	
Nixon Hit by Bribery, Spying, Blackmail Scandals	51	
Accumulating Evidence Keeps Pointing to Nixon	81	
Reluctant Congress Weighing Impeachment Vote	110	
"One Year of Watergate" Was Only a Beginning	138	
		1869

New Holes in "Narrowing Nixon Defense Perimeter"	171	Roberts, John P.	
White House Tapes Winding Tighter Around Nixon	204	Miners, Tories Prepare for Showdown	133
Pursuing Nixon in Print: Books on Watergate (BR)	221		
Election Upset Shows Depth of Watergate Effects	242	Rodite, Aughi	
Investigations Drawing Closer to Nixon	277	What Greek Students' Goals Should Be	1281
Solzhenitsyn's Letter to Kremlin Bureaucrats	297		
Nixon Trying to Curtail Impeachment Hearings	316	Romero, Antonio	
Nixon's "Confrontation" With Impeachment Committee	330	How Workers Defeated Spinola's Attempted Coup	1394
Healyites Fail Acid Test of Watergate	348	Danger of Illusions in the Portuguese Army	1396
White House Said to Expect Nixon's Impeachment	371	How High-School Students Joined in Struggle	
Congress Sees Impeachment as "Near Certainty"	435	Against Portuguese Dictatorship	1483
Impeachment Bill May Include Tax Fraud, Contempt	471		
Bizarre Twists in Patricia Hearst Kidnapping	511	Rose, Andy	
What Portuguese Junta Plans for African Colonies	531	U. S. Right-Wingers Attempt to Revive Witch-Hunt	403
Nixon's Gamble With White House Transcripts	582		
Transcripts Spur Moves to Dump Nixon	616	Rotherham, Peter	
Why Nixon Defies Watergate Subpoenas	678	New Zealand Capitalists Join in Plunder of Fiji	276
Colson's Guilty Plea Shakes Nixon Gang	770		
Why Kissinger Threatened to Resign	820	Rothschild, Jon	
Congress Inches Closer to Vote on Impeachment	888	Haggle in Secret at Middle East "Peace Conference"	3
"Monthly Review" Editors Make a Discovery	949	Meir's Labor Party Retains Control of Government	
Committee Reports Pile Up Evidence Against Nixon	968	After Elections	42
The Impeachment Vote: Will Nixon Be (Deleted)?	1059	Disengagement Accord—A Betrayal of Arab Masses	67
		Rousset, Pierre	
Namvar, Majid		What the Vote Totals Revealed in French Election	656
Shah's Firing Squads Claim Eight Victims	239		
Iranian Students Protest Executions	345	Salby, Sol	
Shah Spills More Blood in Face of Rising Unrest	1194	Australian Election Showed Increasing Polarization	729
Shah Purges Iranian Press	1436	Niugini's Independence Postponed Until 1975	1078
Shah of Iran Stung by "Newsweek" Charges	1469	Whitlam Prescribes Strong Dose of Wage Controls	1602
		Sanders, Scott	
Nanhaya, Antero		Background to Portuguese Army Officers' Revolt	450
Marcos Still Unable to Achieve "Stability"	275	Lisbon Crowds Demand Release of Cuban	709
		Saunders, George	
Nizoz, David		Soviet Bureaucrats in Canada Circulate Slander of	
Capitalists Prepare Niugini for "Independence"	520	Moroz (with Anne Klein)	726
		Litvinov Describes "Spectrum" of Views	735
Novack, George		Sheppard, Barry	
Detente and Democratization Viewed From Within		The Political Evolution of Angela Atwood	737
the United States	1692		
		Simms, Robert	
Oliver, Norman		The Canadian Boom Ends	1400
Argentine Trotskyists Hold Special Congress	48		
		Smith, Baxter	
Paz, Nestor		Memos Show FBI Plot Against Black Movement	332
Peruvian Government Decries Torture	1197		
		Smith, Elizabeth	
Percy, Jim		British Workers' Struggles Defy "Social Contract"	689
CP's Opportunist Role in Australian Election	791		
		Stentzel, Jim	
Poulin, Richard		Government Attack Destroyed Philippine City	
Bomb Explodes in Hands of Canadian Police		(with Fazlur Karim)	236
Provocateur (with Art Young)	1213		
		Sze Nei	
Purdie, Bob		Hong Kong Rally Hits Skyrocketing Prices	725
Ireland: How Close to Victory?	549		
		Th.	
Ramos, Ricardo		What Chances for Papandreou's New Party?	1422
A New Mexican Party, the PMT	1553		
		Thomas, Tony	
Rasmussen, Hans-Erik		Inflation Spurs Martinique Labor Upsurge	261
Who Controls North Atlantic Fishing? (BR)	671		
		Thompson, Bob	
Ring, Harry		The Repression in Yugoslavia Today	784
Was Slain SLA Leader a Police Informer?	781		
		Timmerman, Frans	
Roberts, Dick		Australian Student Organization Supports Palestinians	170
The Next Phase in U. S. Foreign Policy (BR)	525		
Detente: Why Both Sides See It as Good Business	600	Trotsky, Leon	
The SALT Talks—A Cover for Nuclear Arms Race	740	The Danger of Ultraleft Tactics in Fighting Fascists	1629
Role of Moscow and Peking in Vietnam Accords	862		
The "Explosive Inflation" They Failed to Foresee— I	1028		
The Ripening Conditions for Worldwide Depression— II	1081		
The Real U. S. Plan— Keep Oil Prices High	1680		

Vogt, Marilyn	
"Report From the Beria Reserve," by Valentyn Moroz (BR)	1127
Wall, Gunnar	
Swedish Maoists Shelve Defense of Vietnam	1198
Warden, Ray	
How Canada's Secret Police Operate	422
Canadian Police Grill Chilean Refugees	537
Where NDP Leaders Went Wrong in Parliament	785
Warschawski, Michel	
Who Will Benefit From a Palestinian Ministate?	736
Warshell, Steven	
High Political Score for U. S. Children	1573
Wechsler, Max	
Protests Greet Shah of Iran on Australian Tour	1359
Weinstock, Nathan	
The Palestinian Movement and the Geneva Negotiations	168

White, Judy	
Chilean Junta Opens Show Trial	504
Catholic Bishops Accuse Chilean Junta of Torture	539
Balaguer Reelected After Opposition Withdraws	652
Peronist Youth Taken Aback by May Day Paddling	684
Right-Wing Thugs Murder 3 Argentine Trotskyists	707
Thousands Attend Funeral of Slain Argentine Trotskyists	755
Peron Urges Campaign Against "Traitors"	814
Argentine Workers Press Strike Struggles	887
Upsurge of Labor Struggles in Barcelona	1064
First Year Under Chile's Iron Heel	1114
Right-Wing Terror Escalates in Argentina	1169
Protests Against Chile Junta Around the World	1235
Thousands in Chile Still Behind Bars	1275
Spanish Auto Workers Press Demands	1389
New Documentation on Reign of Torture in Brazil	1519
Wu Shun-sin	
Inflation, Unemployment Rise in Hong Kong	765
Young, Art	
Bomb Explodes in Hands of Canadian Police Provocateur (with Richard Poulin)	1213

Countries

Africa	
Spinola Offers New Chains to Colonies — by Tony Hodges	1163
Sao Tome, Principe to Gain Independence from Portugal	1329
Angola	
African Rebels Repeat Demand for Independence — by Ernest Harsch	581
Lisbon Threatens to Step Up African Wars — by Ernest Harsch	615
Time Running Out on Portuguese in African Colonies — by Ernest Harsch	647
Lisbon Presses Talks With African Rebels — by Ernest Harsch	713
The Stakes: Iron, Diamonds, Oil — by Ernest Harsch	853
White Racists Intensify Terrorist Action — by Hugo Blanco	1125
100 Persons Killed in Clashes	1540
Antilles	
Trotskyists Hold Founding Congress — by G. Filoche	118
Workers Mobilization	182
Campaign Posed Issue of Self-Determination — by Dick Fidler	657
GRS View of Left Unity in Martinique — by Edouard Delepine	1504
Arab East	
Haggle in Secret at Middle East "Peace Conference" — by Jon Rothschild	3
Israel After the October War (Interview With Israeli Trotskyist)	5
Arab Trotskyists Assaulted at Beirut Demonstration	6
Joint Statement of Israeli and Arab Revolutionists	31
Washington Threatens Military Action Against Arab-Persian Gulf States	37

Disengagement Accord — A Betrayal of Arab Masses — by Jon Rothschild	67
Egyptian and Israeli Armies Begin "Disengagement"	167
The Palestinian Movement and the Geneva Negotiations — by Nathan Weinstock	168
Australian Student Organization Supports Palestinians — by Frans Timmerman	170
Lebanese Trotskyists Denounce Plans to Liquidate Palestinian Cause	186
Israeli Terrorists Bomb Palestinian Camps — by Michael Baumann	643
Israeli Terror Bombings Claim New Victims — by Michael Baumann	677
London March Supports Palestinians	683
Palestinians Lose in Syria-Israeli Accord — by Michael Baumann	715
Who Will Benefit From a Palestinian Ministate? — by Michael Warschawski	736
Palestine National Council Meets	775
Palestinian Group Approves Geneva Talks	817
Nixon-Kissinger Road-Show Draws Large Crowds — by Michael Baumann	818
Program of Palestine National Council	840
Israelis Escalate Terrorist Bombing Raids Against Lebanon — by Michael Baumann	856
Zionists Threaten Invasion of Lebanon — by Michael Baumann	886
Sadat Says Israel Has Tactical Nuclear Weapons	900
Cairo Jails 8 Palestinians Released by Sudan	900
Clampdown on Palestinians in Lebanon — by Michael Baumann	936
Israeli Commandos Raid Lebanese Coast	965
Maalot Inquiry Points Finger at Dayan	965
Protest Demands Release of Jailed Arabs	966
Zionists Deliberately Leveled Quneitra	967
End Oil Embargo on Netherlands	977
Lebanon Curbs Right to Bear Arms	1253
An Arab and Iranian Finance Capital Emerges — by Ernest Mandel	1437

Arab Summit Meeting Endorses PLO—by Michael Baumann	1466	"Shooting Irons" Not the Dividing Line Since the Death of Peron	1230 1241
Pentagon Plots War—by Dick Fidler	1510	"Avanzada Socialista" Analyzes Turn of Montoneros	1260
Mounting Talk of War—by Michael Baumann	1539	3,000 at Chile Rally in Buenos Aires	1273
Palestinian Protests Sweep Occupied West Bank — by Peter Green	1594	Silvio Frondizi Assassinated	1287
		Police Attack Frondizi Funeral	1328
		Expanding Cuban-Argentine Trade	1328
		Isabel Signs New "Antisubversive" Bill	1329
		Big Struggles on the Agenda	1342
Argentina		Rightists Attack Key Cordoba Union—by Gerry Foley	1347
Trotskyists Hold Special Congress—by Norman Oliver	48	Police, Right-Wing Gangs Attack PST	1347
Peron Escalates Repression After Guerrilla Raid — by Gerry Foley	99	Peronist Regime Clamps Lid on Workers' Rights — by Juan Carlos Coral	1350
PST Position on Peron's Repressive Laws	127	Balance Sheet on "Multisectoral"	1419
Cordoba Workers Punch Hole in "Social Pact"	143	PST Statement at the "Multisectoral"	1421
How Guerrilla Raid Was Used by Peronist Regime	188	They Opened Up With Machine Guns	1428
Peron Opens "Dogmatic Stage of Revolution" — by Gerry Foley	227	Police Raid on PST's Cordoba Local	1429
Peron Backs Ultraright Coup in Cordoba — by Gerry Foley	259	Death Squads Slay Three Trotskyists—by Gerry Foley	1459
Latin American Guerrillas Form Joint Committee	283	Ultraright Terrorists—a New Threat (interview with Nahuel Moreno)	1461
Left Peronist Leaders Surrender to Cordoba Coup — by Gerry Foley	291	Police Raid Buenos Aires Headquarters of PST — by Gerry Foley	1507
Canada, Argentina Plan Trade With Cuba	313	Right-Wing Peronists Step Up Witch-Hunt — by Gerry Foley	1542
Right-Wing Offensive Continues—by Gerry Foley	325	Body of Eva Peron Returned to Buenos Aires	1575
How Should Workers Fight Rightist Offensive? — by Gerry Foley	376	Peronist Regime Steps Up Attacks on Alleged Leftist Guerrilla Groups	1638
Opening Days of Cordoba Coup	380	Peronist Regime Demands New Powers	1675
PRT's Position on Fourth International Correction	427 436		
Peronist Regime Bans Contraceptives	440	Asia	
Did Peron's Police Kill Nancy Magliano?	444	U. S., Iran Extending Indian Ocean Bases — by Dianne Feeley	200
Peronists Jail Prominent Trotskyist	480	Washington Pushes Plans for Base in Indian Ocean — by Dianne Feeley	453
A New Pattern of Workers Struggles?—by Gerry Foley	499		
Coral Faces Peron in Defense of Strikers	501	Australia	
PST Mendoza Office Destroyed in Attack	502	Student Organization Supports Palestinians — by Frans Timmerman	170
Press Under Attack	517	Victoria Right-Wingers Expel Socialists From Young Labor Association—by Jamie Doughney	310
Metalworkers Press Fight for Democracy	544	Capitalists Prepare Niugini for "Independence" — by David Nizoz	520
Rally Demands Release of Luis Vitale	596	Vote Labor but Fight for Socialist Policies	570
Coral Confronts Peron With Five Demands	606	What Is Behind "New Australian Nationalism"? — by Jim McIlroy	625
Argentina Gets Soviet Loan	623	Election Showed Increasing Polarization—by Sol Salby	729
Class-Struggle Slate Wins Union Election	642	CP's Opportunist Role in Election—by Jim Percy	791
PST Member Assassinated	653	Four-Year Ban Lifted on Ernest Mandel	1186
Lechin Arrested	661	Demonstrations Protest Arrest of Malaysian Student	1285
Peronist Youth Taken Aback by May Day Paddling — by Judy White	684	Charge CIA Funded Opposition to Labor	1287
A Year of Attacks on Working Class	686	Thousands Hear Mandel—by Jamie Doughney	1323
1,000 Join Fernandez Funeral March	686	Protests Greet Shah of Iran on Tour—by Max Wechsler	1359
Right-Wing Thugs Murder 3 Trotskyists — by Judy White	707	Unions Protest Antilabor Bill	1385
Report Arrest of 50 ERP Members	730	Socialists Gain in Fight Against Expulsion from Young Labor Association	1514
May Day Manifesto of PST	746	Why Public Transport Is Falling Apart—by Jim McIlroy	1570
Thousands Attend Funeral of Slain Trotskyist — by Judy White	755	Whitlam Prescribes Strong Dose of Wage Controls — by Sol Salby	1602
ERP to Donate Funds	774	Blacks Protest in Canberra	1603
Peron Urges Campaign Against "Traitors" — by Judy White	814	Record Year for Strikes	1651
Workers Press Strike Struggles—by Judy White	887		
After Peron, What Next for Bourgeoisie? — by Gerry Foley	931	Austria	
Rightists Continue Attacks on PST	934	Swing to Left in Student Elections—by Raimund Loew	269
No PST Signature on Statement Handed to Peron	960	Nixon Met by Demonstrators in Salzburg	861
Peronism's Thirty-Year Career	984		
Why Workers Need Their Own Party	986	Bahamas	
Interviews With Peron—by Nahuel Moreno	988	Cuba and the Bahamas Set Up Diplomatic Ties	1699
Coral Tells of Dialogue With Peron in Madrid	989		
"Institutionalization" and Rightist Threat	1004	Bangladesh	
Bonus Won't Compensate for Inflation	1022	Nationwide Protest Strike—by Ernest Harsch	183
28 PST Members Seized by Police	1058	Rahman Gets New Laws Against Opposition	237
Whither the PST?	1145	Press, Lawyers Hit Special Powers Act	274
In Defense of the PST and the Truth Correction	1147 1280	Pakistani Regime Recognizes Bangladesh	274
Right-Wing Terror Escalates—by Judy White	1169	Postal Workers Score Victory	322
Veteran Trotskyist Dies (Rita Moreno)	1170		
Peron's Real Heirs—by Juan Carlos Coral	1173		

Police Fire on Demonstration	415	Students Demonstrate for Improved Grants	198
Farm Committee to Defend Civil Liberties	459	The Stakes in the Miners' Strike—by Patricia Fryd	246
Dacca to Release Pakistanis Held Since Independence War	516	Voters Reject Tory Wage Freeze	265
100,000 Attend Dacca Opposition Rally	594	Wilson's "Great New Social Contract"	266
Prisoners on Hunger Strike	696	IMG Campaign Scores Encouraging Gains	
Mujib—Up to the Chin in Latest Flood—by Malik Miah	1211	—by Michael Baumann	314
Dacca Forced by U. S. to Halt Cuban Trade	1328	Some Lessons for the Left in Elections	
Ravaged by Hunger	1430	—by Oliver MacDonald	333
Famine Victims Locked Up in Camps	1458	Six Key Questions Facing Workers—by John Marshall	335
Has Bangladesh a Future?—by Ibne Azad	1470	Wilson Trying to Enforce Tory Rent Rise	385
Thousands Die in Famine	1548	What Ruling Class Expects From Wilson	386
12,000 Political Prisoners Rot in Mujib's Jails		Workers and the Labour Party (Interview With a Scottish Miner)	390
—by Ernest Harsch	1642	Labour Party Upholds Tory Wage Controls	407
Belgium		South Africa Strike Highlights Role of British Companies	446
For a Working-Class Vote in Elections		Protest Mounts Against Abuse of Irish Prisoners	
—by Eddy Labeau	312	—by Patricia Fryd	506
How Reformists Saved Monarchy—by Eddy Labeau	346	Petition for Irish Prisoners in Britain	508
Contradictory Results in Elections	411	British CP Defends the Hungarian Family	521
For Belgium, Too, No Escape From Recession		Students Fight Victimizations	551
—by Ernest Mandel	1475	Rightists Attack Irish Martyrs March—by Bob Cleaver	552
Bhutan		Report Recommends Easier Abortion	624
Charge Plot Against King	730	10,000 Protest Aid to Chile Junta—by John Blackburn	649
Bolivia		500 Attend Revolutionary Student Rally	650
Price Hike Sparks Explosion—by Gerry Foley	131	London March Supports Palestinians	683
100 Reported Killed in Cochabamba Uprising		Workers' Struggles Defy "Social Contract"	
—by Candida Barberena	177	—by Elizabeth Smith	689
Latin American Guerrillas Form Joint Committee	283	Wilson's Strategy for Wage Restraints	
Tribunal Finds 4 Latin American Juntas Guilty of "Crimes Against Humanity"	492	—by Tony Hodges	690
Elections Canceled	555	Irish Prisoners Near Death—by Patricia Fryd	719
Lechin Arrested in Argentina	661	Unions Oppose Arms for Chilean Junta	
Coup Attempt Fails	774	—by Tony Hodges	721
Banzer Picks All-Military Cabinet	977	Paper Exposes SAVAK Agent in London	768
Banzer Sets Up "New Order"—by Peter Green	1682	Price Sisters End Hunger Strike	773
Brazil		Student Anti-Racist Demonstrator Killed	
Amnesty International Campaign Against Torture and Killings	96	—by Tony Hodges	825
Mass Movements Begin to Revive	441	March for Freedom of Portuguese Colonies	
Tribunal Finds 4 Latin American Juntas Guilty of "Crimes Against Humanity"	492	—by Tony Hodges	857
What Is Different About Geisel's Regime?	503	Rallies Protest Police Murder of Kevin Gately	
Student Disappears in Police Custody	595	—by Tony Hodges and David Dillon	890
Political Prisons Reported Filled by New Arrests	622	Rank-and-File Labour Conference Meets	
Committee to Defend Political Prisoners	671	—by Tony Hodges	894
Lawyers Protest Violations of Human Rights	696	Manx Nationalist Party Registers Growth	1025
Geisel Tightens Up on Critics	769	London Ends Force-Feeding of Political Prisoners	1027
Report New Arrests	865	Economic Impasse of British Imperialism	
Trotskyists Publish Clandestine Paper	1462	—by Alan Jones	1085
New Documentation on Reign of Torture		Gately Inquest Whitewashes Police—by Tony Hodges	1121
—by Judy White	1519	10,000 in London Voice Solidarity with Victims of Repression in Chile—by Robin Hunter	1236
U. S. Journalist Tortured	1596	Bureaucrats Adopt Belly-Crawling Election Plan	
Britain		—by Phyllis Hamilton and Patricia Fryd	1248
A General Strike to Bring Down the Tory Government	29	Scottish Labour Party Votes for Nationalist Assembly—by Mattie Hussey	1325
Heath Pushes Confrontation With Workers		Labour Wins Narrow Majority in General Election	1353
—by Tony Hodges	71	What the Elections Revealed—by Tony Hodges	1379
Seven Chileans Face Ouster From Britain	84	4,000 March in London for Troops Out of Ireland	
Why Troops Surrounded London Airport—by Alan Harris	113	—by Robin Hunter	1465
On the Social Crisis in Britain (Statement of the Fourth International)	124	Wilson Pushes "Austerity" for Workers	
Miners, Tories Prepare for Showdown		—by Tony Hodges	1474
—by John P. Roberts	133	Wilson's 21-Gun Salute to South African Racists	
Heath Aims Shrewsbury "Precedent" at Miners		—by Tony Hodges	1477
—by Tony Hodges	134	Since the Concentration Camp Rebellions in Northern Ireland—by Patricia Fryd	1516
London Protest Defends Belfast Nine	136	Britain's Tiger Cages	1545
Polish Regime Shows Solidarity—With Tories	137	Protest Mounts Over Wilson's South Africa Moves	
Russell Foundation Sponsors Probe of Military Juntas in Latin America	145	—by Tony Hodges	1546
Heath Tries Red-Scare to Maintain Wage Controls	163	"Bomb" Smear Denounced by IMG—by Tony Hodges	1552
		Wilson Faces Wave of Wildcat Strikes—by Ray Davis	1556
		Anti-Irish Hysteria Over Birmingham Bombings	1586
		Wilson's Budget Gives Profits Top Priority	
		—by Tony Hodges	1599
		Labour Abandons Victimized Workers	
		—by Robin Hunter and Tony Hodges	1601

Witch-Hunt Against the Irish—by Gerry Foley	1635	Latin American Guerrillas Form Joint Committee	283
How to Defend Irish People Against Wilson's Witch-Hunt—by Gerry Foley	1670	Thousands in Paris March Against Chilean Junta	308
Iranian Students in London Protest Torture Under Shah	1679	Dublin to Admit Some Refugees From Chile	340
Cambodia (Also see Indochina War)		Pinochet Admits Planning Coup in 1972	382
U. S. "Advisers" in Fighting	424	U. S. Companies Enthusiastic Over Junta	383
Pnompenh Students Demonstrate	731	General, Ex-Minister Die in Junta's Prisons	383
Pnompenh Police Attack Student Protest	767	World Capitalists Eye Profits	438
U. S. Advisers Select Targets for Bombing Raids	1646	— by Jean-Pierre Beauvais	438
Canada		Thousands in U. S., Canada Hear Edelstam	478
Revolutionist Defeats Witch-Hunt in NDP	234	Supporters of Chilean Revolutionists Hold National Conference in France	492
Canada, Argentina Plan Trade With Cuba	313	Tribunal Finds 4 Latin American Juntas Guilty of "Crimes Against Humanity"	492
Cuba to Buy Locomotives	384	Junta Opens Show Trial—by Judy White	504
How Secret Police Operate—by Ray Warden	422	Canadian Police Grill Chilean Refugees	537
Tribunal Indicts Abortion Law	438	— by Ray Warden	537
Thousands in U. S., Canada Hear Edelstam	478	Ask Right of Asylum for Chilean Refugees in Peru	538
Police Grill Chilean Refugees—by Ray Warden	537	Catholic Bishops Accuse Junta of Torture	539
Inflation Sparks Labor Militancy	586	— by Judy White	539
Inflation Issue Defeats Trudeau Government	662	MIR Leader Discusses Resistance Strategy	574
Court Overturns Acquittal of Morgentaler	662	Lawyer Barred From Frame-Up Trial	595
Soviet Bureaucrats Circulate Slander of Moroz		Rally in Argentina Demands Release of Luis Vitale	596
— by Anne Klein and George Saunders	726	Junta Gets Loan of \$97 Million	597
Ottawa's Mistreatment of Chilean Refugees		The Workers Movement Under the Junta (Interview With a Labor Leader)	604
— by Jon Cole	727	Junta Hands Down More Death Sentences	621
Where NDP Leaders Went Wrong in Parliament		— by Judy White	621
— by Ray Warden	785	Exodus of Scientists	623
Socialists Present Candidates in Election	832	10,000 Protest British Aid to Junta	649
For an NDP Government With Socialist Policies	836	— by John Blackburn	649
Morgentaler to Be Sentenced July 10	861	Runaway Inflation Eats Into Living Standards	651
Program of LSA in Election	875	Churches, Jurists Accuse Junta of Torture	651
Program of RMG in Election	878	U. S. Rallies Demand: No Aid to Junta	655
Ottawa Blocks Entry of Chilean Refugees	885	Observer Describes Santiago Show Trial	687
Why Liberals Won Federal Election—by Dick Fidler	971	Swiss Journalist Describes His Arrest and Torture	698
Morgentaler Sentenced	1077	British Unions Oppose Arms for Junta	721
Bomb Explodes in Hands of Police Provocateur		— by Tony Hodges	721
— by Richard Poulin and Art Young	1213	Ottawa's Mistreatment of Chilean Refugees	727
Ojibways Dramatize Claim to Stolen Land		— by Jon Cole	727
— by Ned Dmytryshyn	1284	Report Describes Brutal Tortures in Prisons	758
The Boom Ends—by Robert Simms	1400	Unidad Popular Leaders on Trial	833
Ottawa Moves to Deport 1,500 Haitians	1513	The Situation Today (Interview With a Foreign Resident)	866
Unions Denounce Ottawa's Chile Policy	1514	Ottawa Blocks Entry of Chilean Refugees	885
Haitian Immigrants Face Deportation as Ottawa Rejects Appeals for Asylum	1614	Pinochet Becomes Chief of State	897
40,000 Montreal Workers March Against Inflation	1640	Pinochet Hands Over 150 Companies	901
Haitians Fighting Deportation Win Wide Support in Quebec	1699	Appeal by Chilean Union Federation	928
Chad		Prisoners Sentenced	943
Hundreds of Thousands Dead in African Famine	272	Paris Training Chilean Military	976
Chile		MIR Leader Interviewed by "Le Monde"	994
New Zealand Campaign for Victims of Repression in Chile—by Brigid Mulrennan	16	"Perspective" Reviews "Disaster in Chile"	1008
Chile After the Coup d'Etat—by Jean-Pierre Beauvais	19	No Improvement Seen in Economy	1023
Since the Junta Came to Power (Interview with Two Exiles)	45	Hearings Begin for Corvalan, UP Officials	1024
Demand Ireland Be Opened to Victims of Chile Repression	46	Junta Pays Off Anaconda	1076
Seven Chileans Face Ouster From Britain	84	First Year Under the Iron Heel—by Judy White	1114
Santiago Snipers Shoot at Refugees in Embassies		CIA Admits Role in Overthrowing Allende	1155
— by Candida Barberena	86	— by Michael Baumann	1155
Pot-Banging and Strike Actions Reported	103	CIA Job on Allende Approved by Ford—by Dick Fidler	1191
Rumanian Regime Plans Chile Investment		Amnesty International Reports Torture Continues	1200
— by Ted Harding	120	Summary Executions Continue	1201
Amnesty International Reports on Torture	121	Protests Around World Against Military Junta	1235
Junta Faces Mounting Difficulties		— by Judy White	1235
— by Jean-Pierre Beauvais	178	10,000 in London Voice Solidarity—by Robin Hunter	1236
Valparaiso Transport Leaders Arrested	179	CIA Funds Behind "Strikes" Against Allende	1237
Christian Democrats Criticize Junta	181	CIA Revelations a Big "Surprise" to U. S. Congressmen—by Dick Fidler	1238
Swedish Ambassador to Speak on Coup	231	More Protests Mark Anniversary of Coup	1273
Ask Aid for Threatened Prisoners	262	3,000 at Chile Rally in Buenos Aires	1273
Prepare Secret Trials in Santiago	264	30,000 in Athens Solidarity Rally	1275
		Thousands Still Behind Bars—by Judy White	1275
		"March of Empty Pots" Funded by CIA	1276
		Junta Tries to Bribe MIR	1286
		MIR Leader Miguel Enriquez Reported Killed	1314
		100,000 Voice Chile Solidarity in Rome	1329

Popular Front Re-formed in Underground	1358	Cyprus	
"Chile's Days of Terror"—by Ernest Harsch (BR)	1366	Behind War Moves in Eastern Mediterranean	
New Facts on CIA Operation	1387	—by Gerry Foley	1011
Repression Worse Than Ever	1432	Stand of Greek Students on Cyprus Issue	1171
Anaconda, Kennecott Copper Clean Up on Settlements		Czechoslovakia	
With Junta	1436	Prisoners Released	290
Canadian Unions Denounce Ottawa's Chile Policy	1514	West German Committee to Defend "Prague Spring"	316
Carmen Castillo Freed by Junta	1524	Stalinists Revoke Citizenship of Goldstuecker	493
Laura Allende Arrested	1524	The 1968 Invasion and Its Aftermath	1123
Constitution To Ban All Marxist Parties—Forever	1575	Protest Repression of Dissidents	1523
Czechoslovak Farmer Political Prisoners Pose Cases		Former Political Prisoners Pose Cases of	
of Chile and Czechoslovakia	1584	Chile and Czechoslovakia	1584
Report Labor Camps Planned for Children of		Denmark	
Allende Supporters	1614	Who Controls North Atlantic Fishing?	
Junta Holds Laura Allende as Hostage	1615	—by Hans-Erik Rasmussen (BR)	671
Campaign Wins Release of Luis Vitale	1673	Massive Strike Protests "Tax Compact"	720
OAS Observers Denied Access to Pinochet's		Union Loosens Ties With Social Democrats	1286
Torture Centers	1698	100,000 Protest Unemployment	1651
Two MIR Militants Killed in Chile	1699		
Thirteen Days in Pinochet's Torture Chambers	1710	Diego Garcia	
China		Behind the U. S. Buildup—by Peter Green	1549
Thai Official Says Peking Disowns Rebels	235	Dominican Republic	
Wang Ming Dies	493	Balaguer Reelected After Opposition Withdraws	
China-Japan Air Link Established	517	—by Judy White	652
Maoist Campaign Aimed at Army Command		Egypt	
—by Les Evans	545	Why Sadat is "De-Nasserizing" Egypt	
Role of Students in the "Cultural Revolution"		—by Michael Baumann	454
(Interview With a Former Red Guard Leader)	564	"Coup" Attempt Stirs Diplomatic Pot	
Moscow Demands Release of Crew of Helicopter		—by Michael Baumann	533
Downed in China	598	Court Rules Nasser's Confiscations Illegal	622
Anti-Confucius Drive Hits at Rebel Youth		Cairo Assures Investors of Safety, Profits	
—by Les Evans	663	—by Michael Baumann	1018
Establish Diplomatic Relations With Malaysia	730	Ethiopia	
Mao's Campaign to Criticize Confucius and Lin Piao		Hundreds of Thousands Perish in Famine	
—by Kate Chang	792	—by Candida Barberena	145
Revolutionaries in Mao's Prisons		Army Rebellion Ousts Cabinet—by Ernest Harsch	271
—by Ernest Harsch (BR)	955	Mass Upsurge Continues as Selassie Retreats	
The Big-Character Wall Posters—by Peter Green	1071	—by Ernest Harsch	295
Peking Cuts Hanoi Military Aid	1329	Students Seize Embassy in Moscow	297
Chinese Report Liu Shao-chi's Death	1523	Strikes, Protests Continue to Rock Regime	
Anti-Confucius Campaign Created "Major Weaknesses"		—by Ernest Harsch	323
in Economy	1575	Famine Spreading Through South—by Ernest Harsch	373
Chen Po-ta Alive but "Broken"	1699	Women Stage Protests in Addis Ababa	374
Colombia		Troops Raise New Demands	424
President-Elect Proposes "Social Pact"	895	Protests Continue to Spread	437
Bogota Threatens State of Siege to Halt		Protests Spread Throughout Country	494
Inflation Protests	1699	Landlords, Officials Flee Peasant Revolt	505
Comoro Islands		Cabinet, Military Try to "Restore Order"	592
The Struggle for Independence		Rebel Troops Arrest Government Officials	
—by Kamarouline Abdallah	356	—by Ernest Harsch	937
Cuba		Army Rebels Announce Curbs on Cabinet	973
Brezhnev Pushes Detente During Visit to Havana	178	Army Takes Over Asmara	1026
Canada, Argentina Plan Trade With Cuba	313	Premier Resigns	1076
Cuba to Buy Locomotives From Canada	384	Army's "Creeping Coup" Overtakes Selassie	
Mexico Seeks Warmer Ties With Cuba	493	—by Dick Fidler	1117
U. S.-Owned Corporations Allowed to Sell		Military Shows Selassie to the Door—by Dick Fidler	1187
Automobiles to Cuba	517	Military Moves Against Army Dissidents, Eritreans	1364
Why Washington Is Relaxing Its Ban on Sales		Eritrean Liberation Front Holds Mass Rallies	1405
—by Gerry Foley	541	Thirty-five Former Officials Indicted	1574
Test Electoral "Pilot Project" in Matanzas		Military Regime Executes 60 Former Officials	
—by Dick Fidler	978	and Aristocrats	1614
OAS Members Move to End Sanctions—by Dick Fidler	1167	Selassie Gives Up Fortune	1650
U. S. Attack on Oil Countries Scored by Castro	1317	More Ethiopian Troops Sent Into Eritrea	
Dacca Forced to Halt Cuban Trade	1328	—by Ernest Harsch	1674
Expanding Cuban-Argentine Trade	1328	Fiji	
Castro Calls for Unity Behind Oil Producers	1356	New Zealand Capitalists Join in Plunder	
Castro Forecasts Change in Washington's Cuba Policy	1444	—by Peter Rotherham	276
Ford Urged to End Blockade of Cuba	1512		
Divided OAS Fails to End Blockade	1555		
Cuba and the Bahamas Set Up Diplomatic Ties	1699		

France			
The Agreement at Lip Watch Factory	268	Abortion Legalized	1650
Illmany, Marie-Louise: Martyrs in Struggle Against French Imperialism	302	French Army Head Warns of Unrest Among Soldiers	1698
Thousands in Paris March Against Chilean Junta	308	Germany, Democratic Republic of (East)	
Provocateurs Disrupt March in Paris	393	U. S., East Germany Open Talks	1026
Basque Refugees End Hunger Strike	394	Drops Goal of National Reunification	1286
Urge Speedy Hearing of Appeal Against Ban on Ligue Communiste	395	Germany, Federal Republic of (West)	
Students Mobilize Against Fontanet Law		Committee to Defend "Prague Spring"	316
— by Dick Fidler	409	Doctors Speak Out for Right to Abortion	339
Gaullists Seek Heir to Pompidou— by Dick Fidler	468	Trotskyist Congress Plans Expanded Work	
"Rouge" Urges United Far-Left Candidacy	469	— by Gunter Minnerup	452
"Rouge" Supporters Organize	470	Police Raid "Was Tun" Office	477
Supporters of Chilean Revolutionists Hold National Conference	492	Court Upholds Mandel Ban	617
Krivine Presses for Piaget as Far-Left Candidate		No Evidence Killing of Judge Was Revenge for Meins's Death	1575
— by Dick Fidler	509	Bonn's "Special Treatment" for Political Prisoners	1632
Long Live the Revolutionary Communist Front	527	Court Sentences Meinhof to Eight-Year Term	1650
Krivine Campaigns for Revolutionary Alternative		Bonn's "Antiterrorist Campaign"— by Gerry Foley	1667
— by Dick Fidler	535	Statement by Rudi Dutschke on Holger Meins's Death	1668
National Minorities Candidate Ruled Off Ballot	555	The Death of Holger Meins— Down With Solitary Confinement	1707
Bourgeoisie Divided in Response to Social Crisis		The Assassination of Judge Drenkmann— a Blow to Defense of Political Prisoners	1708
— by Pierre Frank	559	"A Red Stomach Tube Is Used"— by Holger Meins	1709
Action Program for a Workers Government	571		
Economic Issues Dominate Election— by Pierre Frank	587	Ghana	
Krivine Speaks for Socialism in Election		Students Required to Sign Pledge of "Good Behavior"	516
— by Dick Fidler	589		
Krivine Describes Election Strategy	590	Greece	
Ultralefts Reconciled With Mitterrand	591	Communist Party Members Arrested	304
Government Censors Remarks of Presidential Candidate	599	Hundreds of Arrests Kept Secret	392
How the Far Left Met Mitterrand's Candidacy		Report Arrests in Piraeus, Salonika	393
— by Dick Fidler	628	Trotskyists Arrested	534
OCI Plumps for Mitterrand on Both Rounds	629	Masses Rejoice Over Collapse of Junta	
"Lutte Ouvriere": From Indifference to Support	631	— by Gerry Foley	1061
Krivine's Assessment: The "Allende of France"	633	How Caramanlis's Cops Uphold "Law and Order"— by Giannis Felekis	1122
"Revolution": Mitterrand Offers Some Hope But Not Much	634	Trotskyists Appeal to Trade-Union Activists	1152
Maoists Reject Him in Both Rounds as Stooge for Moscow	635	Trotskyist Leader Acquitted of "Resisting Arrest"	1160
Pablo: Interests of PSU Come First	636	Stand of Greek Students on Cyprus Issue and Battle for Democracy in Greece	1171
Brittany Conference Issues Anti-Imperialist Call	639	Demand Arrest of Agents of Greek Junta	1172
What the Vote Totals Revealed— by Pierre Rousset	656	Expose CIA's Role in 1967 Coup	1193
Campaign Posed Issue of Self-Determination in Antilles— by Dick Fidler	657	The Developing Upsurge: What the Salonika Demonstration Showed— by Gerry Foley	1205
Soviet Envoy Pays Respects to Giscard	658	30,000 in Athens Chile Solidarity Rally	1275
How CP Pursued Gaullist Votes	659	In Reply to Soft Soap of the Press— by S. Kofteros	1278
In the Aftermath of Round Two— by Dick Fidler	680	What Our Goals Should Be as Students	
"Rouge" Sentenced to Heavy Fine in Lawsuit	683	— by Aughi Rodite	1281
After the Elections: What Next?— by Daniel Bensaid	722	Caramanlis Legalizes CP	1287
Cohn-Bendit Asks Right to Return	774	No "Reconciliation" With the Army	1344
Giscard Orders New Bomb Tests	774	Twenty Proposed Changes in Labor Laws	1376
The End of Gaullism and Rise of the Masses		20,000 Stage Protest at U. S. Embassy	1388
— by Pierre Frank	776	What Chances for Papandreou's New Party?— by Th.	1422
Correction	913	The Lineup in Elections	1431
Some Questions for Giscard	802	Papadopoulos Exiled to Island in Aegean	1431
Trotskyists Hold Workers' Conference	869	The Two CPs Set Up an Electoral Bloc	
What Role for Socialists in Women's Movement?	914	— by Gerry Foley	1520
Why Revolutionists Advocate Sliding Scale of Wages	944	Soldiers Demand Discharge	1664
For a "Third Round" of Social Struggles	955	Behind Caramanlis's Victory in Greek Elections	1712
Paris Training Chilean Military	976		
The Antimilitarist Battle in Armed Forces		Grenada	
— by Dick Fidler	1068	Prime Minister Arresting Opposition	202
Prisoners Revolt	1077		
Giscard Tightens the Screws on Workers	1402	Guinea-Bissau	
The French CP's Weekend Carnival— by Irving Herrera	1488	African Rebels Repeat Demand for Independence	
Militant Postal Strikers Confront Giscard	1561	— by Ernest Harsch	581
Millions Stop Work in General Strike— by Dick Fidler	1592	Lisbon Threatens to Step Up African Wars	
Reformist Parties Jockey for Position		— by Ernest Harsch	615
— by Alain Krivine	1609	Time Running Out on Portuguese in African Colonies	
Which Way Forward for Workers?	1644	— by Ernest Harsch	647
Postal Unions End Strike	1645		

Lisbon Presses Talks With African Rebels		500,000 Stage Protest in Bihar	859
— by Ernest Harsch	713	Ten Killed as Assam Police Attack Students	859
Colonialist Attack in Cape Verde	799	Writers Charged in "Conspiracy" Case	896
Rebels Halt Talks With Lisbon— by Ernest Harsch	898	Gandhi Continues Antilabor Offensive	
Program of the PAIGC	1006	— by Sharad Jhaveri	974
Guinea-Bissau Gains Independence— by Ernest Harsch	1162	Tensions Rise on India-Pakistan Border	976
		India Imposes Wage Freeze	1076
Guyana		Naxalite Suspects Tortured in Calcutta	
Blocks Bauxite Exports After U. S. Firm Refuses		— by Sharad Jhaveri	1256
to Pay Tax	1364	Hot Debate Over CIA's Covert Activities	
		— by Sharad Jhaveri	1321
Haiti		Gandhi's Forgotten Political Prisoners	
Demonstrators Demand U. S. Asylum	406	— by Sharad Jhaveri	1363
600 Demonstrators Demand U. S. Asylum for Refugees	599	Bihar Paralyzed by Three-Day General Strike	
Ottawa Moves to Deport 1,500 Haitians	1513	— by Sharad Jhaveri	1386
Haitian Immigrants Face Deportation as Ottawa		What Perspective for the Dalit Panthers?	
Rejects Appeals for Asylum	1614	— by Sharad Jhaveri	1411
Haitians Fighting Deportation Win Wide Support		New Right-Wing Party Formed— by Sharad Jhaveri	1463
in Quebec	1699	Millions Threatened by Famine— by Ernest Harsch	1478
		Roots of the Struggle in Bihar— by Sharad Jhaveri	1598
Honduras		Report on Prison Conditions Shocks Public	
U. S. Doles Hurricane Aid With Eyedropper	1266	— by Sharad Jhaveri	1678
		Indonesia	
Hong Kong		Students Stage Protests	60
The Youth Movement (Interview With a Chinese		Tanaka Visit Sparks Massive Protests	83
Trotskyist)	456	Threaten Death to 42 Protesters	355
Rally Hits Skyrocketing Prices— by Sze Nei	725	New Series of Political Trials Begins	1134
Inflation, Unemployment Rise— by Wu Shun-sin	765	Timor Demonstration Opposes Annexation by	
		Indonesia	1444
Hungary		Iran	
Writer Sentenced	153	The Shah Speaks Out	56
British CP Defends the Hungarian Family	521	Seven Sentenced to Death	66
Women Petition for Abortion	962	Ask Protests of Death Sentences	98
		U. S., Iran Extending Indian Ocean Bases	
Iceland		— by Dianne Feeley	200
Government Falls	622	Shah's Firing Squads Claim Eight Victims	
Coalition Defeated	942	— by Majid Namvar	239
New Government Pledges to Retain NATO Base	1135	Students Protest Executions— by Majid Namvar	345
		Five Prominent Writers Jailed	768
India		Paper Exposes SAVAK Agent in London	768
General Strike Paralyzes Bombay	32	Why the Shah Intervened in Dhofar	867
More Soviet Arms to Gandhi Regime	59	Shah Gets Nuclear Plants in Deal With Paris	942
The Bombay General Strike— by Kailas Chandra	85	Shah Buys Share of Krupp	1027
Statement of Trotskyists on Bombay General Strike	96	Iranian Students Association Expels 30	
CPI, Communist Party (Marxist) Argue Over		— by Parviz Foroughi	1065
Brezhnev Visit— by Kailas Chandra	116	Shah Spills More Blood in Face of Rising Unrest	
Food Protests Rock Gujarat	185	— by Majid Namvar	1194
Food Protests Topple Gujarat Government	201	Shah Negotiating Giant Arms Deal with Pentagon	1252
Protest Police Attacks on Dalit Panthers	226	Protests Greet Shah on Australian Tour	
Mass Struggles in Gujarat and Maharashtra		— by Max Wechsler	1359
(Interview With a Trotskyist)	305	Demonstrators Greet Shah in New Zealand	1405
Food Protests Spread to Bihar State	384	Shah Sending New Troops to Oman	1405
Civil Strife in Gujarat and Maharashtra		Shah Purges Press— by Majid Namvar	1436
— by Kailas Chandra	416	An Arab and Iranian Finance Capital Emerges	
Unrest Over Skyrocketing Prices— by Sharad Jhaveri	458	— by Ernest Mandel	1437
Set Up Antigovernment Front in Bombay		Shah Stung by "Newsweek" Charges— by Majid Namvar	1469
— by Kailas Chandra	485	SAVAK Arrests Prominent Writer (Sa'edi)	1574
The Upsurge in Gujarat	522	Iranian Students in London Protest Torture	
Dalit Panthers Attacked in Bombay	553	Under Shah	1679
50,000 Students Protest in West Bengal	553	American Intellectuals Protest Terror in Iran	
Railway Workers Set General Strike— by Sharad Jhaveri	593	— by Peter Green	1700
Mass Arrests of Railway Unionists	593	Iraq	
Widespread Support for Rail Strike— by Sharad Jhaveri	620	Kurds Reject Baghdad's Autonomy Plan	
Toward a Regroupment of Political Parties?		— by Michael Baumann	374
— by Sharad Jhaveri	627	Bombers Destroy 11 Kurdish Villages	515
Gujarati Group Demands Action Against High		Air Force Napalms Villages	623
Food Prices	661	Why Revolutionists Support Kurdish Self-Determination	666
India Conducts Nuclear Test	661	Kurds Demand Halt to Terror Bombing	860
Gandhi Breaks Rail Strike	724	Army Reported Gaining Over Kurdish Rebels	1027
Stalinists Discern "Change" in Gandhi		Tokyo Signs 10-Year Economic Pact	1135
— by Sharad Jhaveri	725		
Divided Leadership Weakened Rail Strike			
— by Sharad Jhaveri	766		

Forces Seize Most Kurdish Towns	1286	Economy in Trouble	1328
Sakharov Demands Halt to Terror Bombing of Kurds	1354	Poland to Resume Diplomatic Ties	1405
Ireland		Riots Protest Huge Price Rises	1524
Demand Ireland Be Opened to Victims of Chile		Workers Protest Huge Price Hikes—by Peter Green	1541
Repression	46	Palestinian Protests Sweep Occupied West Bank	
London Protest Defends Belfast Nine	136	— by Peter Green	1594
Where Freedom Struggle Stands Today (Interview		Israelis Rattle Nuclear Bomb	1698
With Editor of "An Phoblacht")	148	Italy	
Irish Writers Protest Exile of Solzhenitsyn	288	Valpreda Still Facing Frame-Up Charges	270
Dublin to Admit Some Refugees From Chile	340	Government Shaken by Workers Upsurge (Interview	
Where Official Republicans Stand Today (Interview		With a Fiat Militant)	474
With Cathal Goulding)	418	The Stakes in the Divorce Referendum	547
Dublin's Escalating Attacks on IRA		Italy Takes Lead in International Postal Race	610
— by Patricia Fryd	447	Divorce Law Retained	661
Protest Mounts in Britain Against Abuse of Irish		Police Uncover Right-Wing Terrorist Plot	773
Prisoners—by Patricia Fryd	506	Correction	833
Prisoners Ask Stepped-Up Protests—by Jimmy Doag	507	Economic Crisis Shakes Italian Capitalism	
Petition for Irish Prisoners in Britain	508	— by Dick Fidler	822
How Close to Victory?—by Bob Purdie	549	Coalition Agrees to Attack Living Standards	
Nationalism and Protestant Workers	567	— by Dick Fidler	858
Which Way Forward to a United Ireland?	573	New Left-Wing Party Formed	1134
Belfast Women's Liberation Group Formed	603	CP Beats Drum for Popular Front	1135
Brittany Conference Issues Anti-Imperialist Call	639	The "Il Manifesto" Regroupment	1326
Bombings Require United-Front Response	694	100,000 Voice Chile Solidarity in Rome	1329
Right-Wing Strike Overthrows Faulkner	717	Fanfani Asked to Form New Government	1365
Reactionary Strike Poses Threat of Pogroms		Former Head of Army Intelligence Implicated	
— by Brian Lyons	718	in Coup Attempt	1525
Irish Prisoners in Britain Near Death—by Patricia Fryd	719	10,000 Women March in Rome	1555
Price Sisters End Hunger Strike	773	Recession Now in Full Swing—by Livio Maitan	1688
Thousands March in Funeral Procession for		14 Million Workers Strike to Protest Inflation	1699
IRA Member	826	Jamaica	
Anatomy of Loyalist Strike	992	To Raise Bauxite Prices	660
In Wake of Loyalist Strike, What Perspective?	1033	Japan	
"War and an Irish Town"—by Brian Lyons (BR)	1215	Tanaka Visit Sparks Massive Protests in Indonesia	83
Belfast Trotskyists Dragged Into Court	1294	Thai Students March Against Tanaka Visit	87
Official IRA Heads Down Blind Alley	1310	Tokyo Responds to the Energy Crisis—by Ernest Harsch	208
Revolts of Political Prisoners in North Touch		The Situation and the Activities of the Revolutionary	
Off Solidarity Actions—by Gerry Foley	1382	Communist League (Interview With a Trotskyist	
Conditions at Long Kesh and Crumlin Road	1424	Leader)	217
4,000 March in London for Troops Out of Ireland		Unionists Protest Soaring Inflation	238
— by Robin Hunter	1465	How Oil Giants Tightened Screws on Tokyo	396
Since the Concentration Camp Rebellions		Government Workers Defy Strike Ban	397
— by Patricia Fryd	1516	Workers Win 30 Percent Raise	518
Anti-Irish Hysteria in Britain Over Birmingham		China-Japan Air Link Established	517
Bombings	1586	Tokyo Agrees to Lend \$1,000 Million to Moscow	555
Irish Agriculture: Britain Calls the Shots		Japanese Imperialism Today: Still Within	
— by James Conway	1595	Washington's Orbit—by Ernest Harsch (BR)	794
Witch-Hunt in Britain Against the Irish		Elections Deal Setback to Tanaka's Party	974
— by Gerry Foley	1635	Tanaka Rivals Resign From Cabinet	1010
How to Defend Irish People Against Wilson's		Baghdad Signs 10-Year Economic Pact	1135
Witch-Hunt—by Gerry Foley	1670	Unions Set First "Autumn Labor Offensive"	1201
Israel (Also see Arab East)		Protest U. S. A-Arms in Ports	1346
After the October War (Interview With Israeli		Park and Tanaka Patch Up Quarrel—by Peter Green	1360
Trotskyist)	5	Protests in Seoul, Tokyo Condemn Park	1361
Joint Statement of Israeli and Arab Revolutionists	31	Yamashita Forecasts Depression	1399
Meir's Labor Party Retains Control of Government		How Tanaka Did It	1426
After Elections—by Jpn Rothschild	42	Two Million in Rallies Against Ford Visit	
Society Shaken by October War (Interview With		— by Peter Green	1427
Trotskyist)	114	Impact of Radicalized Youth on Unions (Interview	
Trotskyists' Position on Knesset Elections	125	With Yohichi Sakai)	1490
The October War and the Economic Crisis		Behind Tanaka's Downfall—by Ernest Harsch	1643
— by Arie Bober		Jordan	
Part 1	460	Soldiers Mutiny	170
Part 2	487	Korea, Democratic Republic of (North)	
Part 3	523	Kim Il Sung's Thoughts on "Reunifying" Fire and	
Part 4	556	Water—by George Johnson (BR)	744
Meir's Cabinet Becomes a Casualty of October War		Korea, Republic of (South)	
— by Michael Baumann	467	Park Intensifies Repression	58
"Spy" Case	554		
Protest Torture of West Bank Arabs	555		
Embassy Slanders Political Prisoner	765		
Reports Decline in Tourism, Immigration	1026		

Dissidents Imprisoned	130	Mexico Seeks Warmer Ties With Cuba	493
New Arrests Reported	200	Wily Political Boss Outfoxes Kidnappers	
Police Attack Protesters in Seoul	434	— by Eugenia Aranda	1195
Seoul "Spy" Trial Begins	517	Workers Find They Need a Wage Hike	
Park Discovers Another "Plot"	530	— by Eugenia Aranda	1322
67 Face Death in Secret Trial	697	A New Party, the PMT— by Ricardo Ramos	1553
Kim Dae Jung Brought to Trial	754	Antonio Maldonado Murdered in Tlaxcala	1555
Former President Arrested Secretly in Protests	827	Mexican Guerrilla Leader (Lucio Cabanas) Killed	1674
Seoul Court-Martial Condemns 14	977		
Ex-President on Trial for "Subversion"	1021		
Catholics Protest Arrest of Bishop	1076	Mongolia	
Park Steps Up Political Witch-Hunt— by Peter Green	1119	Mongolia, Thailand Open Diplomatic Relations	413
Park and Tanaka Patch Up Quarrel— by Peter Green	1360		
Protests in Seoul, Tokyo Condemn Park	1361	Mozambique	
5,000 Catholics Demonstrate Against Repression	1364	African Rebels Repeat Demand for Independence	
Opposition to Park Steps Up Protests— by Peter Green	1512	— by Ernest Harsch	581
		Missionaries Report Massacre	614
Laos (Also see Indochina War)		Lisbon Threatens to Step Up African Wars	
Accord on Police	162	— by Ernest Harsch	615
Coalition Regime Set Up in Vientiane	477	Time Running Out on Portuguese in African Colonies	
The Situation in Laos	528	— by Ernest Harsch	647
Regime Accepts Imperialist "Aid"	597	Lisbon Presses Talks With African Rebels	
Assembly Dissolved	977	— by Ernest Harsch	713
		Frelimo Rejects Cease-Fire Proposal— by Ernest Harsch	762
Lebanon (Also see Arab East)		Political Prisoners Tell of Torture	855
Arab Trotskyists Assaulted at Beirut Demonstration	6	Frelimo Troops Capture Northern Town	1017
Joint Statement of Israeli and Arab Revolutionists	31	Portuguese Troops Refuse to Fight Guerrillas	1076
Trotskyists Denounce Plans to Liquidate		Frelimo Agrees to Coalition Regime— by Ernest Harsch	1244
Palestinian Cause	186	Coalition Government Takes Office	1286
Israelis Escalate Terrorist Bombing Raids		Portuguese Troops Attack Mozambicans	1430
— by Michael Baumann	856		
Zionists Threaten Invasion— by Michael Baumann	886	Netherlands	
Clampdown on Palestinians— by Michael Baumann	936	Arab States End Oil Embargo	977
Curbs Right to Bear Arms	1253		
		New Zealand	
Libya		Campaign for Victims of Repression in Chile	
Qaddafi Nationalizes 3 U. S. Oil Companies	211	— by Brigid Mulrennan	16
Government Nationalizes Holdings of Royal Dutch-Shell	493	"One Nation" Based on Oppression	234
		New Zealand Capitalists Join in Plunder of Fiji	
Luxembourg		— by Peter Rotherham	276
Labor Bureaucrats Move to Exclude Militants	199	Labour Regime Helps Nixon Prop Up Thieu	477
		Labour Party Leaders Try to Bar Socialist	694
Malaysia		Unions in Massive Protests— by George Fyson	1019
Demand Release of Political Prisoners	184	Prisoners Strike for Basic Human Rights	
Protest Abuse of Prisoners	238	— by Claudia Mason	1212
Relatives of Political Prisoners Face Trial	508	Demonstration Protests Arrest of Malaysian Student	1285
Committee in U. S. Demands Release of Prisoners	594	Wide Support for Abortion Clinic	1362
Student Protest Attacked	599	Demonstrators Greet Shah of Iran	1405
Establishes Diplomatic Relations With China	730	From Stalinism to Trotskyism in New Zealand	
Demonstrations in Australia, New Zealand		— by John Colquhoun	1453
Protest Arrest of Malaysian Student	1285		
		Niger	
Mali		Hundreds of Thousands Dead in African Famine	272
Hundreds of Thousands Dead in African Famine	272	Capitalists Coin Profits From Famine	273
Report Deliberate Starvation of Tuaregs	303	Twenty-eight Demonstrators Sentenced	319
		Army Topples President	516
Martinique			
Inflation Spurs Labor Upsurge— by Tony Thomas	261	Nigeria	
Murder of Striking Workers	302	Police Attack Students	270
Ilmany, Marie-Louise: Martyrs in Struggle Against		The Looting of Nigeria's Oil Wealth— by Ernest Harsch	444
French Imperialism	302		
On the Workers Offensive	495	Norway	
		Trotsky's Exile in Norway— by Jan Bjarne Boe	92
Mauritania		Social Democrats, Stalinists Plan Fusion	554
Hundreds of Thousands Dead in African Famine	272	Tracing the History of Norwegian Feminism	
		— by Eva Almhjell (BR)	670
Mauritius			
The Political Situation in Mauritius	699	Oman	
		Why the Shah Intervened in Dhofar	867
Mediterranean			
A-Bombs Open to Raids by Greeks or Turks	1214	Pakistan	
		Regime Recognizes Bangladesh	274
Mexico		Officers Sentenced	347
"New York Times" Does a Whitewash on Siqueiros	55	Dacca to Release Pakistanis Held Since	
		Independence War	516

800 Baluchis Reported Killed in Air Raids	900	Lisbon Presses Talks With African Rebels	
Tensions Rise on India-Pakistan Border	976	— by Ernest Harsch	713
Bhutto Lowers Iron Curtain on Baluchistan	1210	Meeting Discusses Future of Revolution	
Bhutto Launches Military Offensive in Baluchistan—by Sharad Jhaveri	1355	— by Gerry Foley	759
		What Colonial Students Are Fighting For	788
		The Situation in Portugal	795
		"Woe to Revolutionists Who Make a Revolution Only Halfway"	798
Papua New Guinea		Colonialist Attack in Cape Verde	799
Capitalists Prepare Niugini for "Independence"		Soldiers Call for Halt to War	800
— by David Nizoz	520	Spinola Moving Toward Crackdown on Left	
Women Protest Inflation	864	— by Gerry Foley	803
Independence Postponed Until 1975—by Sol Salby	1078	CP, Guardian of Capitalism—by Hugo Blanco	806
		Patriotic March Draws Little Support—by Gerry Foley	807
		The Fall of the Dictatorship and the Revolutionary Upsurge (Statement of the Fourth International)	834
		Junta Institutes Press Censorship—by Gerry Foley	851
		London March for Freedom of Portuguese Colonies	
		— by Tony Hodges	857
		Origin of "New Portuguese Letters"	
		— by Candida Barberena	868
		Women and the Revolution (Interview With Maria Velho da Costa)	911
		New Strikes Challenge Junta's Crackdown	935
		Behind Fall of the Provisional Government	
		— by Gerry Foley	963
		Police Agents Held in Murder of Delgado	967
		Spinola Names New Cabinet	1017
		First Crisis of Cabinet—by Hugo Blanco	1066
		Union Leaders Tell "How We Organized in Totalitarian Portugal"	1129
		Ten Police Agents Charged With 1965 Murder of Opposition Leader	1134
		For United Action Against Repression	1174
		Behind the Resignation of General Spinola	
		— by Gerry Foley	1267
		What the Reformist Left Saw in Spinola	
		— by Gerry Foley	1288
		Masses Move Against Attempted Coup—by Gerry Foley	1318
		Behind the Ultrarightist Attempt at a Comeback	
		— by Gerry Foley	1330
		Goncalves Calls for Belt Tightening—by Gerry Foley	1392
		How Workers Defeated Spinola's Attempted Coup	
		— by A. Romero	1394
		Danger of Illusions in the Army—by A. Romero	1396
		Troops Attack Mozambicans	1430
		Timor Demonstration Opposes Annexation by Indonesia	1444
		Statement of Portuguese Postal Workers	1456
		GMR's Stand on Sunday Labor	1456
		Top CIA Men in Parleys With Portuguese Officials	1468
		Portuguese General Tells Inside Story of Putsch	
		— by Gerry Foley	1481
		How High-School Students Joined in Struggle Against Dictatorship—by Antonio Romero	1483
		Puerto Rico	
		Governor Revives Controversy Over Superport	375
		Governor Proposes New Repressive Laws	605
		U. S. Senate Votes to End Shelling of Culebra	771
		Theater Bombed	1429
		Police Attribute New York Bombings to Nationalists	1445
		UN Hears Testimony on Puerto Rico	1473
		20,000 Demand "Free Puerto Rico Now"	1480
		Rumania	
		Regime Plans Chile Investment—by Ted Harding	120
		Senegal	
		Hundreds of Thousands Dead in African Famine	272
		Sikkim	
		Demonstrators Demand Rights	516
		Opponents of Chogyal Win Election	598
		India Increases Control Over Government	864

South Africa			
New Repressive Laws Proposed	282	Petition in Britain for Dzyuba and Chornovil	751
Strike Highlights Role of British Companies	446	Dissident's Appeal for Moroz	752
Racist Regime Forces Mass Migrations	855	Polemic Against Trotskyism Published	774
"Volunteers" to Fight Zimbabwe Guerrillas	1136	The Continuing Persecution of Pyotr Grigorenko	839
Police Break Up Demonstrations in Support of Frelimo	1286	Trade, Arms Race Are Focus of Moscow Summit	
Wave of Arrests	1329	— by Dick Fidler	883
Reveal White House "Tilt" Toward South Africa		Grigorenko Released From Mental Hospital	899
— by Peter Green	1391	Appeals Describe Effort to Starve Bukovsky	926
Wilson's 21-Gun Salute to Racists— by Tony Hodges	1477	Correction	960
Protest Mounts Over Wilson's South Africa Moves		Grigorenko Gets Reduced Pension	942
— by Tony Hodges	1546	Bukovsky Transfer Was Punishment for	
UN General Assembly Bars South Africa	1575	Hunger Strike in Camp	1027
		Brezhnev Calls for Meeting of World Communist	
		Parties	1027
		Shikhanovich Reported Freed	1027
		How the Bureaucrats Live	1070
Soviet Union		Sakharov Appeals for Crimean Tatar	1076
"The Gulag Archipelago"— by Ernest Harsch (BR)	8	"Report From the Beria Reserve"	
Moscow Hardships	34	— by Marilyn Vogt (BR)	1127
Dissidents Defend Solzhenitsyn	58	Valentyn Moroz Feared Near Death in Jail	1204
More Soviet Arms to Gandhi Regime	59	Moscow Bureaucrats Censor Art With Bulldozer	1240
CPI, Communist Party (Marxist) Argue Over		Officials Report Moroz Is Still Alive	1252
Brezhnev Visit to India— by Kailas Chandra	116	Novel Criticized for Exaggerating Stalin's	
Ukrainians Report Continuing Arrests	120	Wartime Role	1253
Medvedev's Defense— and Critique— of Solzhenitsyn	165	10,000 Attend Moscow Dissident Art Show	1287
Brezhnev Pushes Detente During Visit to Havana	178	Moscow Cuts Hanoi Military Aid	1329
Exile of Solzhenitsyn a Warning to All Dissidents		Sakharov Demands Halt to Terror Bombing of Kurds	
— by Candida Barberena	195	in Iraq	1354
Ailing Grigorenko to Be Held Longer	197	Moroz's Life in Jeopardy	1354
Yevtushenko Defends Solzhenitsyn Against Slanders		New Issues of Ukrainian Herald	1365
— by Candida Barberena	240	Industrial Output Increasing	1445
Grigorenko's Appeal to 1968 CP Meeting	249	Roy Medvedev Debates With Panin, Sakharov,	
Imprisoned Dissident Near Death	282	Solzhenitsyn, and Others	1499
Irish Writers Protest Exile of Solzhenitsyn	288	Valentyn Moroz Continues Hunger Strike	1515
Solzhenitsyn's Letter to Kremlin Bureaucrats		"Moroz Will Die If He Is Not Set Free"	1560
— by Allen Myers	297	Armenian Nationalists Jailed by Kremlin	1574
Sakharov Issues Appeal for Bukovsky	307	Soviet and Ukrainian UN Ambassadors Refuse	
Nixon Still Popular— With Kremlin	319	to Discuss Moroz Case	1615
Roy Medvedev's Review of "The Gulag Archipelago"	358	"Early Retirement" for Armenian CP Boss	1637
Conference in New York Discusses Soviet Dissidents	370	Moscow OKs Pentagon Plan on Nuclear Arms Race	
Dissidents, Bukovsky's Mother Ask Aid	399	— by Dick Fidler	1641
Launch Campaign to Free Chornovil, Moroz	408	Head of Moscow Amnesty International Arrested	1651
Kremlin Continues Pressure on Dissidents	409	Exiled Dissidents Form Committee to Defend	
Pavel Litvinov's Appeal for Dissidents	463	Political Prisoners	1651
Dissidents Defend Grigorenko	485	Problems of Democratization and Detente	
Call for Day of Actions in Defense of Grigorenko	496	— by Roy Medvedev	1657
New York Rally in Defense of Dissidents	498	What Ceiling in the U. S.-Soviet Arms Accord?	
Pyotr Grigorenko's Fight for "Leninist Principles"		— by Dick Fidler	1676
— by Tamara Deutscher	546	Detente and Democratization Viewed From	
Soviet Trade With West Is Up	554	Within the United States— by George Novack	1692
Kremlin Pushing Meeting of Communist Parties	554	Open Letter From Raissa Moroz	1711
Tokyo Agrees to Lend \$1,000 Million to Moscow	555		
Rostropovich to Go Abroad?	555		
Moscow Demands Release of Crew of Helicopter		Spain	
Downed in China	598	Savage Sentences Given Carabanchel 10	
Detente: Why Both Sides See It as Good Business		— by Candida Barberena	15
— by Dick Roberts	600	Position of LCR-ETA(VI) on Assassination of	
Argentina Gets Soviet Loan	623	Carrero Blanco	62
"Chronicle of Current Events" Resumes Publication	623	Interview With Member of LCR-ETA(VI)	62
Soviet Envoy Pays Respects to Giscard	658	Widespread Effort to Save Life of Salvador Puig	80
Superfin Sentenced	660	Liga Comunista Position on Carrero Assassination	155
Kremlin Reported Planning to Put Pyotr Grigorenko		Confirm Death Penalty for Salvador Puig	233
on Trial	660	Prisoners on Hunger Strikes	245
Voices of the Opposition— by Ken Coates (BR)	669	For Action Against the Murderers of Salvador Puig	320
Prisoners Demand National Rights	695	Demonstrations Protest Execution of Puig	357
New "Chronicle" Appears in Moscow	696	Basque Refugees in France End Hunger Strike	394
The Opposition Movement in Ukraine— by Oleh Hlyntzkyj	702	Youth Led Protests Against Repression	412
Soviet Bureaucrats in Canada Circulate Slander of		"We Are All Salvador Puig Antich"	425
Moroz— by Anne Klein and George Saunders	726	Franco's Police Arrest Alleged LCR-ETA(VI) Members	599
Litvinov Describes "Spectrum" of Views		Brittany Conference Issues Anti-Imperialist Call	639
— by George Saunders	735	Stalinists Hail Church, Army	975
Correction	813	Upsurge of Labor Struggles in Barcelona	
The SALT Talks— a Cover for Nuclear Arms Race		— by Judy White	1064
— by Dick Roberts	740	Franco Cedes Powers to Juan Carlos	1077

CP Proposes Government of "National Reconciliation"	1077	Uganda	
Spanish Sahara to Vote on "Self-Determination" in 1975	1135	Executions Follow Attempted "Coup"	414
Franco Jails 67 Catalan Oppositionists	1247		
Wave of Arrests in Police Witch-Hunt of Basques	1287	U. S. A.	
Witch-Hunt of Basque Militants Continues	1357	Watergate Miracle	2
The Bar Rolando Bombing— Whose Responsibility?	1374	Nixon Sets New Confrontation Over Watergate Tapes	
Auto Workers Press Demands— by Judy White	1389	— by Allen Myers	11
U. S., Spain to Begin Talks on Bases	1444	Subject of U. S.-Portuguese Talks Is Arms, Oil	
ETA Says Madrid Bombing Was a Police Job	1445	— by Tony Hodges	17
Police Report Arrest of Trotskyist Group	1454	How We Overcame Ultraleftism in Defense Work	
Protest Arrest of Feminists	1506	(Interview With James P. Cannon)	22
Government-Controlled Unions Demand Right to Strike	1525	Nixon Hit by Bribery, Spying, Blackmail Scandals	
LCR-ETA(VI) Denounces Report of Police	1534	— by Allen Myers	51
Repression in Franco's Jails	1534	Government Admits Harassment and Wiretapping of	
Franco Regime Charges Feminist in Assassination		Trotskyists	54
of Carrero Blanco	1607	Accumulating Evidence Keeps Pointing to Nixon	
Three Basque Nationalists Get Stiff Jail Sentences	1615	— by Allen Myers	81
Genoveva Forest Tortured by Franco's Police		Reluctant Congress Weighing Impeachment Vote	
— by Peter Green	1639	— by Allen Myers	110
Basque Protesters Demand Freedom for Franco's		"One Year of Watergate" Was Only a Beginning	
Political Prisoners	1699	— by Allen Myers	138
		New Holes in "Narrowing Nixon Defense Perimeter"	
Spanish Sahara		— by Allen Myers	171
To Vote on "Self-Determination" in 1975	1135	Truck Drivers Strike in 20 States	174
		White House Tapes Winding Tighter Around Nixon	
Sri Lanka		— by Allen Myers	204
JVP Leader Sentenced	472	Why U. S. Maoists Fail to Form "New Communist	
Police Discover Another "Subversive Organization"	517	Party"— by Jon Hillson	212
Prisoner Charges He Was Tortured	696	Pursuing Nixon in Print: Books on Watergate	
Report Asks Release of Youth	706	— by Allen Myers (BR)	221
Rohan Wijeweera's Defense Speech in JVP Trial	841	Swedish Ambassador to Speak on Chile Coup	231
Bala Tampoe Gagged by Bandaranaike Regime	1251	Election Upset Shows Depth of Watergate Effects	
		— by Allen Myers	242
Sweden		FBI Informer Linked to Hampton Killing	245
A Founder of Swedish Trotskyism Dies	315	Investigations Drawing Closer to Nixon— by Allen Myers	277
Dockers Strike	598	"Symbionese Liberation Army" Demands \$6 Million in	
Maoists Shelve Defense of Vietnam— by Gunnar Wall	1198	Hearst Kidnapping	279
In Defense of the Swedish Vietnam Movement	1311	"Fahizah" Describes "Symbionese Liberation Army"	286
		Nixon Trying to Curtail Impeachment Hearings	
Switzerland		— by Allen Myers	316
Bosses Trying to Manipulate Immigrants	206	Nixon Still Popular— With Kremlin	319
Dissidents in CP Youth Decide to Join Trotskyists	599	Nixon's "Confrontation" With Impeachment Committee	
Issues in the Jura Autonomy Vote	939	— by Allen Myers	330
Revolutionists Call for United Campaign to		Memos Show FBI Plot Against Black Movement	
Defend Rights of Immigrant Workers	1079	— by Baxter Smith	332
Cabinet Drafts New Abortion Bill	1365	Healyites Fail Acid Test of Watergate— by Allen Myers	348
Defeat Effort to Expel Immigrant Workers	1378	Conference Discusses Soviet Dissidents	370
Swiss Government Bans Tariq Ali	1538	White House Said to Expect Nixon's Impeachment	
		— by Allen Myers	371
Thailand		Right-Wingers Attempt to Revive Witch-Hunt	
Students March Against Tanaka Visit	87	— by Andy Rose	403
What Students Are Seeking (Interview with		Demonstrators Demand Asylum for Haitians	406
Seksan Prasertkul)	88	Latest Somersault on the Healyite Front	414
Students Protest CIA Presence	123	Victor Riesel's Attack on Fourth International	432
New Constitution, Elections Proposed	154	Congress Sees Impeachment as "Near Certainty"	
Official Says Peking Disowns Rebels	235	— by Allen Myers	435
Troops Raze "Communist" Village	304	Eight Indicted in Kent State Killings	437
Mongolia, Thailand Open Diplomatic Relations	413	On Streaking	466
Sanya Out and In as Premier	697	Impeachment Bill May Include Tax Fraud, Contempt	
Bangkok Strike Raises Minimum Wage	897	— by Allen Myers	471
Tanks Invade Chinese Quarter of Bangkok	938	Senate Hearings: Oil Companies Created Shortage	
New Constitution Voted	1365	— by Ernest Harsch	473
		Thousands in U. S., Canada Hear Edelstam	478
Timor		Bizarre Twists in Patricia Hearst Kidnapping	
Demonstration Opposes Annexation by Indonesia	1444	— by Allen Myers	511
		Socialists List Attacks by Government	512
Tunisia		Nixon Loses Another Election to Watergate	513
Dissidents Given Long Prison Terms	1154	Calley's Sentence Cut	513
Bourguiba Made President for Life	1253	The Next Phase in U. S. Foreign Policy	
		— by Dick Roberts (BR)	525
Turkey		"Guardian" Confucian?	578
Rightists Oppose Amnesty	623	Nixon's Gamble With White House Transcripts	
Amnesty Excludes Political Prisoners	661	— by Allen Myers	582
Amnesty Extended	1026	How White House Conspiracies Are Planned	584

Detente: Why Both Sides See It as Good Business		Ford Urged to End Blockade of Cuba	1512
— by Dick Roberts	600	Calley Freed on Bail	1524
Transcripts Spur Moves to Dump Nixon		Army Uses Banned "Subversive" List in Attempt	
— by Allen Myers	616	to Discharge YSA Member	1544
Banquet Marks 10 Years of "Intercontinental Press"	618	Behind the U. S. Buildup on Diego Garcia	
Rallies Demand: No Aid to Chile Junta	655	— by Peter Green	1549
Kleindienst Pleads Guilty in ITT Case	655	Should Federal Troops Be Used in Boston?	
Demand Freedom for Feliciano	674	— by Joseph Hansen	1562
Why Nixon Defies Watergate Subpoenas		High Political Score for Children— by Steven Warshell	1573
— by Allen Myers	678	Boston Crisis: "Little Rock of 1974"	1582
Magruder Draws 10-Month Sentence	679	SWP: All Necessary Force to Stop Racists	1583
Police File Charges Against Patricia Hearst	701	U. S. Journalist Tortured in Brazil	1596
The Political Evolution of Angela Atwood		With Gerald Ford All the Way to Vladivostok	1597
— by Barry Sheppard	737	A "Recession"— And It's Getting Worse	
The SALT Talks— A Cover for Nuclear Arms Race		— by Dick Fidler	1604
— by Dick Roberts	740	Long-Term Crisis in Auto Industry	1608
Nixon Abolishes Official "Subversive" List	769	Pentagon Releases Report on Mylai Cover-Up	1615
Colson's Guilty Plea Shakes Nixon Gang		Doublespeak Finals	1634
— by Allen Myers	770	Moscow OKs Pentagon Plan on Nuclear Arms Race	
Senate Votes to End Shelling of Culebra	771	— by Dick Fidler	1641
Was Slain SLA Leader a Police Informer?		The New Famine— Made in the USA— by Ernest Harsch	
— by Harry Ring	781	Grasping Tentacles of American Agribusiness— II	1647
Washington's Political Police	782	Why They Slashed the Production of Food— III	1683
Kleindienst: Sentenced or Given Award?	790	Win With WIN	1666
Why Kissinger Threatened to Resign— by Allen Myers	820	FBI Admits Surveillance Plans for Young Socialist	
Trade, Arms Race Are Focus of Moscow Summit		Convention	1673
— by Dick Fidler	883	What Ceiling in the U. S-Soviet Arms Accord?	
Congress Inches Closer to Vote on Impeachment		— by Dick Fidler	1676
— by Allen Myers	888	The Real U. S. Plan— Keep Oil Prices High	
Boom in Pet Foods	930	— by Dick Roberts	1680
"Monthly Review" Editors Make a Discovery		Eat Now, Pay Later	1697
— by Allen Myers	949		
Committee Reports Pile Up Evidence Against Nixon		Upper Volta	
— by Allen Myers	968	Army Takes Over	201
Big Jump in Arms Sales	976	Hundreds of Thousands Dead in African Famine	272
Officials Seen Suppressing Immigration Scandal	1024		
Survey Shows Young Workers Increasingly Dissatisfied	1025	Uruguay	
U. S., East Germany Open Talks	1026	Dictatorship in Crisis	175
The Impeachment Vote: Will Nixon Be (Deleted)?		"Marcha" Editor, Novelist Arrested	
— by Allen Myers	1059	— by Candida Barberena	263
James P. Cannon (February 11, 1890-August 21, 1974)	1107	Latin American Guerrillas Form Joint Committee	283
Fourth International Hails Cannon's Achievements	1107	Trotskyists Active in Underground— by Gerry Foley	479
In Tribute to Jim Cannon— by Joseph Hansen	1109	Economic, Political Crisis Deepens	484
Everybody Knows Rockefeller. But Who the Hell		Tribunal Finds 4 Latin American Juntas Guilty of	
Is Ford?— by Ernest Harsch	1115	"Crimes Against Humanity"	492
Rat No. 2 Pardons Rat No. 1	1156	Novelist Released	697
The Strange Nixon Pardon— Why Did Ford Do It?		Widespread Use of Torture Charged	850
— by Michael Baumann	1190	Seregni Released From Prison	1525
CIA Funds Behind "Strikes" Against Allende	1237		
Chile Revelations a Big "Surprise" to		Venezuela	
Congressmen— by Dick Fidler	1238	The MAS Wins 200,000 Votes	47
War Resisters Conference Rejects Ford's		A Dissenting Voice on Siqueiros	122
"Amnesty" Swindle	1252	Oil Nationalization: On Whose Terms?	203
Ford Declares Economic War on Oil Countries		CP Splits	622
— by Dick Fidler	1268	Perspectives for Revolutionists	946
President of Venezuela Answers Ford	1272	President Answers Ford's Threats of Economic	
Defendants Win in Wounded Knee Trial		War Over Oil Prices	1272
— by Lee Gearhart	1282		
Who is Alexander Haig?	1293	Vietnam, North (Also see Indochina War)	
Racists Terrorize Boston Black Community	1352	U. S. Press Debates Meaning of Hanoi Speech	
New Facts on CIA Operation in Chile	1387	— by Michael Baumann	341
Reveal White House "Tilt" Toward South Africa		National Assembly Sets Tasks	365
— by Peter Green	1391	Pham Van Dong Interviewed in Sweden	566
Threat of World Slump Alarms "Business Week"		Moscow, Peking Cut Military Aid	1329
— by Dick Fidler	1441		
Castro Forecasts Change in Washington's Cuba Policy	1444	Vietnam, South (Also see Indochina War)	
U. S., Spain to Begin Talks on Bases	1444	Defoliation Effects May Last a Century	258
Police Attribute New York Bombings to Puerto		U. S. Funds, "Advisers" Continue War	
Rican Nationalists	1445	— by Michael Baumann	281
Auto Makers Cut Back Investment, Lay Off		Thieu Holds 200,000 Political Prisoners	395
Workers, As Sales Decline	1445	List Prisoners Held	402
Top CIA Men in Parleys With Portuguese Officials	1468	New Zealand Labour Regime Helps Nixon Prop Up Thieu	477
20,000 at New York Rally Demand "Free Puerto		Tokyo to Aid Thieu	492
Rico Now"	1480	Saigon Buddhists Protest Imprisonment	492

Washington "Finds" More Millions for Thieu — by Michael Baumann	514	Tito Jails 32 in Pro-Moscow Group	1234
Report 24,000 U. S. "Advisers" in Vietnam	596	Dissident Professors Win Broad Support	1277
Pentagon Stockpiles Arms for Saigon	619	Five Students Jailed for Supporting Professors	1404
Book Describes Thieu's Prisons	826	16 Croatians Charged With Plotting Against Belgrade	1405
NLF Looks at Watergate	837	Dissident Professors Face Renewed Attacks by Regime	1574
185,000 Casualties in "Peace"	941	16 Croatians Tried as Terrorists	1650
Heaviest Casualties Since Cease-Fire Agreements	1076		
New Communist 'Offensive'?— by Peter Green	1202	Zaire	
Thieu Faces a New Opposition— by Peter Green	1295	Government Nationalizes Japanese Firms	623
Catholics Protest Thieu Dictatorship	1403		
Demonstrators Demand Thieu Resign	1404	Zambia	
Growing Clamor to Get Rid of Thieu— by Peter Green	1464	Kaunda's Regime and Colonized Southern Africa (Interview With a Trotskyist)	490
Washington to Give Thieu \$50 Million Through World Bank	1664		
		Zimbabwe	
Yugoslavia		Smith Steps Up War Against Guerrillas — by Ernest Harsch	518
History of Repression at Belgrade University	189	Smith Orders New Rhodesian Elections	896
Tito Elected President-for-Life	660	South African "Volunteers" to Fight Guerrillas	1136
Purge of CP	697	Electoral Sweep Renews Smith Regime's Grip	1136
Yugoslavia Publishes "Revolution Betrayed"	745	Zimbabwe Groups Unite	1699
The Repression Today— by Bob Thompson	784		

Subjects

Books

"The Gulag Archipelago," by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn — reviewed by Ernest Harsch	8	"The American Radical Press, 1880-1960," edited by Joseph Conlin— reviewed by Ernest Harsch	1412
"Bulletin of the Opposition," edited by Leon Trotsky— reviewed by "Times Literary Supplement"	27	Documents — Statements of the Fourth International	
"Report on Torture," by Amnesty International — reviewed by David Burton	61	On the Social Crisis in Britain	124
"The Impeachment of Richard Nixon," by Leonard Lurie; "The Strange Case of Richard Milhous Nixon," by Jerry Voorhis; "Watergate," by Lewis Chester, Cal McCrystal, Stephen Aris, and William Shawcross; "Watergate: Crime in the Suites," by Michael Myerson; and "The Watergate Hearings," edited by the "New York Times"— reviewed by Allen Myers	221	The Fall of the Dictatorship and the Revolutionary Upsurge in Portugal	834
"The Gulag Archipelago," by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn — reviewed by Roy Medvedev	358	Whither the PST?	1145
"The Next Phase in Foreign Policy," edited by Henry Owen— reviewed by Dick Roberts	525	Documents — General	
"Letter to Soviet Leaders From A. Solzhenitsyn"; and "Samizdat: Voices of the Soviet Opposition," edited by George Saunders— reviewed by Ken Coates	669	History of Repression at Belgrade University	189
"Den norske kvinnebevegelses historie," by Anna Caspari— reviewed by Eva Almhjell	670	Grigorenko's Appeal to 1968 CP Meeting	249
Who Controls North Atlantic Fishing?— by Hans- Erik Rasmussen	671	Latin American Guerrillas Form Joint Committee	283
"For the Independent, Peaceful Reunification of the Country," by Kim Il Sung— reviewed by George Johnson	744	"Fahizah" Describes "Symbionese Liberation Army"	286
Yugoslavia Publishes "Revolution Betrayed"	745	Irish Writers Protest Exile of Solzhenitsyn	288
"Japanese Imperialism Today," by Jon Halliday and Gavan McCormack— reviewed by Ernest Harsch	794	Roy Medvedev's Review of "The Gulag Archipelago"	358
		North Vietnam National Assembly Sets Tasks	365
"Revolutionaries in Mao's Prisons: The Case of the Chinese Trotskyists," by Li Fu-jen and Peng Shu-tse— reviewed by Ernest Harsch	955	Soviet Dissidents, Bukovsky's Mother Ask Aid	399
"Perspective" Reviews "Disaster in Chile"	1008	Argentine PRT's Position on Fourth International Correction	427
"The Gulag Archipelago," by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn— reviewed by Ernest Mandel	1051	Victor Riesel's Attack on Fourth International	436
"Report From the Beria Reserve," by Valentyn Moroz— reviewed by Marilyn Vogt	1127	Pavel Litvinov's Appeal for Soviet Dissidents	463
"War and an Irish Town," by Eamonn McCann — reviewed by Brian Lyons	1215	Call for Day of Actions in Defense of Grigorenko	496
"Latin American Perspectives"	1351	MIR Leader Discusses Resistance Strategy	574
"Chile's Days of Terror," edited by Judy White — reviewed by Ernest Harsch	1366	Franz Marek on East European Opposition	638
		Brittany Conference Issues Anti-Imperialist Call	639
		Committee to Defend Brazilian Political Prisoners	671
		Soviet Prisoners Demand National Rights	695
		Petition in Britain for Dzyuba and Chornovil	751
		Soviet Dissident's Appeal for Moroz	752
		Colonialist Attack in Cape Verde	799
		Portuguese Soldiers Call for Halt to War	800
		South Vietnam NLF Looks at Watergate	837
		The Continuing Persecution of Pyotr Grigorenko	839
		Program of Palestine National Council	840
		Rohan Wijeweera's Defense Speech in JVP Trial	841
		Appeals Describe Effort to Starve Bukovsky	926
		Appeal by Chilean Union Federation	928
		Stand of Greek Students on Cyprus Issue and Battle for Democracy in Greece	1171
		Demand Arrest of Agents of Greek Junta	1172
		Twenty Proposed Changes in Greek Labor Laws	1376
		Conditions at Long Kesh and Crumlin Road	1424
		From Stalinism to Trotskyism in New Zealand — by John Colquhoun	1453

Spanish Police Report Arrest of Trotskyist Group	1454
GMR's Stand on Sunday Labor in Portugal	1456
Statement of Portuguese Postal Workers	1456
Roy Medvedev Debates With Panin, Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn, and Others	1499
Repression in Franco's Jails	1534
Czechoslovak Former Political Prisoners Pose Cases of Chile and Czechoslovakia	1584
Bonn's "Special Treatment" for Political Prisoners	1632
Problems of Democratization and Detente—by Roy Medvedev	1657
Greek Soldiers Demand Discharge	1664
"A Red Stomach Tube Is Used"—by Holger Meins	1709
Thirteen Days in Pinochet's Torture Chambers	1710
Open Letter From Raissa Moroz	1711

Documents — Trotskyist

A General Strike to Bring Down the Tory Government	29
Joint Statement of Israeli and Arab Revolutionists	31
Position of LCR-ETA(VI) on Assassination of Carrero Blanco	62
Interview With Member of LCR-ETA(VI)	62
Statement of Indian Trotskyists on Bombay General Strike	96
Israeli Trotskyists' Position on Knesset Elections	125
Argentine PST Position on Peron's Repressive Laws	127
Liga Comunista Position on Carrero Assassination	155
Lebanese Trotskyists Denounce Plans to Liquidate Palestinian Cause	186
How Guerrilla Raid Was Used by Peronist Regime	188
For Action Against the Murderers of Salvador Puig	320
"We Are All Salvador Puig Antich"	425
On the Workers Offensive in Martinique	495
Long Live the Revolutionary Communist Front	527
The Situation in Laos	528
Vote Labor But Fight for Socialist Policies	570
Action Program for a French Workers Government	571
Which Way Forward to a United Ireland?	573
Coral Confronts Peron With Five Demands	606
On the May Day Demonstration in Lisbon	672
Ireland Bombings Require United-Front Response	694
May Day Manifesto of Argentine PST	746
The Situation in Portugal	795
"Woe to Revolutionists Who Make a Revolution Only Halfway"	798
For an NDP Government With Socialist Policies	836
Program of LSA in Canadian Election	875
Program of RMG in Canadian Election	878
For a "Third Round" of Social Struggles in France	955
No PST Signature on Statement Handed to Peron	960
"Institutionalization" and Rightist Threat in Argentina	1004
In Defense of the PST and the Truth	1147
Correction	1280
Greek Trotskyists Appeal to Trade-Union Activists	1152
Peron's Real Heirs	1173
For United Action Against Repression in Portugal	1174
"Shooting Irons" Not the Dividing Line in Argentina	1230
"Avanzada Socialista" Analyzes Turn of Montoneros	1260
Trotsky, Cannon Discuss Preparatory Work for Founding Congress of Fourth International	1303
Official IRA Heads Down Blind Alley	1310
In Defense of the Swedish Vietnam Movement	1311
Big Struggles On the Agenda in Argentina	1342
No "Reconciliation" With Greek Army	1344
The Bar Rolando Bombing — Whose Responsibility?	1374
Balance Sheet on the Argentine "Multisectoral"	1419
PST Statement at the "Multisectoral"	1421
What Chances for Papandreu's New Party? —by Th.	1422
GRS View of Left Unity in Martinique —by Edouard Delepine	1504
LCR-ETA(VI) Denounces Report of Spanish Police	1534
Boston Crisis: "Little Rock of 1974"	1582
SWP: All Necessary Force to Stop Racists	1583

The Danger of Ultraleft Tactics in Fighting Fascists—by Leon Trotsky	1629
Background to Trotsky's Letter on Tactics in Fighting Fascists—by Gerry Foley	1630
The Death of Holger Meins—Down With Solitary Confinement	1707
The Assassination of Judge Drenkmann—a Blow to Defense of Political Prisoners	1708
Behind Caramanlis's Victory in Greek Elections	1712
Documents of the Fourth World Congress Since Reunification (Tenth Congress)	1713

Drawings by Copain

Allende Gossens, Salvador	46, 1153
Arafat, Yasir	168, 936, 1537
Arias Navarro, Carlos	158, 412
Assad, Hafez	716
Baker, Howard	14
Balaguer, Joaquin	653
Balbin, Ricardo	984, 1369, 1675
Bandaranaike, Sirimavo	843
Barzani, Mustafa	667, 860
Berlinguer, Enrico	858
Bhutto, Zulfikar Ali	274, 1355
Bordaberry, Juan Maria	264
Bork, Robert	351
Bras, Juan Mari	605, 1473
Brezhnev, Leonid	250, 543, 884
Bukovsky, Vladimir	400
Caetano, Marcello	337, 532, 797
Cannon, James P.	1226
Caramanlis, Constantine	1062, 1209, 1521
Carrero Blanco, Luis	156
Castro, Fidel	542, 1046, 1168, 1222
Ceausescu, Nicolae	121
Chaban-Delmas, Jacques	560, 956
Chalidze, Valerie	1501
Chou En-lai	235
Colson, Charles	318, 889
Coral, Juan Carlos	48, 480, 757, 1542
Corvalan Lepe, Luis	263, 1024
Cosgrave, Liam	449
Craig, William	718
Cunhal, Alvaro	923, 1133
Dange, S. A.	486, 767
Dayan, Moshe	467, 678, 966
Dean, John	83, 277
Devlin, Bernadette	137
Dong, Pham Van	566
Eban, Abba	763
Ehrlichman, John	13, 171, 317, 770
Ervin, Sam	14
Faisal	36, 77, 1265
Faulkner, Brian	150, 448, 992
Foot, Michael	408, 650
Ford, Gerald	436, 472, 1177, 1606
Franco, Francisco	160
Frei, Eduardo	180
Gandhi, Indira	59, 305, 458, 1678
Gelbard, Jose	1301
Giscard d'Estaing, Valery	682, 909, 1561, 1592
Goulding, Cathal	420
Gowon, Yakubu	445
Gray, L. Patrick	205
Grigorenko, Pyotr	197, 546, 899
Gromyko, Andrei	3
Haig, Alexander	140
Haldeman, H. R.	140, 173
Hawatmeh, Nayef	705
Healey, Denis	1600
Heath, Edward	65, 72, 164, 265
Hoover, J. Edgar	404
Hunt, E. Howard	224
Hussein	170

Jaworski, Leon	172, 679	Washington Threatens Military Action Against Arab-Persian Gulf States	37
Kaunda, Kenneth	491	The Arab Embargo and the Oil Trusts' Response Correction	37
Kelley, Clarence	782	The Arab Oil Boycott: A Conspiracy With the Trusts?	77
Kim Il Sung	745	U. S. Imperialism and the World Energy Crisis — by Ernest Harsch	75
Kissinger, Henry	12, 54, 67, 232, 344, 874, 884, 996, 1155, 1185, 1510, 1540, 1677	Shortage of Energy: Natural Exhaustion or Social Misuse?	104
Kleindienst, Richard	51	Oil Giants Press Attack on Pollution Restrictions — by Ernest Harsch	108
Krivine, Alain	510	Oil Profits and the Tax Game — by Ernest Harsch	141
Laird, Melvin	52	Tokyo Responds to the Energy Crisis — by Ernest Harsch	208
Leigh, Gustavo	20, 539	Washington Orders "Allies" Back Into Line — by Ernest Harsch	232
Lin Piao	919	How Oil Giants Tightened Screws on Tokyo	396
Litvinov, Pavel	255, 464	Oil Shortage Threatens Famine in Asia, Africa Correction	398
Lon Nol	425	U. S. Senate Hearings: Oil Companies Created Shortage — by Ernest Harsch	448
Lopez Rega	987	Ford Declares Economic War On Oil Countries — by Dick Fidler	1268
Machel, Samora	1245	Oil-Producing Countries Tell Off Ford — by Dick Fidler	1315
Makarios, Archbishop	1012	Castro Calls for Unity Behind Oil Producers	1356
Mao Tsetung	793	Imperialists Move to Cut Oil Imports	1398
Marcos, Ferdinand	275	Pentagon Plots War in Arab East — by Dick Fidler	1510
Mari Bras, Juan	1473		
Marquez, Pompeyo	922		
McCann, Eamonn	1216		
Medvedev, Zhores	196		
Meir, Golda	42, 115, 643		
Mills, Wilbur	435, 1003		
Mitchell, John	969		
Mitterrand, Francois	536, 1610		
Mor Roig, Arturo	606		
Muskie, Edmund	473		
Muzorewa, Abel	951		
Neto, Agostinho	714		
Nixon, Richard	11, 40, 54, 109, 318, 583, 1059		
Papadopoulos, George	1431		
Park Chung Hee	1360		
Peron, Juan	97, 748, 929		
Petkoff, Teodoro	47, 947		
Pinochet Ugarte, Augusto	19, 179, 382, 439		
Powell, Enoch	389		
Rahman, Mujibur	183		
Rockefeller, Nelson	353		
Rucci, Jose	101		
Rumor, Mariano	823		
el-Sadat, Anwar	4, 65, 70, 533		
Schlesinger, James	741, 828		
Schmidt, Helmut	908, 1042		
Scott, Hugh	139, 371, 616		
Selassie, Haile	271, 295, 973, 1298		
Sinyavsky, Andrei	253		
Smith, Ian	519		
Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr	1, 165, 193, 360, 670, 1056		
Souvanna Phouma	528		
Spinola, Antonio de	451, 531, 579, 849, 961, 1336		
Suharto	60		
Tanaka, Kakuei	88, 211, 398, 1399, 1643		
Thanom Kittikachorn	91		
Thieu, Nguyen Van	343, 396		
Tito, Josip Broz	191, 784		
Trudeau, Pierre	662, 971, 1400		
Velasco Alvarado, Juan	654, 1219		
Wallace, George	223		
Whitlam, Gough	571, 625, 1602		
Wilson, Harold	74, 163, 385, 690, 1249, 1380		
Yamani, Ahmed Zaki	39, 210		
Yevtushenko, Yevgeny	225, 240		
Drawings by David			
Franco, Francisco	15		
Heath, Edward	133, 257		
Meir, Golda	465		
Drawings by Laura Gray			
Joseph Stalin	299, 1054		
Energy Crisis			
More Profits for the Oil Giants — by Ernest Harsch	35		
		Features	
		How We Overcame Ultraleftism in Defense Work (Interview With James P. Cannon)	22
		"New York Times" Does a Whitewash on Siqueiros	55
		Trotsky's Exile in Norway — by Jan Bjarne Boe	92
		A Dissenting Voice From Venezuela on Siqueiros	122
		Why U. S. Maoists Fail to Form "New Communist Party" — by Jan Hillson	212
		Fourth International Holds Tenth Congress	323
		How Reformists Saved Belgian Monarchy — by Eddy Labeau	346
		Detente: Why Both Sides See It as Good Business — by Dick Roberts	600
		Millions Celebrated Workers Holiday	624
		The SALT Talks — A Cover for Nuclear Arms Race — by Dick Roberts	740
		John MacLean and Scottish Socialism (Interview With a Colleague)	902
		The Common Market in Crisis — by Ernest Mandel	907
		On the Situation in Latin America (Interview With Hugo Blanco)	990
		The "Explosive Inflation" They Failed to Foresee — by Dick Roberts	1028
		Anyone Can Join the "Nuclear Club" — by Ernest Harsch	1035
		The Ripening Conditions for Worldwide Depression — by Dick Roberts	1081
		A New Leap in the Nuclear Armaments Race — by Ernest Harsch	1094
		James P. Cannon (February 11, 1890-August 21, 1974)	1107
		Fourth International Hails Cannon's Achievements	1107
		In Tribute to Jim Cannon — by Joseph Hansen	1109
		Mounting Fear That It's a Worldwide Recession — by Dick Fidler	1157
		Where UN Goes Wrong on "Population Explosion" — by Ernest Harsch	1254
		Oil-Producing Countries Tell Off Ford — by Dick Fidler	1315
		How to Make a Fast Buck Out of Starving Children — by Ernest Harsch	1324
		Imperialists Move to Cut Oil Imports	1398
		The Crisis in the Automobile Industry — by Ernest Mandel	1406
		A Note on Careers of Bejar and Blanco — by Gerry Foley	1433

Hugo Blanco and Hector Bejar Cross Swords	1434	Indochina War (Also see Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam)	
An Arab and Iranian Finance Capital Emerges		U. S. Funds, "Advisers" Continue War	
— by Ernest Mandel	1437	— by Michael Baumann	281
Threat of World Slump Alarms "Business Week"		New Figures on U. S. Military Aid to Saigon	340
— by Dick Fidler	1441	U. S. Press Debates Meaning of Hanoi Speech	
Invest in Food— and Watch Profits Grow	1536	— by Michael Baumann	341
Why Public Transport is Falling Apart		U. S. "Advisers" in Cambodia Fighting	424
— by Jim McIlroy	1570	Washington "Finds" More Millions for Thieu	
The New Famine— Made in the USA— by Ernest Harsch		— by Michael Baumann	514
Rise of Hunger Around the Globe— I	1587	Report 24,000 U. S. "Advisers" in Vietnam	596
Grasping Tentacles of American Agribusiness— II	1647	Pentagon Stockpiles Arms for Saigon	619
Why They Slashed the Production of Food— III	1683	Pentagon Admits Weather-Warfare	660
Food Conference: No Relief to the Hungry		Role of Moscow and Peking in Vietnam Accords	
— by Ernest Harsch	1591	— by Dick Roberts	862
With Gerald Ford All the Way to Vladivostok	1597	185,000 Casualties in Vietnam "Peace"	941
What Ceiling in the U. S.-Soviet Arms Accord?		Heaviest Vietnam Casualties Since Cease-Fire	
— by Dick Fidler	1676	Agreements	1076
Detente and Democratization Viewed From		New Communist "Offensive"?— by Peter Green	1202
Within the U. S.— by George Novack	1692	Thieu Faces a New Opposition— by Peter Green	1295

En español

Analisis

SALT— Encubre la Carrera Armamentista	
— por Dick Roberts	828
Error de la ONU Sobre la "Explosion Demografica"	
— por Ernest Harsch	1338
Amenaza de Crisis Mundial Alarma a "Business Week"	
— por Dick Fidler	1449
Peligrosa Tactica Ultraizquierdista en la Lucha	
Contra los Fascistas— por Leon Trotsky	1652
Antecedentes de Carta de Trotsky Sobre Tacticas	
en Lucha Contra los Fascistas— por Gerry Foley	1701

America Latina

Entrevista con Hugo Blanco	953
Nota Sobre las Trayectorias de Bejar y Blanco	
— por Gerry Foley	1492
Blanco y Bejar Intercambian Palabras	1493

Angola

Racistas Blancos Intensifican su Accion	
Terrorista— por Hugo Blanco	1144

Argentina

Matones Derechistas Asesinan a Tres	
Trotskistas—por Judy White	708
Funeral de los Trotskistas Asesinados	
— por Judy White	756
Peron Lanza una Campana Contra los "Traidores"	
— por Judy White	815
Obreros Lanzan Huelgas— por Judy White	915
Mas Ataques Derechistas Contra el PST	952
Treinta Anos de Peronismo	997
Ahora Mas que Nunca, un Partido Obrero	999
Un Dialogo con Peron	1001
El PST No Firma "Declaracion de los 8"	1002
¿A Donde Va el PST?	1178
En Defensa del PST y la Verdad	1180
Fe de Erratas	1256
Despues de la Muerte de Peron	1300
Acto Por Chile en Buenos Aires	1337
Derechistas Atacan Sindicato Clave de Cordoba	
— por Gerry Foley	1367
Policia y Bandas Derechistas Atacan al PST	1368

Asesinos de Ultraderecha: Nuevo Peligro	1447
Policia Mata a Cordobesa	1496
Asesinan Tres Trotskistas Argentinos	
— por Gerry Foley	1497
Sindicalistas Colombianos Repudian Asesinatos	
y Represion en Argentina	1706

Asia

Asia Tiene el Record de Presos Politicos	1579
------------------------------------------	------

Brasil

Trotskistas Publican Periodico Clandestino	1653
--------------------------------------------	------

Canada

Candidatos Socialistas en las Elecciones	870
------------------------------------------	-----

Chile

Protestas Denuncian Regimen Sanguinario	
— por Judy White	1296
Acto Por Chile en Buenos Aires	1337
Ford Aprueba Trabajo de la CIA en Chile	
— por Dick Fidler	1340
Reconstruyen Frente Popular en la Clandestinidad	1372
Campana Logra Libertad de Luis Vitale	1703

China

La Campana Contra Confucio Apunta Hacia la	
Juventud Rebelde— por Les Evans	917

Colombia

Lopez Propone un "Pacto Social"	926
---------------------------------	-----

Corea del Sur

Park y Tanaka Hacen las Paces— por Peter Green	1416
Protestas en Seul y Tokyo Contra Park	1417

Cuba

Prueba Proyecto Electoral en Matanzas	
— por Dick Fidler	1044
¿Fin de las Sanciones de la OEA contra Cuba?	
— por Dick Fidler	1222

Documentos

¿A Donde Va el PST?	1178
	1887

En Defensa del PST y la Verdad	1180	Protestas en Seul y Tokyo Contra Park	1417
Fe de Erratas	1256	Una Entrevista con Yohichi Sakai	1704
Trotsky, Cannon Discuten Trabajo Para Preparar Congreso de Fundacion de la Cuarta Internacional	1526	Libros	
Peligrosa Tactica Ultraizquierdista en la Lucha Contra los Fascistas — por Leon Trotsky	1652	Escritos de un "Ucraniano Terco" — comentado por Marilyn Vogt	1228
Antecedentes de Carta de Trotsky Sobre Tacticas en Lucha Contra los Fascistas — por Gerry Foley	1701	Medio Oriente	
Sindicalistas Colombianos Repudian Asesinatos y Represion en Argentina	1706	Que Logro Kissinger en Damasco y Tel Aviv — por Michael Baumann	763
Espana		Mexico	
Los Stalinistas Alaban a la Iglesia y al Ejercito	1104	La Guerrilla Sacude Guerrero	1102
La Bomba del Bar Rolando: ¿Quien Es Responsable?	1370	El Viejo Cacique Supera a Sus Secuestradores — por Eugenia Aranda	1220
Situacion en las Prisiones Franquistas	1578	Entrevista con James P. Cannon: Discusion con un Joven Revolucionario Mexicano	1225
Obreros Espanoles del Automotor Salen a Huelga en Varias Plantas — por Judy White	1580	Los Trabajadores Necesitan Mas Salario — por Eugenia Aranda	1373
E. U. A.		Surge un Nuevo Partido — por Ricardo Ramos	1495
Por que Kissinger Amenazo con Renunciar — por Allen Myers	872	Antonio Maldonado Asesinado en Tlaxcala	1628
Sindicatos Exigen Aumento de Salarios — por Andy Rose	1003	Peru	
James P. Cannon (11 de febrero de 1890-21 de agosto de 1974)	1137	Gobierno Peruano Abre Campana Contra la Tortura — por Nestor Paz	1219
La Cuarta Internacional Elogia Triunfos de Cannon	1137	Nota Sobre las Trayectorias de Bejar y Blanco — por Gerry Foley	1492
Homenaje a Jim Cannon — por Joseph Hansen	1139	Blanco y Bejar Intercambian Palabras	1493
Todos Conocemos al Multimillonario Rockefeller, Pero ¿Quien Diablos es Ford?	1176	Exijamos Libertad de Laura Caller	1703
Indulto de Nixon: "Justicia" Capitalista	1256	Polonia	
¿Quien Es Alexander Haig?	1415	Huelgas de Agosto en Puertos Balticos — por Olaf Klarnat	1576
Los Hechos de Boston	1418	Portugal	
¿Deben Intervenir en Boston Tropas Federales? — por Joseph Hansen	1616	Estudiantes Africanos Toman una Agencia Colonial — por Gerry Foley	711
Boston: "Little Rock de 1974"	1625	Acto para Discutir el Futuro — por Gerry Foley	760
Parar la Ofensiva Racista	1627	Soldados Piden que se Acabe la Guerra	800
Etiopia		El PC, Guardian del Capitalismo — por Hugo Blanco	809
Los Militares Echan a Selassie a la Calle — por Dick Fidler	1297	Spinola Lanza una Ofensiva Contra la Izquierda — por Gerry Foley	810
Europa		La Junta Impone la Censura — por Gerry Foley	923
El Mercado Comun en Crisis — por Ernest Mandel	1040	Primera Crisis del Gabinete en Portugal — por Hugo Blanco	1100
Francia		Spinola Renuncia Como Presidente — por Gerry Foley	1335
Peligrosa Tactica Ultraizquierdista en la Lucha Contra los Fascistas — por Leon Trotsky	1652	Las Peligrosas Ilusiones en el Ejercito Portugues — por A. Romero	1446
Antecedentes de Carta de Trotsky Sobre Tacticas en Lucha Contra los Fascistas — por Gerry Foley	1701	GMR Opina Sobre el Domingo de Trabajo	1581
Gran Bretana		Medidas "Educativas" del Gobierno Portugues — por Antonio Romero	1654
Reducida Mayoria Laborista en las Elecciones	1414	Puerto Rico	
Grecia		¿Y los Aborteros Donde Estan?	1656
Alegria de las Masas por la Caída de la Junta — por Gerry Foley	1097	U. R. S. S.	
Como Mantiene Caramanlis la "Ley y el Orden" — por Giannis Felekis	1218	El Movimiento de Oposicion en Ucrania — por Oleh Ilnytskyj	732
Estudiantes Opinan Sobre Chipre y la Lucha Democratica	1258	Grigorenko Ha Sido Liberado	951
Denuncian a Agentes de la Junta	1260	Venezuela	
Ninguna "Reconciliacion" Con el Ejercito	1452	Perspectivas para los Revolucionarios	920
Hungria		Vietnam	
Mujeres Demandan Derecho al Aborto	1050	Papel de Moscu, Pekin en los Acuerdos — por Dick Roberts	995
Irlanda		Yugoslavia	
Huelga Derechista Derriba a Faulkner	772	La Represion — por Bob Thompson	871
Israel		Zimbabue	
Exigen Libertad de Prisioneros Arabes	1050	Smith Convoca a Elecciones en Rodesia	951
Japon			
Park y Tanaka Hacen las Paces — por Peter Green	1416		
1888			