

PATHFINDER

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Groucho, Chico, Harpo, Karl?

One can say what one likes about the dictator countries but no one could ever accuse their rulers of having a sense of humor. For a long time, no movie house in Berlin has dared to show a picture of Charlie Chaplin. Although the official reason for the ban has never been given, the chances are that high Nazi officials realize it would be a dense moviegoer indeed who would not think of the tiny mustache decorating the lip of Adolf Hitler whenever he saw its exact duplicate on the whimsical face of the cinema comedian.

Last week Italy, in the throes of its ruler's new found affection for Germany, began to take up the ban on Chaplin. For good measure, it threw in one of its own—on the Marx Brothers. We can understand why Il Duce might prefer his countrymen not to find anything laughable in his good friend Hitler, but where there is a parallel for either Hitler or Mussolini in the amiable Marx Brothers we are at a loss to understand. Certainly neither Hitler nor Mussolini would have the aplomb at pricking stuffed shirts that is Groucho's, the mad inventiveness that is Chico's, the mute, wild-eyed appeal that is Harpo's.

The official explanation does not seem to give the answer. The Fascist newspaper *Il Tevere* speaks of a Marx Brothers production, "A Night at the Opera," as being a "perfect example of the degenerated quality of the Jewish race" and calls their antics "only a big bluff. Their clowning may succeed in drawing a smile from servants, but Italians do not need to take delight in their stupidity."

Our own guess is that Italy's high officials are a little confused as to just who the Marx Brothers are. They should know that there is Groucho, Chico, Harpo, and once there was Zeppo. Never did Karl Marx, father of Communism, belong to that branch of the family.

If the Fascist leaders fear Hollywood is making fun of the dictators, they should cast a suspicious eye in a slightly different direction. Specifically, at one of the seven dwarfs—one named D—PEY.

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