1922-11-25 US NARA M336 Roll 18 pages 254-259 Report of R.D. Murphy, U.S. Vice Consul in Munich

p.256:

“The third inquiry made by the Socialists, probably of the greatest current interest, deals with the attitude of the Government towards the activities and breaches of the public peace caused by the national Socialists Workmen’s party. This interpolation was based on the claim of the United Socialists that armed bands of the national Socialists organization were terrorizing the Government; that the police sympathized with the activities of the organization and offered no resistance to it; that Hitler’s strength had been greatly fortified by Mussolini’s success which Hitler is attempting to imitate in Bavaria with the sympathy of the Government or at least without its active opposition. The Socialists claimed that action should be taken against Hitler’s organization under the special laws for the protection of the Republic.

“The Government through its Minister of Justice in its reply characterized the National Socialist movement as a natural effect of the burdens imposed upon Germany during the past four years, and a natural reaction against the view of the Untied Socialists that the German people were justly bound to perform the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles. He stated that the Government was, however, holding the movement under control and within reasonable bounds; the movement had a constitutional right to exist; the rumors of counter revolution founded upon the activities of Hitler’s organization were not supported by acts of violence on the part of the organization; the responsibility for such disorders as had occurred could be attributed as well to misdemeanors on the part of Unites Socialist workingmen as to members of the Hitler group.

“My observation leads me to the conclusion that the so-called Bavarian Mussolini – Hitler, concerning whose activities the Department was advised in my report No. 221 of November 10, is countenanced by the government because he through his organization provides vent for the inevitable outcroppings of public discontent which lies so near the surface of things in Bavaria during this period of economic disorder. He is an opportunist quick to appeal to popular prejudice, as is demonstrated in his campaign against the Jews, but it does not seem that he has developed sufficiently to play the larger role of dictator which is his avowed ultimate aim. He is content to progress slowly and submit to the control of the present government, and the government seems likewise content to have a useful tool which provides an exhaust for the element which craves attendance at the usual beer-hall assemblies to listen to denunciation of the Jews, the Entente in general and France in particular, to the condemnation of the Treaty of Versailles, and such ‘Schlagwörter’ as the ‘Berliner Judische Räterrepublik’ and a vivid portrayal of its economic woes.”

Interview with the Bavarian Prime Minister.

Premier von Knilling yesterday granted me a thirty-minute interview in which he expressed himself somewhat as follows: Serioius social disorders due to oppressive economic conditions during the coming winter months are possible but he has full confidence in the strength of the government and the police to cope with and suppress and excesses. Anti-Jewish sentiment is strong and increasing. He himself is anti-semitic. While Hitler’s organization is growing in numbers, the Premier does not feel that Hitler is of large enough caliber to advance

[p.258]

beyond the point of a popular agitator. He does not partake of the qualities of a Mussolini, nor will he even attain the measure of success of Kurt Eisner. He has not the mental ability and furthermore the government is now on guard as was not the case in 1918. To the question of where Hitler’s organization obtained its funds, he said there were many rumors. He of course denied that the present government is supplying funds or assistance in any way. (From a high government source I learn that it is strongly rumored that Henry Ford’s organization is furnishing Hitler with funds to assist him in his campaign against the Jews). Many of the more respectable element which has recently been attracted to Hitler had contributed, but his financial resources were far from unlimited.

“The Premier gives the impression of capability and good judgment. He is unquestionably reactionary and a royalist.”