Letter from Heinrich Held, Privy Councillor, Bavaria to Cardinal Faulhaber, Oct. 6, 1923

Source: L. Volk, ed., *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers, 1917-1945* [“Faulhaber Papers”] vol. 1, pp. 314-315, entry no. 144

Translation from the original German:

Your Eminence,

Serious religious and political concerns press me to take pen in hand for a letter to Your Eminence. What has long been my suspicion has now become my rock solid conviction: The entire nationalist-volkish movement in Bavaria, whose nucleus is the National Socialists and the Fighting League with Ludendorff at the head, is in its main tendencies a major movement of apostasy from the Catholic faith and the Chruch and at the same time a cunning struggle against the State of Bavaria and the House of Wittelsbach. The leading “initiates” of the whole movement are almost exclusively Protestants and mostly non-Bavarians, whose immigration here is mostly of recent date; of them it is clear that they are in closest contact with the Protestant League (Evangelischer Bund) and the North German sort of German nationalists surrounding Helfferich (the author of the demagogic pamphlets under the name of Ulrich von Hutten). Ludendorff is the archtype of a Protestant Leaguer and Hitler is the docile student of Wolf and Schönerer, the Free-From-Rome people of Braunau. The financiers in Germany are Stinnes and the financiers of the Hollenzollerns, along with foreign antisemites and Lodge members.\*

(\*Notes by L. Volk, ed.: Ludendorff . . . fought against international powers (Jews, Freemasons and Jesuits) and for a religion based on north German race. Karl Helfferich was Vice Chancellor in 1916-1917. Karl He4rmann Wolf was an Austrian politician prominent in the Free-From-Rome movement, as was Georg Ritter von Schönerer. Braunau am Inn is the Austrian town, directly across the Inn River from Bavaria, where Hitler was born.)

The Catholic Church and we German Catholics are denounced as anti-nationalist and opponents of the Reich. The “Black International” is branded by these people as at least as dangerous for Germany and national unity and agreement as the Red International. Their systematic, veiled incitement, laced with nationalistic slogans, has a confusing and poisoning impact even in our Catholic ranks – many Catholics run with the big crowd without knowing how they are being exploited and wronged by resounding slogans. Yes even clergy get entangled in National Socialist ideas and allow themselves to be shamelessly exploited as agitators. With devilish cleverness “German” Christianity is propagated and the real – Catholic – Christianity is conjured away. With “field masses,” as drapery, the Catholic people, especially Catholic youth, are thoroughly deceived about the true intentions of the leaders of the movement. It is a pity and a shame, how the Catholic people of Bavaria are allowing themselves to be brought to their end by political and religious tricksters, charlatans and criminals.

Your Eminence! The danger is enormously great. No government or representative of the people can master this danger, because a year-long lying and poisoning demagoguery has deprived them of respect and trust, even among a considerable portion of the Catholic population. Herr General State Commissar Dr. von Kahr will also be unable to accomplish anything in this direction – either he does not recognize this danger or he is unable, as a Protestant, to summon the inner strength to dispel it, even if he is yet well intentioned otherwise. The danger is acute in the highest degree – the conduct of France aggravates it from day to day.

Thus there is only one salvation and it lies with Your Eminence and the episcopate as a whole. Your Eminence, do not take it as presumption, but as an imploring request, arising from a recognition of facts, from a true son of the Church and a friend of the Fatherland, if I implore Your Eminence to stake out a sure signpost showing the way out of this intellectual and spiritual entanglement, by means of an open strong word of warning and resistance to the Catholic people. I am convinced that one word from Your Eminence will bring our Bavarian Catholic people back to their senses and to proper Catholic and Bavarian behavior.

Your Eminence, excuse the frankness of my expression – it is the result of a long interior struggle.

With respectful greetings, Your Eminence’s grateful servant,

/s/ Heinrich Held