

Italians Fear Ripples

By Sari Gilbert

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ROME, Jan. 8—Reports of payments by the CIA to non-Communist Italian leaders caused little immediate fallout here, but Italian political observers already are speculating that the position of the Christian Democratic Party in the current governmental crisis could be greatly complicated by the charges.

The Italian press gave little coverage to the reports and few of today's editorials were dedicated to that subject. Since this is not the first time that revelations of this sort have been made, the general feeling is that this, like other incipient scandals, will soon blow over.

The general silence on the issue was not, however, a sign

that the disclosures, whether true or false, will have no impact. Indeed, probably the most concerned group here is the Christian Democratic party, which yesterday together with Italy's other major non-Communist parties—the Socialists, the Republicans and the Social Democrats—issued denials that they or any of their members had received U.S. funds.

The Christian Democrats—who have ruled Italy since World War II—have once again been thrown into a caretaker status with the announcement by the Socialists yesterday that they are withdrawing parliamentary support for the government. Coming at the outset of what is likely to be a protracted governmental

crisis, the allegations of CIA payments are causing particular concern about the party's future.

Under their current party secretary Benigno Zaccagnini, the Christian Democrats—or at least those close to Zaccagnini—have been trying to create a new image for their trouble-ridden party.

Zaccagnini, in fact, is convinced that the huge gains made by the Communist Party in regional elections last June can be explained only by widespread disaffection in the country with the corruption and "Tamany Hall" tactics for which Christian Democrats have become known.

This week's disclosures—unless they can be adequately disproven—are

on CIA Funding

likely to make many Italians think that Zaccagnini and his followers are no different from any of their predecessors and the party secretary's widely recognized reputation for honesty and integrity is likely to end up tarnished.

According to one Christian Democrat in Zaccagnini's inner circle, who said that "we haven't been offered and have not taken a single lira," the best thing now would be if the names of those politicians alleged to have received funds were released. "Unless the guilty are brought forward, everyone, including Zaccagnini, will be under a cloud of suspicion," he said.

Giuseppe Pisanu, a Sardinian deputy who also heads up Zaccagnini's secretariat, said that he, too, hoped there would be further clarification

of just who was involved. "I am a dyed-in-the-wool pro-American," he said, "but I can tell you that if I'd been planning a trip to the U.S., I would cancel it for fear people would think I was just another 'bought' politician."