

FARAGO, Ladislav

1974

Swastikas West

AFTERMATH: MARTIN BORMANN AND THE FOURTH REICH. By Ladislav Farago. 479 pages. Simon and Schuster. \$10.95.

Two years ago, Ladislav Farago (author of the best seller on espionage "The Game of the Foxes") created a minor sensation with a series of articles in The London Daily Express that maintained that Martin Bormann, Hitler's right-hand man, was still alive and well in South America. Undaunted by the widespread skepticism provoked by this assertion, Farago promised that his Bormann theory would be vindicated in a forthcoming study of the Führer's top henchman and his fellow fugitives of the Third Reich. The product of this vow is an uneven "exposé" of postwar Nazism that should resurrect the 1972 flap with a few added wrinkles.

Once again, Farago's main theme is that Bormann did not die in the battle of Berlin, as the West German Government insists, but escaped to Denmark, made his way to Italy and then, traveling under an alias on an official Vatican passport, went into permanent exile in South America. First stop was Argentina, where, under the protection of the late dictator Juan Perón, Bormann—generally using the alias of Ricardo Bauer—took charge of the "SS treasure," a vast fortune that had been smuggled out of Hitler's Germany, and became "the Führer" of South America's large neo-Nazi colony. Perón's downfall in 1955, claimed Farago, propelled Bormann into a peripatetic existence that carried him successively to Brazil, Bolivia and Chile before he returned to Argentina—where he supposedly still lives—when the Peronists resumed power in March 1973.

Nazi: This thesis is documented with an array of material ranging from the seemingly authentic Bormann files of the Argentine secret service to an excerpt from the questionable purported memoirs of the Nazi leader. Farago also makes some explosive allegations that should stir controversy: that the Vatican aided thousands of Nazi war criminals to escape from Europe by issuing them travel documents; that the late Eva Perón was a charter member of a Nazi-run syndicate that received the SS treasure; that the Peróns extorted the lion's share of this hoard from Bormann as the price of his entry to Argentina.

Unfortunately, such "revelations" are few and far between—much of the book reads like retreaded stories of the fate of Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller, concentration-camp boss Franz Stangl, Adolf Eichmann and their ilk. More serious is Farago's failure to prove, as the title advertises, the existence of a significant neo-Nazi enclave in South America. Early references to "a kind of 'Fourth Reich,'"

Newsweek, November 4, 1974

