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Europe

NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN ITALY

Results of Italy's national elections on 28 and 29 April will probably favor continuation of Amintore Fanfani's center-left government--backed in Parliament by Pietro Nenni's Italian Socialist Party--despite expected losses by Fanfani's Christian Democrats. The small Social Democratic Party is expected to gain heavily from its role as principal architect of the center-left formula. The Republican Party, the Christian Democrats' other cabinet partner, will remain negligible in strength despite the increased prominence of Republican Budget Minister La Malfa. Most observers feel the Nenni Socialists will be lucky to hold their own.

The three cabinet parties and their Socialist allies have toned down the mutual recriminations which marked the earlier weeks of the election campaign. Both Fanfani and Christian Democratic Party Secretary Moro have urged voters who do not choose to support the major party to back its allies, including the Nenni Socialists.

Besides Fanfani's "opening to the left," another new factor in this campaign is Italy's "economic miracle" which had not fully developed at the time of the last national elections (1958) and for which both Christian Democrats and Communists claim credit. Another development is the move to the right by the already conservative Liberal Party, which is bitterly attacking the Christian Democrats, and is expected to show a substantial gain over its 3.4-percent share of the 1958 vote.

Moro, however, has reiterated his party's stand against any alliance with the right, specifically with the Liberals. Even ex-premier Scelba, who had earlier reportedly urged a "clean center-left" including the present cabinet parties but excluding the Nenni Socialists, said last week: "it is more important to bring the Socialists into the democratic camp than to collaborate with the Liberals."

Conflict between the once allied Communists and Socialists is sharpening. The Socialist daily, Avanti!, has been featuring a series headlined "An Alternative Which Does Not Exist" which attacks the Communists' claim to represent an alternative to what they call the "phony center-left" exemplified by the present government. The Socialists have also sought to embarrass the Communists by criticizing the Soviet cultural crackdown and exploiting reports of discord within the Kremlin. Nevertheless, the Communists, with a party organization superior to that of the Socialists, will probably at least maintain their present strength. They are working especially hard to draw votes from Socialists opposed to Nenni's "opening to the right."

As for other parties, the neo-Fascists will probably hold their own, and the expected collapse of the monarchists should help the Liberals and Christian Democrats. The Adzhubey audience and the latest papal encyclical are expected to have little effect on the voting. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

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