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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

The Italian Election Maze

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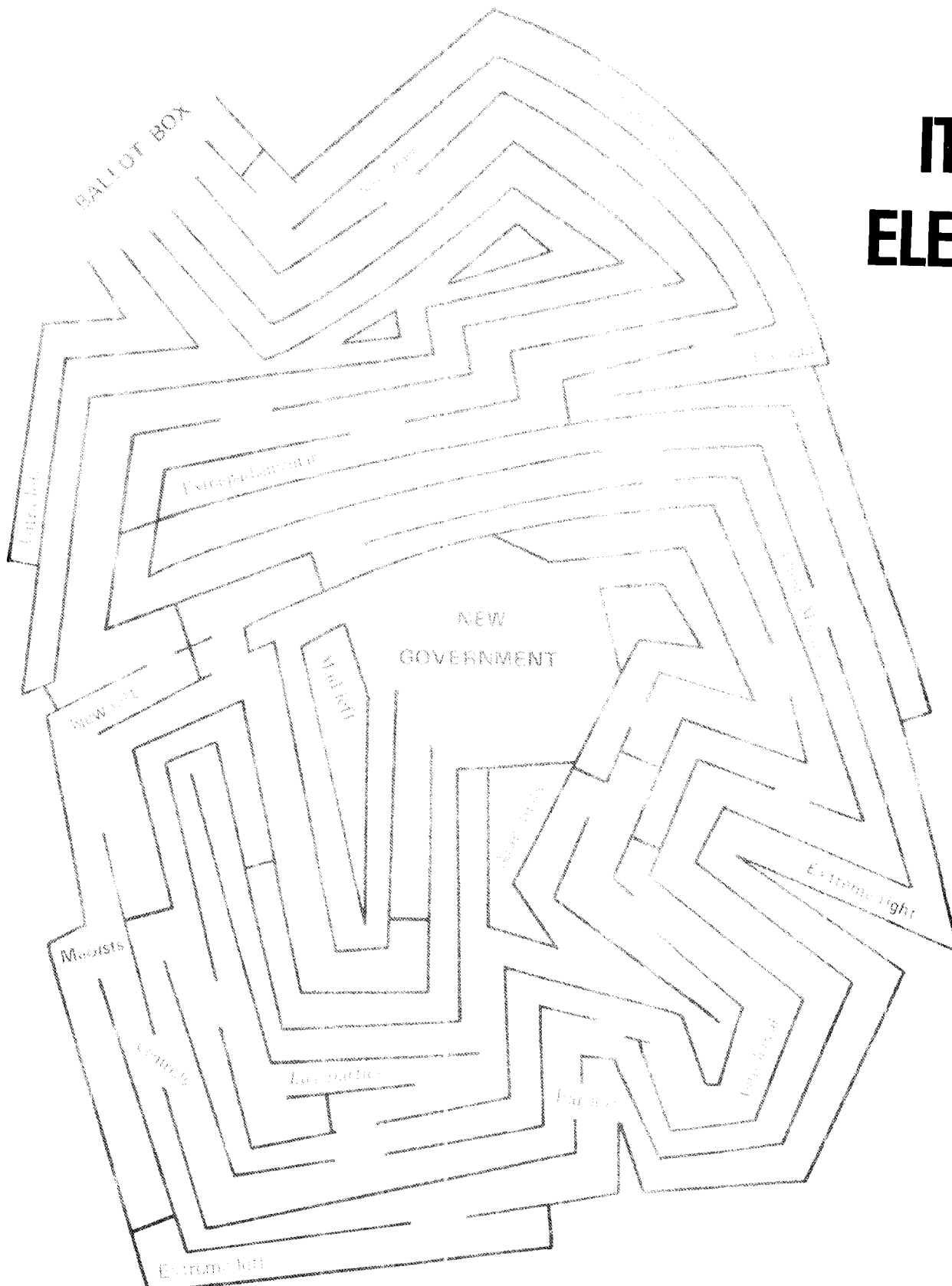
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The ITALIAN ELECTION MAZE



MAJOR PARTIES

FAR LEFT



Manifesto Party A pro-Chinese faction of Italy's Communist Party, it is presenting its own slate of candidates for the first time. It is named after *Il Manifesto*, a publication the dissidents have been issuing for the past three years.



Communist Party of Italy The largest Communist Party in a non-Communist state, it supports the policy of the Soviet Union in foreign affairs and reform of the state in domestic affairs.



Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity Formed in 1964 by left-wing Socialists who did not approve of the Socialist Party's participation in the center-left coalition.

CENTER-LEFT



Socialist Party The largest element in the country's socialist movement, which has been split, reunited, and split again over the degree of cooperation with the Communists.



Social Democratic Party Right-wing Socialists who do not approve of a unified program with the Communists.



Republican Party A small, left-center party whose traditions go back to the 19th century struggle to unite Italy as a republic. Its foreign policy positions ordinarily are pro-US.



Christian Democratic Party The descendant of the Catholic Popular Party of the early 1920s, it has been the core of all postwar governments. It represents a wide range of views, which sometimes makes it difficult to reach agreement on specific issues.

CENTER-RIGHT



Liberal Party Strongly pro-NATO, it is distinguished from the right wing of the Christian Democrats mainly by its anti-clericalism.

FAR RIGHT



Italian Social Movement Imbued with the traditions of fascism, and a certain nostalgia for the Mussolini era.

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The ITALIAN ELECTION MAZE

A new season of Italian politics opened on 28 February when President Leone dissolved parliament and set elections for 7-8 May. The atmosphere this time around is markedly different than when the nation last went to the polls in 1968. Then, the outgoing government defended its record. Today, the four parties of the center-left coalition are blaming each other for the inadequacies and general malfunction of recent Italian administration.

In 1968, the economy was flourishing; today, it is floundering after the poorest year since World War II. The electorate's mood has changed from optimistic support to deep disenchantment over the lack of progress the tired center-left formula has made toward solving political and social problems.

The parties of the extreme right and extreme left have been thriving on these problems. The neo-fascists, who were not taken seriously in 1968, now have developed a knack for rallying the protest vote. The Communists are troubled by this trend and also are worried about the prospect of losses to their own left. The Communists' militant Manifesto group, for example, is running on a separate ticket for the first time. Labor unrest, the turbulence in Italian society itself, and the jumble of political currents within the center-left coalition have all combined to create an atmosphere of political uncertainty.

Italy's voters always have been more stable than the governments they elected. The percentage of votes won or lost by an individual party from one national election to the next has exceeded four percent only once in twenty years. The politicians are uncertain how long this can go on. A record number of first-time voters—one in ten—may disrupt the pattern this year, but there are so many parties and political movements that it is difficult for any one party to gain a dramatic advantage. This year, 6,888 candidates representing 23 parties will compete for the 630 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

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The Making of a Parliamentarian

To complement the complexities of a political system that has a superabundance of parties and overlapping factions, Italy has devised an equally intricate electoral process.

Chamber of Deputies

The candidate must be 25 and the voter 21. The country is divided into 32 districts or electoral colleges. The number of deputies elected from each electoral college is in proportion to the population of the district. Individual parties submit a list of candidates for each district which may include as many names as there are prospective seats. The candidate need not reside in the district and may run in as many as three districts. If a candidate wins in more than one district, he must choose the district he will represent. The next person on his party list in the other district is then declared the winner there.

Each voter is allowed to vote for only one party's list of candidates, but he may rearrange the order of the names by writing in the names of his favorite candidates closer to the top of that party's list. This is called "preferential voting." If not enough voters express a particular preference, the priority established by the party is used to assign the seats that are won.

When the balloting is concluded, the electoral commission divides the total number of votes cast in each college by the number of deputies to be elected, plus a "correction factor" of two. The result is the minimum number of votes, or the

electoral quotient, required to elect a single candidate in that district. This figure is divided into each party's total vote as many times as possible and the remainder is transferred to a central national pool, the Unified National College (UNC). The seats within an electoral college that have not been allocated because of the lack of sufficient bloc votes are also transferred to the UNC.

Only parties that have won at least one seat in one of the 32 electoral colleges and have obtained at least 300,000 votes nationwide may qualify to have their remainder votes transferred to the UNC. The UNC determines a new electoral quotient by dividing the total number of votes it has received by the total number of seats transferred there. Seats are then assigned to parties possessing the quotient, or multiples thereof, with any remaining seats given to the parties having the highest unused remainder.

Senate

The candidate must be 40 and the voter 25. The country is divided into 20 regions. A candidate may run in only one region, but he may present himself in as many as three electoral colleges within the region by a system called "linking." The candidate is allowed to associate himself with other candidates in different electoral colleges in the

same region. The other candidate need not be of the same party although he almost always is. Another alternative is to run in three electoral colleges and link with yourself. It follows, therefore, that candidates for the Senate run semi-independently rather than on party lists like candidates for the Chamber of Deputies.

If a candidate receives 65 percent of the vote in his college he is elected, but this is rare. More often, an "electoral figure" is assigned to each group of linked candidates and an "individual figure" to each candidate in the group. The electoral figure equals the vote total of all candidates in the group. The individual figure is determined by multiplying the number of votes received by the candidate by 100 and dividing the answer by the number of voters in the college. A candidate running in more than one college is assigned the highest "individual figure" he obtains.

The electoral figures for all groups in the same party are totaled and then divided successively by one, two, three, etc. Seats are awarded to the party on the basis of the highest quotients thus obtained in descending order until all the seats are allotted. Seats won by each party group are then distributed to those who have the highest individual figure within the party group.

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Dissolution and Early Elections

Over the past year, the growing divergencies within the center-left alliance have been spotlighted against a backdrop of unsolved problems and popular losses at the polls. Premier Emilio Colombo's government had squeezed through some reforms and was pressing for others when the Republicans, the smallest of the four partners in the fragile coalition, threatened to withdraw support. Traditionally concerned about fiscal responsibility, the Republicans were apprehensive about the cost of additional social-welfare programs, particularly in view of the country's general economic slowdown.

The second largest coalition partner, the Socialists, preferred to move leftward—even if it meant reaching accommodations with the Communist Party. This orientation became apparent during the presidential elections in December when the Socialists aligned with the Communists. Leone was eventually elected president by a combination of parties of the center and without Socialist support. Faced with this flagrant lack of discipline and the absence of general agreement on a governmental program, Premier Colombo resigned to give the center-left parties the choice of patching their differences or moving toward early elections.

Negotiations to form a new government widened other cracks in the coalition and made the formation of a new center-left alliance impossible. Disagreements over measures to revitalize the sagging economy and to arrest the breakdown in law and order drove the coalition partners further apart, but the divorce referendum proved to be the issue on which there was no margin for compromise. The Socialists and the Republicans were adamant in their refusal to participate in a government without prior agreement to block the referendum intended to repeal the divorce legislation of 1970.

When it became apparent that the country was moving toward its first post-war experience

with parliamentary dissolution and early elections, Italy's largest party, the Christian Democrats, maneuvered into a position where it could govern alone during the campaign period. Noting the electorate's drift to the right, the Christian Democrats wanted to free themselves from their former center-left partners so the electorate would be aware that the Christian Democrats would be open to other coalition combinations after the elections. The Christian Democrats also reasoned that, if they governed with vigor and purpose during the interim, they might be able to shed the center-left's image of a do-nothing government.

President Giovanni Leone selected fellow Christian Democrat Giulio Andreotti to form a Christian Democrat *monocolore* government. Andreotti's minority government failed to win its initial vote of confidence. Leone then dissolved parliament on 28 February, set the date for early elections, and appointed Andreotti to head a caretaker government. The dubious constitutionality of allowing a government that never gained parliament's confidence to remain in power until new elections has caused some grumbling, but Leone's action has not been seriously challenged.

Thus, the country slipped into early elections, not by popular demand but because a majority of center-left politicians had come to want it that way. The Christian Democrats had particular grounds for advancing the electoral timetable. The 1971 census confirmed a large population shift away from areas—the countryside and the south—where they are traditionally strong. Parliamentary seats have not yet been redistributed to reflect this migration, but they would have been by 1973.

Early elections promised to offer other advantages that the Christian Democrats share with some of their center-left partners. In the first

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place, local elections have indicated a shift to the right that most center-left leaders fear will gather more momentum by 1973. Then, too, although the center-left administration must bear responsibility for the current economic slowdown, the majority of center-left leaders were not confident that they could have revitalized the economy this year. Moreover, the renegotiation of major labor contracts this autumn involving about four million workers is expected to cause considerable strife. Since the state plays a large role in economic guidance and production, the ruling parties preferred to have the elections before they antagonized such a large segment of the population. Finally, the law provides that dissolution automatically postpones for one year the divorce referendum originally scheduled for June 1972.

In short, a majority of the center-left came to want early elections before they were forced to confront issues that might further erode their popularity. This strategy is not without risks. Placing the country's problems in a holding pattern may only reinforce the center-left's image as a government that avoids, rather than solves, problems.

Issues and Problems

Divorce: The tortured history of Italy's divorce legislation is a classic example of the center-left's inability to come to grips with problems that divide the country. First introduced into parliament in 1966, the divorce bill generated four years of debate, unparalleled for acrimony, before it was passed in December 1970. Last summer, the law survived another test when the Constitutional Court declared it did not infringe the 1929 Concordat between the Vatican and the government. Yet, while all this energy and time was being expended on the passage of the divorce legislation, an equal amount of energy and time went into passage of a referendum law designed to nullify it.

The Christian Democrats are largely responsible for this net zero result. They sensed that a

considerable portion of the populace, as well as some of their coalition partners, favored divorce. On the other hand, the Christian Democrats dared not cross the Catholic Church, one of their traditional pillars of support.



Christian Democrat poster warns Italian women that Socialists and Communists support divorce which threatens family life.

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The dilemma was side-stepped in December 1968 in negotiations on the formation of a center-left government following the national elections. The four coalition parties agreed that the divorce law would not be an issue on which government solidarity was expected. The coalition program did include, however, a draft law allowing a national referendum if 500,000 signatures from the electorate were obtained. The divorce law was passed in 1970 and, in June 1971, well over a million signatures were submitted for a referendum to abrogate the freshly printed legislation.

In effect, both those who favored and those who opposed divorce indulged in fruitless and contradictory efforts designed to avoid facing the problem. This kind of procrastination, all too common, has not endeared the center-left to the electorate, which recognizes that such maneuvering prevents the government from dealing with more pressing issues. The postponement of the referendum has placed the divorce issue on the back burner, but it could be an obstacle in the formation of the next government if enough parties insist on a program to derail the referendum.

The large number of women voters (2.3 million more than men) poses special problems in the formulation of campaign techniques to deal with the divorce question. Above the age of 65, there are two women voters for every male; four million out of a total electorate of 37 million are women over 60. This age group can be counted on to stand firmly against divorce.

The younger generation of females are not that predictable. They are not as fearful as their mothers that divorce is a threat to their security and the fabric of family life. Instead, they are beginning to question the subservient position of the wife in most Italian marriages, and some are equating divorce with liberty. The standards of Italian society, as of others, are changing rapidly. Traditional male freedoms are not as sacrosanct as in the past.



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Law and Order: The Italian people have been deeply troubled in recent years by what they view as a breakdown in public order. In this they include a whole catalog of woes ranging from urban warfare and record-breaking traffic jams to the government's inability to implement what laws it does manage to legislate.

Actually, statistics show the level of disorders and violence has declined in recent years, but the voters—bombarDED daily with sensational press accounts of crime, student unrest, strikes, and political violence—do not appear convinced. They expressed their discontent in local elections last June by giving the neo-fascist party, which bills itself as the champion of law and order, impressive gains at the expense of the Christian Democrats.

Following these elections, the center-left government stepped up its efforts to reduce lawlessness and violence. Law enforcement forces were increased and modernized. Training programs to improve police techniques, particularly in riot control, were introduced. In turn, the police have become very active against both organized crime and petty criminals. In addition, the authorities have moved, with obvious relish, against terrorists at both poles of the political spectrum.

All parties are campaigning on a law-and-order plank. With the exception of the Socialists, who tend to side with the Communists on law and order, the center-left parties blame the violence on the Communists and the neo-fascists. The Communists and neo-fascists fault the Christian Democrats for being unable to contain the threat from right or left, and disclaim any association with the fanatical groups that hover around their fringes.

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A street in Milan becomes a battleground during a recent student protest.

The Christian Democrat caretaker government's widely publicized no-nonsense attitude toward crime and violence during the campaign should reap benefits at the polls. In March, the government activated 3,000 police reservists to ensure order during the campaign. In April, the police staged a massive anti-crime swoop throughout Italy, checking the identities of over 163,000 people. The dragnet scooped up over 400, led to the confiscation of large quantities of arms and ammunition, and was well-received by the average citizen. Political violence also has been kept under control—in fact, confined to confrontations between political extremes.

Labor: Labor unrest has made a major contribution to the general malaise in Italian society. A new generation of workers—one third of those in the industrial north are under 30—have dem-

onstrated that they intend to be much more assertive than their fathers. The political loyalties dating from World War II resistance movements do not have the old impact. The younger workers have never experienced a recession and are determined to extract a bigger share of the rewards from Italy's postwar economic boom.

Italian workers won unprecedented gains both in monetary returns and union rights following the massive labor turmoil that rocked the nation during the "Hot Autumn" of 1969, but they want more. Dissatisfied with the inefficient manner in which the government has looked after their social and economic interests, rank-and-file union members have exerted considerable pressure for an autonomous labor movement that is more independent of political influence. Italy's three major labor organizations, despite the

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misgivings of their leaders, adapted to this climate and initiated merger talks in late 1970.

The Communist-dominated Italian General Confederation of Labor, the largest of the three major labor organizations, has always favored unity, believing a merger would enable it to dominate the entire union movement. Communist Party leaders were dubious, however, for fear merger would mean an organized and independent labor movement freed from traditional party loyalties. Unity was even more controversial within the other two confederations, the leaders of which were concerned that it would open to the Communists further inroads into the institutional fabric of Italian society.

Despite such misgivings, last November representatives of the three confederations reached a formal, albeit shaky, accord to unite by 1973. Hopes for unity miscarried in March, however, when the central committee of the Italian Labor Union, the smallest of the three confederations, voted down the merger. This setback may cause the Italian worker to lose confidence in his union organization and resort to more wildcat strikes, work stoppages, and absenteeism. Union leaders may try to offset grass-roots resentment by adopting a more militant posture vis-a-vis management. Such a trend already is evident. Strikes are commonplace, cause constant inconveniences, and are harmful to the economy. Italy cannot afford a repeat of last year when over 100 million man-hours were lost to work stoppages.

Economy: The sociopolitical issues that have beset the Italian people in recent years could be overlooked so long as the economy prospered. The economic performance last year—the worst since World War II—made this sort of absolutism much more difficult. Domestic investments fell 10.3 percent, industrial production dropped 2.6 percent, and the GNP increase in real terms was only 1.4 percent. Even though total employment declined slightly, industrial and agricultural wages were up 11.9 and 13.7 percent, respectively, and contributed to a 6.6 percent increase in general price levels. With a quarter of their productive capacity unutilized and their profit margins squeezed, manufacturers need a clearer political picture and assurance of a sustained increase in demand to induce them to invest.

In a front-page editorial in its final issue of the year, the Milan daily financial newspaper *Il Sole/24 Ore* said "Forget 1971." Few have, however, and pessimism prevails in the early months of 1972. Business leaders, discouraged by the uncertain political situation, continued labor unrest, and the probability of difficult negotiations with some four million workers whose contracts expire this year, are reluctant to make the investments that are necessary to refuel the economy.

The Christian Democrats and most of their center-left partners appreciate their vulnerability on the economic issue and are scrambling to improve their images. Premier Andreotti's Christian Democratic caretaker government has promised to accelerate the release of funds for reforms

L'economia al primo posto nella campagna elettorale

Front-page headline in *La Stampa* highlights the importance of the economy in the election campaign.

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Numerous campaign posters vie for the voters' attention.

approved last year. The Christian Democrats also have committed themselves to implement a 1969 law that increases pension scales for the self-employed and have promised to introduce in the next parliament a similar bill for wage earners. In addition, the implementation of the value-added tax, which was expected to increase consumer prices three percent, was postponed.

These moves will curry favor with the electorate, but the business community, the key to economic recovery, probably will remain distrustful. To stimulate investment, the government

lowered the discount rate in April, but most industrialists will postpone capital commitments until they have had time to assess the results of the election. If they conclude that the new government can provide a healthy economic environment, Italy should be able to reverse its economic slump.

What's a Poor Voter to Do?

The Italian voter clearly is disenchanted with the outgoing center-left administration's legacy of broken promises and unmet goals. Even its few

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accomplishments—tax and housing reforms—have left a bad taste. Many voters are leery about the implementation of tax revisions, and the recent, bitter debates over the housing bill produced a compromise that is unlikely to come close to satisfying the country's needs. The widely heralded reforms of universities, the judiciary, public transport, and public health services either bogged down in parliamentary debate or never reached the floor.

Many voters will be tempted to spurn the center-left group because of the decline in the economy, the reputed increase in violence, and legislative inaction. The simplest way for such people to register their disapproval is to vote for a Marxist party of the far left or the neo-fascists on the extreme right. The Italian electorate's long-evident desire to prevent extremists of any kind from gaining control sets limits on this type of voting and may account, at least in part, for the rightward drift of the electorate in the past year. Those who are determined to cast a protest vote may feel safer voting for the neo-fascist party because it is smaller, and therefore less of a threat to democratic institutions than the extreme left. Evidence that a bloc of protest votes exists was apparent in local elections in Sicily last June. Although Christian Democrat losses accounted for most of the neo-fascist gains, the returns showed that some voters had few ideological constraints about switching from the Communists to the neo-fascists.

Most voters probably will take the more difficult route and try to sort out the five parties and their many factions in the middle of the spectrum. The campaign, as well as the maneuvering that preceded the dissolution of parliament, has helped clarify the voters' options.

The Socialist Party, the second biggest party in the center-left, is campaigning on a platform of collaboration with the left, including the Communists. The Christian Democrats have pledged not to collaborate with the Communists or the neo-fascists and are emphasizing "centrality." In

campaign speeches, Christian Democrat and Social Democrat leaders have warned the Socialist Party that intransigent leftism could exclude it from the future government. The smallest coalition party, the Republicans, again seems content to stress fiscal responsibility.

The dispute between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists is interpreted by the Liberals, a center-right, anti-clerical party, as a favorable omen. The Liberals can now envision the possibility—after ten years in the wings—of being a determining element in future coalitions. Christian Democrat and Social Democrat leaders have hinted that an accommodation with the Liberals would be quite acceptable, and the Liberals are pointing up their compatibility by including a reform program in their electoral platform.

The pre-election cleavage in the center-left over what role the Communists will play in future governments has placed the voter in a position to pass judgment on this issue. If he cannot tolerate the thought of another sterile marriage of the

PREVIOUS ELECTIONS FOR CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

Party	1953	1958	1963	1968
Christian Democrat	40.1%	42.4%	38.3%	39.1%
Communist	22.6	22.7	25.3	26.9
Socialist *	12.7	14.2	13.8	14.5
Social Democrat *	4.5	4.5	6.1	
Liberal	3.0	3.5	7.0	5.8
Republican	1.6	1.4	1.4	2.0
Italian Social Movement + (neo-fascist)	5.8	4.8	5.1	4.4
Monarchist +	6.9	4.8	1.7	1.3
Proletarian Socialist †	---	---	---	4.5
Others	2.8	1.7	1.3	1.5

* Ran on the same ticket in 1968 as Unitarian Socialists but are running separately in 1972.

† Broke away from Socialist Party in 1964.

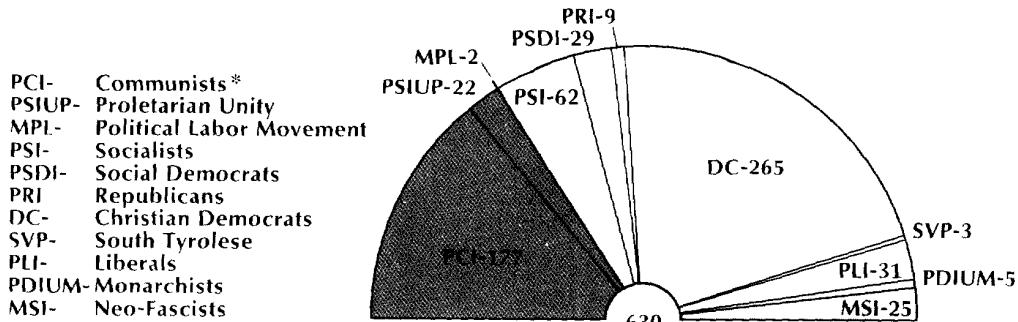
+ Running on same ticket in 1972.

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Italy: Distribution of Seats in the Outgoing Chamber of Deputies



* Includes Manifesto dissidents and Independents of the Left.

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center-left, he can now contemplate the possibility of a centrist grouping that will not include the Socialists. This prospect will be popular with those supporters of the center-left who have always suspected that the Socialists were closet-Communists. It may also reduce the number of voters who defect from the right wing of the Christian Democrats to the neo-fascists.

Party strengths in the outgoing Chamber of Deputies made it possible mathematically to form center-left, center, and center-right coalitions. Most of these combinations did not have enough self-discipline to agree on a program to govern, and the absence of a strong mandate from the Italian voter in one direction or the other created a series of crazy-quilt coalitions designed to accommodate as many factions as possible.

The outcome of the May elections is not likely to eliminate any of these coalition possibilities. Indeed, if the trend to the right that has been apparent in local contests continues, the margin of seats between the center-left and the center-right will be narrowed. Under these circumstances, a new coalition would have a thinner majority than its predecessor—not a happy thought for those who are hoping for a more stable government.

Thus, the elections will probably not provide clear voter guidelines as to the best political

instrument for carrying forward, in an orderly and efficient way, the structural reform of the Italian Republic. Center-left coalitions for a decade have not proved particularly able, and pre-election atmospherics strongly suggest that this formula is no longer a must.

A dramatic resurgence of the far right could serve to unite the center-left as nothing else. A union based on fear rather than conviction, however, is likely to be a fragile, short-lived construction. On the other hand, if neo-fascist gains are only marginal and the center-left has mixed returns, those center-left parties that have improved their position may be even more obstinate on the issues that brought the former coalition to an impasse.

There are indeed a host of possibilities, but none of them add up to a confident government administration prepared to address itself to the country's problems. The most immediate prospect after the elections is the continuance of a minority Christian Democrat government. Other parties will have to decide whether they should be in opposition, give tacit support to, or actually join a coalition. It is during this period that intra-party factions are born and die as party leaders attempt to interpret the election results. After these decisions are made, the bruising negotiations to form a new coalition will begin.

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