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Voters to cleanse Italian political scene

National elections predicted to remove government corruption

The Associated Press

ROME — Voters began giving Italy a new political face on Sunday, the first day of national elections that promise to turn the government's sights to the right or the left.

With the centrist parties that led the country since 1948 discredited by a corruption scandal, the parliamentary elections pitted a conservative alliance formed by one of Italy's richest men against a leftist coalition dominated by former Communists.

"Today we vote, Italy changes," the Corriere della Sera newspaper trumpeted Sunday as the nation began two days of voting.

Pollsters and media are barred from disclosing exit poll results until voting ends Monday

evening. The penalty is up to five years in prison. About 32 percent of eligible voters turned out on Sunday.

Both the centrist and pro-Catholic Christian Democrats and Socialist parties, which have led the country for four decades, fell from grace in a kickback scandal that has tainted many of the nation's political and business elite.

Former Socialist leader and ex-Premier Bettino Craxi is heavily implicated in the scandal, and more than a quarter of parliament is being investigated for possible wrongdoing.

That leaves the conservative Freedom Alliance — led by media magnate Silvio Berlusconi's upstart Forza Italia ("Go Italy") party — and Achille Occhetto's Democrat Party of the Left, the former Communists.

Joining the former Communists in a campaign coalition were the anti-Mafia Network, Greens and hard-line Communists who, unlike Occhetto's party, oppose Italy's participation in NATO.

Under new campaign laws, no opinion polls have been published for two weeks, but the last ones gave a slight edge to Forza Italia and its

partners. Those partners include the heirs of the fascist Italian Social Movement. Now called National Alliance, it is the party of Benito Mussolini, the dictator's grandnephew, who is running for a second term in parliament.

Also allied with the conservatives is the Northern League, which advocated an anti-rust, anti-bureaucracy line even before the kickback scandals broke.

Berlusconi, who made his fortune in real estate, supermarkets, media and entertainment, jumped into politics only two months ago.

His holdings include Italy's three biggest private television networks, a Milan daily newspaper, film production companies, moviehouses, and top-ranked soccer club, Milan.

Opponents claim Berlusconi would be a business interests in policy decisions if he came premier. Berlusconi said he would not be a politician posing a conflict of interest.

If no single coalition gets more than 50 percent of the ballots, they will be forced to court smaller parties.

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Former Soviet citizens to decide between multiple parties, candidates for direction

The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Angered by an economy that's going nowhere fast, Ukrainians voted in large numbers Sunday to replace the Communist-dominated parliament that has blocked reforms and opposes nuclear disarmament.

Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine ignored a presidential order by holding referendums on closer ties with Russia.

The brisk turnout for parliamentary elections, Ukraine's first since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, defied predictions of voter apathy. Preliminary turnout on a crisp, sunny day topped 67 percent by evening, well above the 50 percent needed for the election to be valid.

"The people of Ukraine understand very well these are not ordinary elections," said Viktor Pohorylo, deputy chairman of the Election Commission. "This is a vote for future social peace."

First results were not expected until at least Monday.

The election took place amid growing economic despair in Ukraine. After voting in central Kiev, President Leonid Kravchuk said he hoped for a pro-reform parliament but warned he would postpone presidential elections if the new parliament deepened political chaos.

The election could fuel tensions between the pro-Russian east and the nationalist west.

"The mood is mixed. Some don't know who to vote for and the rest are more radical. I don't think Communists will get votes in western Ukraine," said Yuri Hresko, who was helping get out the vote in Lvov, near the Polish border.

On the other side of Ukraine, in the Donbass mining region near Russia, elections officials said support for Communist and socialist candidates was strong.

The current parliament is dominated by former Commu-

nists opposed to economic reform and to giving up the nuclear arsenal Ukraine inherited from the Soviet Union. The government has been deadlocked, while hyperinflation eats away at living standards.

Voters seemed hopeful a new parliament might improve their lives, but many were confused by the vast number of candidates and platforms.

"There must be a little hope, otherwise why would we have dragged ourselves here?" said Lida Mikhaylenko, a seamstress whose last paycheck amounted to about \$15.

Some ballots listed more than two dozen names. Voters were required to cross off the candidates they didn't want. Candidates who collect enough votes in the first round will face each other in runoff April 10.

"It's very hard to pick. Before there was just one candidate. A simple guy can't choose," said Vladimir Kubisky, a farmer in the

Jesus

Continued from Page 1

Fifty more people are to participate in the crucifixion scene, he said. No acting experience is needed.

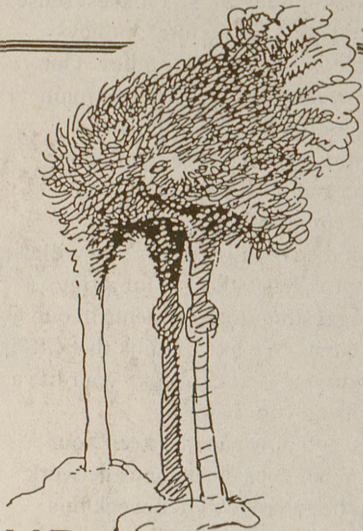
"What's important whether or not brought glory to and were diligent."

— Scott Sonju, senior history major and member of the evangelism team

Scott Sonju, a senior history major and head of evangelism, said he was encouraged by the turnout.

"Right now is just the iceberg," Sonju said. Numbers are not all that important. What's important is whether or not we brought glory to God and were diligent.

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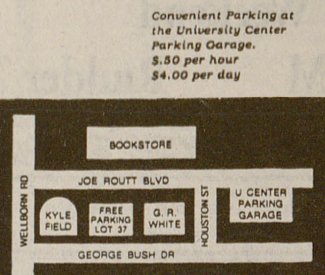
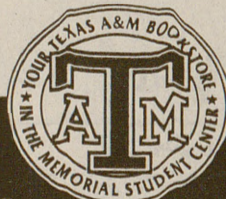
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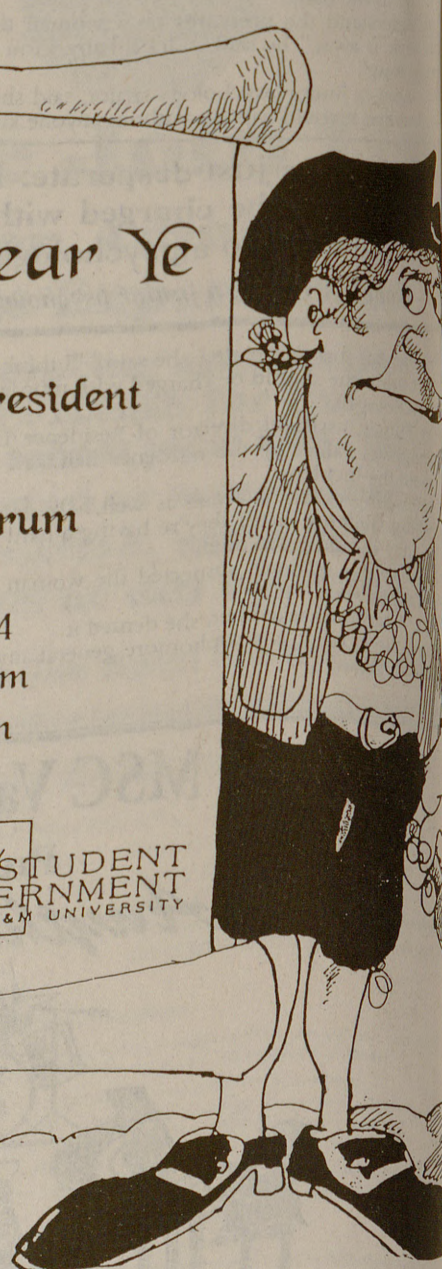
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