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**PRESS & TELEVISION**


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time general elections to coincide with periods of popular favor. Because the polls are subject to inaccurate interpretation, however, electoral disaster can and does result. Weiner, an MIT political scientist who studied polling in the United Kingdom, cites an example: Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath, believing 1974 newspaper polls that showed a favorable climate for the Tories, called an election and promptly lost to Labour.

In Britain, the last nine elections have been decided by an average plurality of 3 percent, whereas pollsters admit to a 5 percent margin of error. Such disparities help explain party leaders' miscues. Another factor: U.S. pollsters analyze their own data; in Britain, this sophisticated task is left to busy newspaper political writers.

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**OTHER NATIONS**


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### *A New Communist Threat to Europe?*

"Euro-Communism" by Neil McInnes, in *The Washington Papers* (Dec. 1976), Sage Publications, 275 South Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212.

The growing influence of the big Communist parties of France and Italy has caused alarm in the United States, but McInnes, European correspondent for *Barron's*, credits both these national parties with acceptance of "the peaceful, electoral way to office" and a willingness to soften some earlier ideological dogmas.

How would they behave sharing power as minorities in coalition governments? French Communists, now led by Georges Marchais, would not last long, McInnes predicts, because their commitments to extensive nationalization of industry would soon provoke a crisis impelling a return to an opposition role. In Italy, Communist-inspired drives for such changes as nationalization would come gradually. The Italian party, led by Enrico Berlinguer, is relatively free of "clannishness and factionalism"; it would stay in office longer because it is better disciplined than its French counterpart, and Italy's political structure offers dissidents few alternatives to supporting Berlinguer.

For the other NATO countries, McInnes argues, Communists in the French and Italian governments would be "an inconvenience, not a disaster"; Communist Party leaders in both countries apparently feel that no matter who is in power, Western Europe must remain secure against Soviet military threats. These Euro-Communists, McInnes says, will eventually break publicly with Moscow. They will thus gain votes from the ranks of those compatriots who have long supported Communist domestic goals but have shunned the Party because of its Soviet ties.