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Italy 46  
WESTERN EUROPE

7. Italian Government May Fall

Continuing pressures for a more broadly based, center-left government in Italy are expected to bring about the resignation of Premier Fanfani's minority Christian Democratic government shortly before or after 27 January. The left-center Social Democrats and Republicans have announced that they will withdraw their support from Fanfani's government on this date, when the Christian Democrats' national party congress begins. These two parties hope to force the Christian Democrats to join them in forming a government which would also receive parliamentary support from the Nenni Socialists.

Fanfani and Christian Democratic secretary Moro favor such a government, and the party congress is expected to pass a resolution approving it. A powerful minority in the Christian Democratic party, however, will seek to block its implementation.

The Republican party's left wing is in favor of forming a center-left government based on parliamentary support from the Nenni Socialists--who control 87 of the 596 seats in the Italian Chamber of Deputies--but it lost ground in recent party balloting in several areas of northern Italy to the right wing, which opposes formation of such a government.

However, the political strength of right-wing spokesman Randolfo Pacciardi has been weakened by his involvement in the Fiumicino airport scandal, now under investigation, and his resultant resignation as chairman of the Chamber of Deputies' defense committee.

While Social Democratic party leader Giuseppe Saragat's decision to press now for a Socialist-backed center-left government is motivated by a desire for social reform, he also hopes to attract Socialist support for his candidacy for president of the republic, who will be chosen by parliament in May. In addition, with national parliamentary elections likely before the end of the current term in 1963, Saragat wants to establish the basis for an electoral campaign without close identification with a Christian Democratic government. He apparently fears that his party's inability to exert strong influence on the policy of government coalitions in which it has participated is one factor in its loss of votes over the years.

Increasingly open advocacy of the formation of a Socialist-backed government by Christian Democratic leaders has improved its chances. Premier Fanfani's speech at Caserta on 1 December was widely interpreted as a plug for it, and on 1 January

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party secretary Moro told the press he believes such a government is necessary to the life of the country. Nevertheless, the conservative Liberal party, which would be left out of such a coalition, and the right-wing Christian Democrats will work to prevent it--as will the Communists, who fear political isolation.

The Nenni Socialist left wing, for its part, continues to resist the party's loosening of ties with the Communists and may press for concessions which the Christian Democrats could not grant in exchange for Socialist support. Although the domestic planks of the draft program the Socialists

have prepared closely resemble those suggested by the Christian Democratic youth group, some of these planks are already under attack by right-wing Christian Democrats, and the Socialist left wing may try to add an unacceptable foreign policy plank when the Socialist central council meets this week to consider the program.

  
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