

Carnival Air Surrounds Coming General Elections in Italy

By WILLIAM F. SUNDERLAND
United Press International
 Rome — Romans and some 32 million of their countrymen decide next week in general elections whether the government of this Catholic country keeps veering left or moves back to center and perhaps beyond.

A carnival air surrounds elections in these parts, and this has been so since the days of the orations of Cicero 2,000 years ago.

But the hoopla masks a highly complicated electoral system for a population that has more voting spirit and who turn out in greater numbers at the polls than any other Western democracy, including Great Britain and the United States. The turnout has averaged 93 per cent of eligible voters since World War II.

Who are they voting for?
Range of Parties
 Parties range from the extreme right Neo-Fascists, aping the ideals of the late dictator Benito Mussolini who brought this nation to wartime ruin, through various centrist parties including the Catholic Christian Democrats, to the disciplined Moscow-line Communists who once nearly pulled this country behind the Iron Curtain.

Martial music mingles in the streets with the raucous sound of voices amplified by loudspeakers, adding to the cacophony of traffic in the eternal city.

Political speeches spout from both channels of a state-owned radio and television.

The 2,000-year-old wonders of Rome are all but hidden by huge temporary billboards urging citizens to "Vote Communist," "Vote Christian Democratic," "Vote Liberal," "Vote . . . Vote . . . Vote . . ."

Eligible To Vote
 On April 28 and 29 some 34,292,662 men and women 21 years or older are eligible to go to 60,472 polling stations throughout the country to cast ballots for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Their makeup determines the color of the next government. It will be Italy's fifth general election since 1946 and the first in five years.

Main issue is the "center-left" experiment of Christian Democratic Premier Amintore Fanfani, the diminutive but dynamic economics teacher known as "The Little

Professor." Most of this nation's post-war governments have been either entirely Christian Democratic or based on right-wing support.

But a year ago Fanfani formed a Christian Democratic government coalition with left-of-center Social Democrats and Republicans and with the Parliamentary support of Pietro Nenni's extreme left Socialists often bedfellows of the Communists.

The immediate price that Fanfani had to pay for Nenni's support was nationalization of electrical power. And many right-wing Italians claim that Italy will pay and pay in further concessions as long as the left is vital to the government coalition.

Eight Major Parties
 Eight major parties are contending the elections and some of those are made up of parties within parties.

Largest is the Christian Democratic party, Italy's main bulwark against Communism. Since the Christian Democrats bested the Communists at the polls in the crucial 1948 elections, they have been running the government, either alone or at the head of coalitions. These coalitions were right wing until the "center-left" scheme emerged a year ago. Foreign policy is strongly pro-American, pro-Atlantic Alliance, vigilantly anti-Communist.

Fanfani, whose government ends automatically with the elections, is nominal leader of the party. But the party power behind him is quiet, 46-year-old party secretary Aldo Moro, whose most noticeable mark in the public eye is the steak of solid gray that runs through his otherwise dark hair. It was Moro who looked at the signs and gave Fanfani the go-ahead to form his "center-left" government last year.

Second In Size
 Second in size and voting power are the Communists, the largest Red party in the Western world. They still claim a membership of about 1,700,000 despite the loss of 300,000 card-holders after the 1956 Hungarian revolt. Since 1948 the Communists have not been in any government but have formed the main opposition.

Leader is gray-haired Palmiro Togliatti, shrewd war horse of Italian politics. Now, 70, he has changed from a fire-breathing revolutionary to a soft-spoken leader who

seems bent on giving his party a bourgeois image.

The Communists prepared for this election by carrying out a purge, or what they call a "rejuvenation," of the party to try to make it more attractive in the public eye.

Leftwing Socialists
 Nenni's leftwing Socialists rank third in party ratings in Italy. They were closely allied with the Communists after the war in a "unity of action" pact and ran with them on a people's front ticket in the 1948 elections.

But following the Hungarian revolt the Socialists began to ease away from the Communists, although at present at least 40 per cent of the rank and file still are considered pro-Communist.

Nenni, a bald, hooked-nosed man of 72, has a half century of opposition work behind him — first to the Fascists and then to the Christian Democrats. His agreement to give Parliamentary support to the Fanfani government was a complete change in policy, and automatically made him a key political figure in Italy.

Other major political parties and their leaders include:

A Conservative Group
Monarchists — A conservative group with most of its support in the south where the long-gone monarchy was once strongest. It has split and merged several times and has lost ground regularly. Its only clear goal is opposition to the center left. The two leaders are Alfredo Covielli and Achille Lauro.

Neo-Fascists — The extreme rightwing party which goes under the name of Italian Social Movement (MSI) since Fascism was outlawed in Italy after the war, led by Arturo Michelini, its main purpose seems to be to furnish opposition to just about every other party.

Social Democrats — the moderate, pro-Western Socialists, under the leadership of Gi Sepe Saragat, who broke away from the Nenni Socialists in 1947 in protest against Nenni's ties with the Communists. They have been partners in past middle-road government coalitions and the current cent-left cabinet. Saragat, the 64-year-old party leader is an unpredictable man of whims and has little taste for compromise.

Moderate Rightwing Party
Liberals — A moderate rightwing party which claims that Fanfani's policies are the "antechamber of Communism." Led by Giovanni Malagodi, they are pro-Western and advocate free enterprise. Their main support comes from industrial leaders, although they are trying to build strength in the middle-classes.

Republicans — Led by Orzono Reale, they are the smallest national party represented in parliament. They are determined supporters of the center-left and Budget Minister Ugo La Malfa is a Republican.

Because of the center-left, this election has been called Italy's most important vote since the crucial showdown at the polls between the Christian Democrats and the Communists in 1948. If the voters give their approval to the "opening to the left" it could chart a new era in Italian politics.

Predict With Reservations
 Political observers are cautious but predict, with reservations:

—The Christian Democrats will lose, if not in representation in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, at least in percentage of the vote. The Communists also probably will lose, but by a fraction of a per cent.

—Almost certain to record largest gains are the Liberals. More and more the middle-class who up to now voted Christian Democratic will turn towards that small party. These voters do not approve of the "opening to the left" and the Liberals are the party that has opened its doors to them.

—The Social Democrats probably will record a gain, although not so much as the Liberals. So will the Nenni Socialists. The other parties will remain about the same.

Applicants for Two Posts Interviewed
 Central Point — School District 6 board of directors last week interviewed applicants for the positions of curriculum director and dean of boys.

The curriculum director will be responsible for selecting curriculum content, development, and design, and will assume general supervision over the instructional program from grades 1 through 12 in School District 6.

The Dean of boys at Crater High is also vice principal and will conduct the guidance and counseling program there.

Board members will review applications before deciding.

with a possible small loss.

The percentage gain by any party probably will be at the expense of the Christian Democrats.

For the Chamber of Deputies, the proportional representation system which gives each party a number of seats almost exactly in proportion

to its popular vote is used. The Senate is elected under a mixed majority-proportional system which gives a slight bonus to larger groups.

In Italy, there is not voting for government leaders. The president of the nation — currently Antonio Segni who was elected by Parliament last

May for a seven-year term — after consultation with leaders of all parties calls on somebody to form the government in the bud.

If the man chosen undertakes the task, then it is up to Parliament to give a vote of confidence or rip the new government in the bud.

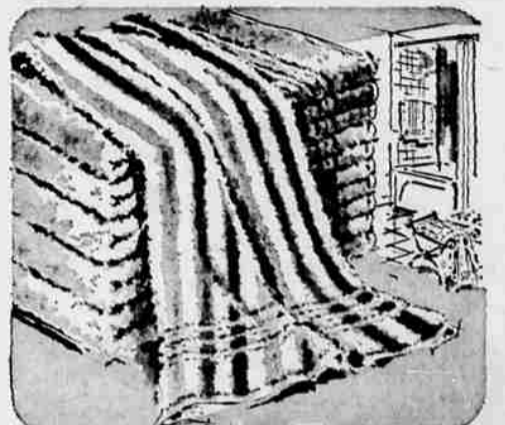


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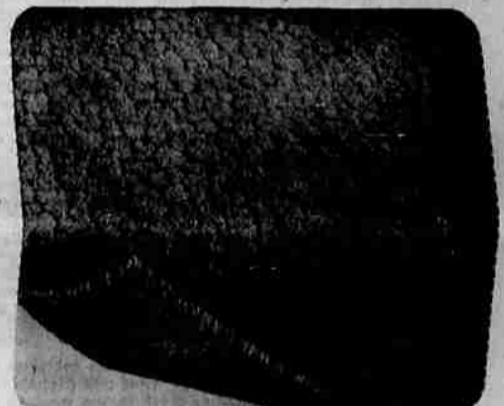
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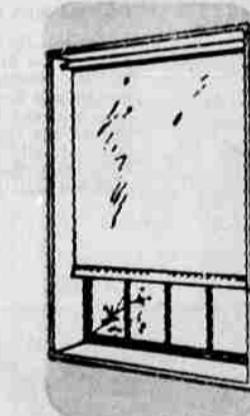
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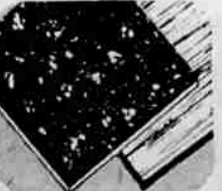
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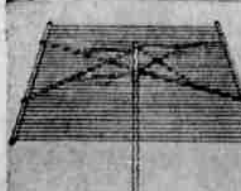
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