Letter from German Reich Chancellor Wirth to Cardinal Faulhaber, August 21, 1922

Source: L. Volk, ed., *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers, 1917-1945* [Faulhaber Papers] (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1975), vol. 1, pages 260-261, entry no. 121

Translation from the original German:

Your Eminence

will have been informed of the adverse position that is taken precisely by the Catholic circles of Bavaria toward my policy and my person and which, as letters have shown me, reaches deep into the ranks of the clergy… As an indication of the nature of this struggle, I call attention to the “Bavarian Courier’s” article in issue no. 315 of July 31st, in which it is stated:

At a secret meeting of the action committees of the Independent Socialist Party and the Communist Party of Germany in Berlin in February 1922, a representative of the Soviet Government declared that it is essential to disarm the rightwing before the outbreak of fighting. This could only be accomplished with the cooperation of the Government. Thanks to the intervention of Dr. Rathenau (German Foreign Minister, Jewish, assassinated June 24, 1922), I have become convinced that only the formation of a pure workers’ government can prevent the outbreak of counter-revolution. The precondition for a successful coup d’état is the aforesaid disarming of the counter-revolution, a step the Reich Government has decided to take. Upon these supposed statements the “Bavarian Courier” commented: The Law for Defense of the Republic [enacted July 21, 1922] is a new, triumphal stage in the advancing world revolution. The plan of February 1922 to break up and dissolve the nationalist formations, to disarm them before the struggle, has nearly been accomplished thanks to this law. Today the entire north of Germany is already the virtually uncontested domain of the advance guard of chaos. Only one blockade has not yet been eroded: Bavaria. The entire months-long systematic incitement conducted against Bavaria has only one purpose, to undermine it, discredit it, and finally draw it into the vortex that has cost Russia far more than 30 million dead.

Whether the statements placed in the mouth of the Soviet representative ever actually occurred, I do not know. In any event they are so completely inappropriate, like the remarks that the “Bavarian Courier” adds to them, whatever the nature may be of the facts. As relates especially to the allegations in the article concerning Dr. Rathenau, I owe it to the memory of my friend and colleague, murdered at the hand of knaves soon before this appeared in the press, as well as to Your Eminence, to stipulate that they are completely made up out of thin air. The role that the “Bavarian Courier” would have Dr. Rathenau playing is the absolute opposite of his mentality and his entire outlook on things. It should certainly be expected of the leading Catholic paper of Bavaria that it would verify all such portentous assertions before publishing them in a form that has to arouse among readers the conviction that they are correct.

As I hear it, Your Eminence considers it advisable that I not take part in the German Catholic Congress this year. I am also of the view that considering the dominant mood in Bavaria I should keep away from the upcoming Congress, - not as if I had concern for my own life, but rather because I consider it my duty to spare our Fatherland the unrest that would be the inevitable consequence of a nonetheless possible attempt on my life. I cannot conceal, however, that it is a deeply distressing feeling for me as a Catholic that the Catholic Chancellor of the German Reich cannot attend the German Catholic Congress, because the mood of the province in which it will be held has been agitated to such an extent.

Of Your Eminence, as Bavaria’s highest bishop, might I venture to request that you take a stand, with whatever means you will and can, against this mood among the Catholic population of your province, which I for the good of our Fatherland must denounce as extremely injurious.

With the fullest high respect, Your Eminence’s devoted

/s/ Wirth

PS In consideration of the importance I place upon this matter, I have taken the liberty to share copies of this letter with various German bishops.