

Observation no: 69

Country-year: 1943

1. Did the current regime come to power in a military coup?

Yes.

Mussolini's Fascist regime was overthrown by the king in conjunction (and with support of) the Italian military.¹ However, because this occurred during the middle of the second World War, the king was only able to secure the Southern half of Italy with Allied support. The Northern part of the country was put under German control and Mussolini escaped here to lead a Fascist group of rebels.

2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?

Yes.

This was the first military coup in the country's short history.

3. Is the country's top leader a former military officer?

Yes.

Pietro Badoglio was appointed by the king to serve as Prime Minister after the fall of Mussolini. Badoglio was the Chief of the Staff of the Italian military from 1925 to 1940, but resigned in 1940 after a particularly poor showing by Italian forces in Greece.

4. Is the military officer corps largely closed to those who do not share the leader's ethnic or sectarian background?

No.

No evidence that the officer corps privileged any particular sect or group of people over another.

5. Are there strict ideological requirements for entry into the senior officer corps?

No.

¹ Ginsborg, Paul. A history of contemporary Italy: society and politics, 1943-1988. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

I could find no evidence that required the Italian military post 1943 to subscribe to any particular ideology, though Fascists were purged from the ranks or fled to the North to fight with the Germans.

6. Is party membership required for entry into the senior officer corps?

No.

There was no requirement for a party membership, partly because the Italian government at this point was barely more than the King, a few Italian Generals who had defected from Fascism, and the Allied Forces.

7. Does military training involve extensive political education or ideological indoctrination?

No.

I could find no evidence of organized political education or ideological indoctrination. The Italian military at this point was so disorganized that it would have been impossible to imagine any systematic training of any type.

8. Has the military been used to repress internal dissent in the last five years?

No.

Though the paramilitary organization, the Black Shirts, was used to repress dissent in the Northern, German controlled areas.

9. Has the military been used to govern the country in the last five years

No.

Mussolini led the country in the five years prior to the coup. Though he had given himself the title and responsibility to make most of the major military decisions in the country, the military itself did not take part in governance.

10. Is there a paramilitary organization separate from the regular military, used to provide regime or leader security?

No.

Allied troops were used to secure the Southern part of Italy until the Italian police forces could be trained to take over the responsibility. However, Fascist paramilitary organizations continued to rule in the German-controlled North.²

11. Is there an internal intelligence apparatus dedicated to watching the regular military?

No.

Nothing I could find indicated that there was enough organization within the Italian government to conduct internal intelligence.

12. Has a purge of the officer corps occurred in the last five years?

Yes.

After Mussolini fell from power, Badoglio, the king, and the Allied Forces purged top military officers with Fascist party ties.³

13. Is there an institutionalized forum through which civilian leaders and military officers regularly exchange information?

Yes.

The Allied military forces established an Allied Military Mission that met with the king and Badoglio. Because of the institutions set up by the Allied Forces, there was consistent communication between civilian leaders and the Italian military forces created and fighting in conjunction with the Allied Forces.⁴

² Pedaliu, Effie. "Britain and the Reconstruction of the Post-Fascist Italian Armed Forces, 1943-48." *Cold War History* 2.1 (2001): 39-68.

³ Agarossi, Elena. *A nation collapses: the Italian surrender of September 1943*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

⁴ Harry Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors* (Center of Military History United States Army: Washington, 1992):

http://webdoc.sub.gwdg.de/ebook/p/2005/CMH_2/www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/wwii/civaff/ch09.htm