

LISTENINGS

Perpetrated and illustrated by KEN ALEXANDER

THE SIGN OF THE DOUBLE-CROSS

RADIO tidings suggest that Hitler will take advantage of Mussolini's Grecian bend to double-cross him out of his share in the French swag. Which proves how right Charlie Chaplin was when he adopted the double-cross as the symbol of smash-and-grab in his picture "The Dictator."

Hitler is the daddy of double-crossers. He has double-crossed everyone so often that he thinks the straight-and-narrow is a spiral staircase. At the beginning of his career he even double-crossed his sheets of wall-paper.



It was only a step from paper and scrim to caper and scream. After double-crossing the people he double-crossed twelve hundred of his Nazi pals by presenting each with six feet of Germany and a double cross over each plot. His double-crossing of small nations would shame the love-letters of a self-made blonde. His admirers boast that he could double-cross a keg of XXXX out of its alcoholic content. He has double-crossed even himself so often that he has his hands tied before he goes to sleep so that he can't sneak out of bed and pick his own pockets.

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Spike Duane gave a yell, turned to flee again. A heavy truck caught him in the small of the back and dashed him against the curving.

"Dead. As dead as last year's romance," said the traffic cop.

"What a pity," said the woman. "He had a perfect film face."

"Perfect film face? Say, what is this?" demanded the cop. "Who are you, anyway?"

"I'm a talent scout for the Hollywood Motion Picture Co.," replied the woman. "I did so want to sign him up. What a pity."

Now it is Musso's turn to be branded with the Nazi two-way traffic sign where it hurts him most. Which is not unfair seeing that he has done so much to ruin the double-cross market in the Balkans. Since he slipped in Greece, victims are less willing to take a ride on the Axis. In fact the Axis has developed a distinct squeak. It needs Rumanian oil badly. But even the Rumanians are beginning to doubt the wisdom of taking a wolf to bed for protection. Hitler stands uncertain at the double-cross roads. "Let me see, who haven't we double-crossed up to now, Goering?" he asks. "There are not many, and those on the list are getting tough, Adolf," says Goering. "They don't trust us like they used to."

"That's the trouble. We can't get anything unless we have mutual trust. I do hate suspicious natures. They take all the fun out of double-crossing. You remember how we used to get them all pally and trusting, Hermann? And their faces when we put the 'fluence on them! Their faces, Hermann! What jolly laughs we used to have. And yet they say we Germans have no sense of humour."

"But since the Greeks burst Benito, the gas-bag of the Balkans, it's almost impossible to do a bit of honest double-crossing."



"Why, when I say to Yugoslavia, 'How about a spin on the Axis?' they reply, 'Yugo to —!' It is scarcely the spirit of co-operation, Hermann. How do they expect us to relieve them of their problems, and everything, unless they have faith and hope; after all, that's all they do have when we're through with them, so they ought to cultivate it."

"It's almost enough to tempt one to go straight, Adolf. Have you — er — ever thought about — er — going straight?"

"Don't be fantastic, Hermann. I did have a dream about it a few nights ago. It must have been that Norwegian lobster. Ugh! It was horrible. I simply had to put it across someone to clear my mind, and, well, there was only Benito."

"Quite, quite, Adolf! How about a little game of noughts and crosses to keep our hand in? If the worst comes to the worst we can, at least, double cross each other."

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