Report of R.D. Murphy, U.S. Vice Consul in Munich

[First mention of Hitler by name in the State Dept reports coming out of Germany in the early 1920s]

<p>After quoting an official announcement of the Bavarian Government rejecting rumors of an imminent counter-revolutionary putsch as “fairy tales,” and “stupid gossip or unfounded suspicion of the police and the Bavarian government,” Murphy writes:

<p>The effect, however, that the success of Mussolini and the Fascisti have had in Italy is reflected in certain of the Bavarian groups, particularly the National Socialists. Representatives of the latter organization participated in a large meeting on November 3rd and listened to a number of radical speeches, the gist of which was that in Italy a small handful of national spirited men had been successful in establishing order. Bavaria, too, should have its Mussolini if order is not established otherwise.

<p>The leader of the National Socialists is Hitler, who is regarded by his followers as the Bavarian Mussolini. The socialist and bourgeois press speak of him only as the leader of the National Socialist ‘blackjack’ squad. The sentiment at the above mentioned meeting was to the effect that a national dictatorship would be better than life in the present republic. The speakers were not reticent in scathing remarks concerning the weakness of the Wirth Cabinet. Hitler and his followers did not hesitate to say that Wirth regards himself as a latter day saint and is at the same time a misguided fool and a menace to the German people. It is on this point that Hitler and his followers have scored their largest gain in popularity. Hitler is a naturalized German, originally a Czech, and formerly a painter by profession. For the past two or three years he has played the role of an agitator. Like Kurt Eisner his start was modest, but he has shown steady progress. While Eisner at the time of his advent to power, it is said, could only depend upon thirty men, Hitler is credited with a following of 4,000 faithful, eager to do his bidding. Hitler is a typical agitator who understands local prejudices and is keen enough to take advantage of the present discontent to further his own aims. He is bitterly opposed to the Wirth Cabinet and the policy of performance; he is strongly anti-semitic; he has visions of a change in the domestic order of things which would somehow result in the casting off of the burden of reparations.

“The reports, however, appearing in certain American newspapers and also in the French press to the effect that Hitler is working hand in glove with such monarchists as Ludendorff, Tirpitz, Luttwitz, Erhardt and the like under a united plan for a royalist coup d’etat in Bavaria do not appear to me to be made of whole cloth. That part of such reports which says that such a counter-revolution will take place on November 11, or shortly thereafter, appears to me unsupported by facts.

<p>A coup d’etat by the right would be at present not only inopportune but unnecessary as far as Bavaria itself is concerned. All that can be expected at this time can be accomplished by the administration constitutionally. The Bavarian people, no matter how royalist and how discontented with the present order, still retain sufficient sense of reason to ask – what will violent measures gain. The secret treaty supposed to exist between France and Czecho-Slovakia whereby in case of a counter-revolution France would take the Ruhr and Czecho-Slovakia a portion of Bavaria does not go for increased sentiment for revolt. Bavaria is German and its people have no sympathy with French separatist schemes no matter what the temptation. Undoubtedly the French are working to that end. I am confidentially informed that the French Minister at Munich has even approached Auer – Socialist leader – with a view to obtaining Socialist support of the plan. There is no indication, however, of progress made. On the contrary, Minister Dard’s activities have made him extremely unpopular here.

<p>Another much discussed political possibility is that of a State President, who is to have a certain tenure of four to seven years and who will exercise a stabilizing influence on the government. The weakness of the present system was forcibly illustrated during the recent . . . When the Premier was forced to withdraw, there was no central figure who could call upon someone to form a new cabinet and take over the reins of policy. Instead there was a long inter-party squabble resulting in the selection of a man well thought of and respected, but not a strong man. The strong men of the Volkspartei – Heim, Held and Speck, did not wish for the office, as they selected another man who has not even the privilege of choosing his own cabinet, to occupy the chair while they continue on in charge of party affairs and policy.

<p>That a Wittelsbacher – probably Rupprecht – may be the State President should one be elected, is not considered as impossible.

<p>Source: U.S. NARA, M336, Roll 18, pp. 206-216.</p><br>