

THE SHADOW OF THE SWASTIKA

Nazi History Dramatised For Radio

THERE is one unfortunate thing about the new NBS feature, "The Shadow of the Swastika." It will make the ordinary radio thriller serial seem quiet and reserved. Fiction writers will have to dig the spurs into their imaginations if they are to outdo the factual drama of recent history.

Nothing in all that history has been so dramatic as the rise of the Nazi party to power in Germany. The Nazis were conceived in conspiracy and they came with bloodshed and fire. They held their position with the machine gun, censorship, espionage, terrorism.

The radio feature comes to New Zealand from the BBC, where it has been running fortnightly since November of last year.

It was produced by an unusually large staff of experts. Every detail was carefully checked, under the supervision of E. L. Woodward, an Oxford University historian, who is an expert on modern German history. It is played by the BBC repertory players, augmented for the occasion.

The records have more shouts, shrieks, and hysteria to the revolution than any other collection in the broadcasting libraries of New Zealand.

The first broadcast will come from Station 2YA at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, March 26. Others will follow at the same time and on the same day weekly.

We give some extracts:

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Date: 1920.

Roehm: I divide people into two classes—those who raise revolts and those who don't. That is, into stout fellows and—those who aren't stout fellows. There's no denying the latter sort predominate.

Eckart: Yes. We must have a fellow at the head who won't wince at the rattle of a machine gun. The rabble must be given a damned good fright. He needn't be very brainy, politics is the most imbecile business in the world. I'd rather have a stupid vain jackanapes who can give the Reds a juicy answer and not run away whenever a chair-leg is aimed at him. Oh—and he must be a bachelor! Then we shall get the women!

Roehm: I think I know our man.

Eckart: Who?

Roehm: Look. Over there. . . .

Eckart: That pasty fellow with the beard?

Drexler: I can hardly see him for smoke. Who is he?

Roehm: A sympathiser. An Austrian. Tried to be an artist, but failed. Then corporal in the army. Now "education officer" for the Reichswehr.

Eckart: A spy, you mean.

Roehm: I checked up on him, Eckart. Unless I'm much mistaken, he's our man. . . . What is the fellow's name? Yes, that's it—Hitler.

A Promise Not Kept

Date: November, 1923.

Hitler: Gentlemen! The new Reich Government is already formed, and the Bavarian Government has been removed. In Bavaria there must be a Regent. Herr von Kahr will be Regent. Commander-in-Chief, Ludendorff. Police Minister, Seisser. Reich Chancellor, Hitler! You must, do you understand, you must fight with me, triumph with me, or die with me if my venture fails. I have four shots in my pistol—three for my colleagues, if they desert me, the last for myself. Unless I am victorious to-morrow I shall be a dead man.

Date: 1924.

Presiding Judge: Order in court. According to the testimony you have just heard, Herr Hitler declared: "Herr Minister, I give you my word of honour that never in my life will I make a putsch! Herr Minister, my word of honour, never a putsch!" Herr Hitler, did you make that promise?

Hitler: Yes.

Presiding Judge: And you broke it?

Hitler: Yes.



HITLER'S HIDEAWAY: About a gloomy and inaccessible cavern high in the Bavarian Alps the local peasants have built up a tradition that there lies the spirit of Frederick Barbarossa, one of a long line of rulers who carried on the historic legend of Charlemagne in Austria. Perhaps when Herr Hitler chose the Kehlstein peak, near this place, for his alpine retreat, he had the old tradition of German-Austrian greatness in mind. But he lives in no cavern. Blasted out of the solid rock, his retreat is luxurious in the extreme and, as this artist's conception indicates, from it a 300-foot lift leads to the summit of the peak. Before this eyrie was built Herr Hitler lived in the Berghof, at Berchtesgaden.

"Bulwark Against Bolshevism"

Date: Berlin, 1930.

Von Papen: Well, here's the situation. Either we resist Hitler or we exploit Hitler. If we resist him we destroy our best bulwark against Bolshevism. If we exploit him the people's unrest is diverted or suppressed.

Hindenburg: Right. You are right.

Von Papen: Well, what are we going to do?

Hindenburg: What can we do?

Von Papen: Should we support him?

Hindenburg: We should not.

Von Papen: Should we resist him?

Hindenburg: We dare not.

Narrator: President Hindenburg and Franz von Papen confer with Hitler at the Chancellery. In the nearby Kaiserhof Hitler's friends are awaiting his return.

Roehm: He'll be out any minute now. Papen has just come out. Here he comes.

Goebbels: What is the news? Can you tell by his face?

Roehm: He's as pale as a ghost . . . looks stern. My God, Goebbels, the tears are streaming down his face!

Goebbels: What do you think it means?

Goering: Either we are at the top of the world or else we are finished.

Roehm: We'll soon know. Here he is! (door opens, pause). Well, Adolf, won't you tell us? (Pause).

Hitler: (Icy hysteria) Goering . . . Goebbels . . . Roehm . . . I am Chancellor of the German Reich!

A Sign from Heaven

Date: February, 1933.

Voice (distant): Fire!

Voice (close): Fire! The Reichstag is on fire!

Nazi: Herr Hitler! Herr Hitler! The Reichstag is on fire.

Herr Hitler: It is a sign from heaven! *Date: June, 1934.*

Policeman: Been shooting them all day. Behind Stadelheim prison. I can't move my finger. Look! My trigger finger. It's tired out. Look!

1st Nazi: What are you talking about, you drunken fool? Been shooting who?

Policeman: Oh. . . . Dozens and dozens. The Fuehrer was there. Boots, belt and whip, and all. August Schneidenhuber, senior S.A. group-leader—boom! Hans von Heydebreck, S.A. leader—one arm he had—boom! Group leader Schmidt, boom! Senior leader Lasch—boom! Ernst Roehm—boom!

2nd Nazi: Ernst Roehm, the Fuehrer's closest friend?

Policeman: Oh, yes. It makes you laugh. Ernst Roehm, the S.A. chief—boom!

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Included among the members of the Repertory Company, formed on the outbreak of war, which played "The Shadow of the Swastika," are many artists well known to Empire listeners.

One of these is Stafford Hilliard, who toured Australia and New Zealand about two years ago with the English actress Fay Compton in "Victoria Regina," "George and Margaret," and several of Noel Coward's "To-night at 8.30" series.