

October 12, 1943.

The Man from the Mountain

He failed to turn up for tea yesterday but had me come out to see him at his place this morning.

Rommel is not using German troops for mopping up recalcitrant Italian army units, but intends to leave this to Mussolini's Italian forces. However, the organization of Mussolini's forces is progressing very slowly, if at all, because of the conviction of the people that the Allies will win. Mussolini is incorporating what army he can get, into the Fascist militia - the reverse of the Badoglio process of incorporating the militia into the army. It appears that so far the only Italian army forces of which Mussolini disposes is two divisions of Black Shirts at Bologna. These were brought back from the Balkans. Our friend thinks that around this nucleus, Mussolini might build a force of 40,000 or 50,000 men but not more.

Our friend's representatives have not met with any success in their advances to the officers of troops true to Badoglio. They were turned down on the three main points, which are:

1. Providing these troops with inspiring propaganda. The officers do not want new propaganda men and claim that the old ones in their units would not have great credit since they were previously fascist propagandists.

2. Arming suitable civilians. The officers steal what arms they can, but it must be done in the dark and without being able to choose appropriate weapons or particularly necessary munitions.

3. Going over to the attack. The officers mostly state that their policy, pursuant to Badoglio's proclamation, is to resist but that they have no orders to attack.

Our friend says that the lassitude of the Italian soldiers is so great that it would take a very strong figure to get action out of them. He suggests the following things:

1. An entirely new propaganda campaign, mentioning democracy, liberty and the Italian tradition. Due to the lack of short-wave sets, he believes that the most effective medium would