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Portuguese Expect Violence

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Politically motivated street violence occurred in Portugal over the weekend, and more is expected this week.

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The forced cancellation of the first congress of the Social Democratic Center Party by radical left-wing groups bodes ill for free and orderly elections this spring. Party delegates and observers from several European parties were trapped overnight inside the congress hall in Oporto, Portugal's second largest city. Police kept demonstrators from breaking in, but the crowd could not be dispersed until security forces arrived from Lisbon early yesterday.

Leaders of the Social Democratic Center, dubbed "fascist" by the left, had anticipated violence; groups of extreme leftists had ransacked their headquarters and broken up a party youth rally late last year, and the far left had said it would prevent the congress from taking place.

Extremist groups calling for the dissolution of the Social Democratic Center held another demonstration in Oporto yesterday with security forces present. Democratic Center leaders reportedly are considering disbanding; if they do, no right-of-center party worth mentioning will participate in the constituent assembly elections.

The Communists, meanwhile, have announced they will hold a demonstration in Lisbon on Friday to compete with one already scheduled by the Socialists. The Socialists have called their demonstration to show continuing opposition to the unitary labor law approved by the cabinet last week. The Communists, who reportedly believe the Socialist rally will be successful, hope to draw off some of its support. Tensions are rising, and a clash between the two groups could become serious.

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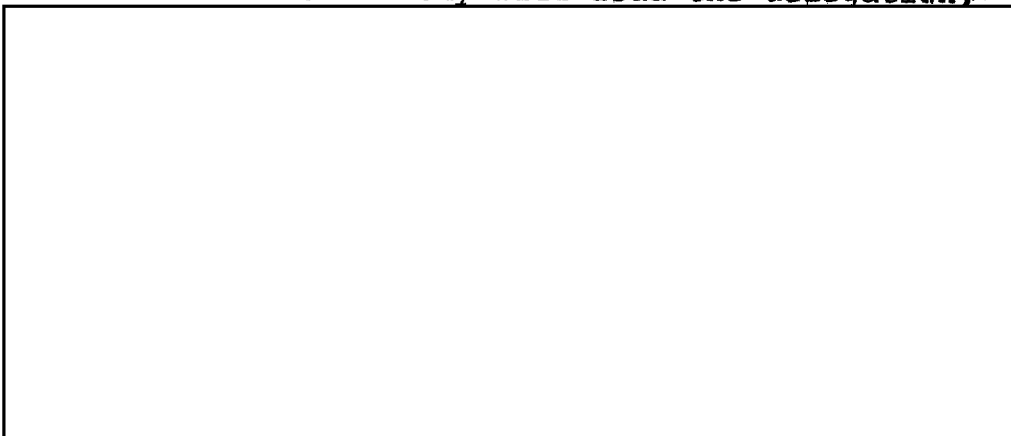
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Socialist International to Make Second Middle East Trip Next Month

The second Socialist International fact-finding mission to the Middle East is to visit Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya February 8-14. Austrian Chancellor and Socialist Party Chairman Bruno Kreisky will lead the delegation.

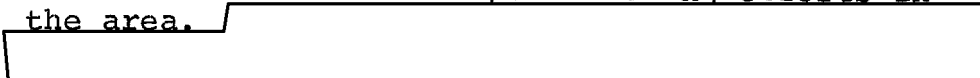
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The group's first formal visit to the Arab world occurred last March as a result of the Socialist International's decision in 1973 that it could no longer support only Israel. That delegation, which Kreisky also led, went to Syria, Egypt, and Israel. The Egyptians and Syrians expressed predictable interest in more trade but were not interested in possible links between the Socialist International and their own so-called Socialist parties.

Kreisky has stressed that the delegation will not interfere with peace-making efforts in the area.

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Concern about Human Rights in Chile

The UN Human Rights Commission--which opens its 31st session next week in Geneva--will spend a great deal of time discussing the human rights situation in Chile. Chile has been a standing item on the Commission's agenda since the September 1973 coup. Moreover, in a resolution passed during the recent UN session, the General Assembly requested the Human Rights Commission to continue to study the situation. In addition to the Chilean situation, the meeting will also discuss a report prepared last year by a subgroup of the Commission, which levied accusations--ranging from widespread torture in Brazil to political executions in Uganda--at five countries, including Chile.

A number of West European countries--joined by the US--have already attempted to head off an expected violent attack on Chile by the Soviets and their allies by drawing up a resolution that they hope will command broad support. While the wording of the resolution has not yet been worked out, the Europeans hope to produce compromise language that would continue the Commission's involvement by sending a fact-finding group to Chile or by considering the reports of already concluded investigations by other groups, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The major objective of the West Europeans in presenting a balanced solution is to gain Chile's acceptance of the proposal. Earlier this month Chilean President Pinochet refused to allow two representatives of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to visit Chile on a similar mission, and the Europeans do not want their resolution to result in a similar Chilean response. [REDACTED]

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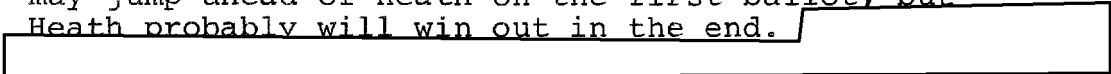
British Tory Party to Elect Leader

The Conservative Party is gearing up this week to elect its party leader. The hierarchy believes that the party needs a leader with firm rank-and-file backing to face up to parliamentary debates on such important issues as EC membership, the defense review, and economic policy. The complicated election procedure, however, could lead to the re-election of former prime minister Heath, even though he has only luke-warm support within the party.

Under the terms of the electoral procedure adopted last fall after Heath lost his second national election in nine months, the first ballot will be held on February 4. If no candidate wins a majority, a second ballot will be held a week later, and a third, if necessary, on February 13. Heath has announced that he will be a candidate through all three ballots.

Despite opposition from the party's committee of parliamentary back benchers, Heath has shown determination to fight to retain his leadership role. Thus far, few inspiring challengers have appeared. Margaret Thatcher, a shadow deputy chancellor of the exchequer, has been the only other serious candidate, although Hugh Fraser, a staunchly conservative, right-wing Tory who served in the cabinet in the early 1960s, has also declared his candidacy.

Other prominent Tories such as William Whitelaw, the respected former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland as well as employment minister, and shadow Home Secretary James Prior could throw their hats into the ring before the second ballot if Heath does not win a vote of confidence on the first round. It now appears that these challengers will have little effect on the final outcome. Thatcher may jump ahead of Heath on the first ballot, but Heath probably will win out in the end.



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