

# NEW POPULAR IDOL RISES IN BAVARIA

## Hitler Credited With Extraordinary Powers of Swaying Crowds to His Will.

### FORMS GRAY-SHIRTED ARMY

#### Armed With Blackjacks and Revolvers and Well Disciplined, They Obey Orders Implicitly.

### LEADER A REACTIONARY

#### Is Anti-Red and Anti-Semitic, and Demands Strong Government for a United Germany.

By CYRIL BROWN.

Copyright, 1922, by The New York Times Company  
By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

MUNICH, Nov. 20.—Next to the high cost of living and the dollar, "Der Hitler" and his "Hakenkreuzler" are the popular topic of talk in Munich and other Bavarian towns. This reactionary Nationalistic anti-Semitic movement has now reached a point where it is considered potentially dangerous, though not for the immediate future.

Hitler today is taken seriously among all classes of Bavarians. He is feared by some, enthusiastically hailed as a prophet and political economic savior by others, and watched with increasing sympathetic interest by the bulk who, apparently, are merely biding the psychological moment to mount Hitler's bandwagon. Undoubtedly the spectacular success of Mussolini and the Fascisti brought Hitler's movement to the fore and gained popular interest and sympathy for it. Another condition favorable to the outburst of the movement is the widespread discontent with the existing state of affairs among all classes in the towns and cities under the increasing economic pressure.

Hitler's "Hakenkreuz" movement is essentially urban in character. It has not yet caught a foothold among the hardy Bavarian peasantry and highlanders, which would make it really dangerous. As a highly placed personage put it:

"Hitler organized a small insignificant group of National Socialists two years ago, since when the movement has been smoldering beneath the surface. Now it has eaten its way through, and a conflagration of course is not only possible but certain if this now free flame of fanatical patriotism finds sufficient popular combustible material to feed on."

Hitler has been called the Bavarian Mussolini, and his followers the Bavarian Fascisti. There is nothing socialistic about the National Socialism he preaches. He has 30,000 organized followers in Munich alone. His total following throughout Bavaria is uncertain, since the movement is in a state of rapid flux. He is wasting no time working out political programs, but devotes his whole energy to recruiting fresh forces and perfecting his organization.

#### Blackjacks Silence Opposition.

"Herr Hitler regrets he is unable to meet you as he is leaving town on important business for several days," was the answer received by THE NEW YORK TIMES correspondent. His important business was going to Regensburg with three special trainloads of Munich admirers for the purpose of holding a series of reactionary inflammatory meetings and incidentally to beat up protesting Socialists and Communists with blackjacks if any dare protest, which is becoming increasingly rarer.

His simple method is, first, propaganda, and secondly, efficient organization. He personally conducts patriotic revival meetings for this purpose, often descending from his stronghold, Munich, on other Bavarian towns with special trainloads of followers. He has the rare oratorical gift, at present unique in Germany, of spellbinding whole audiences regardless of politics or creed. The new converts made at these rallies, those who absolutely and unconditionally pledge themselves to Hitler and the cause, are carefully sifted through and the pick of them; who pass the standard military muster are organized into "storm troops" with gray shirts, brassards in the old imperial colors, black and an anti-Semitic Swastika cross in a white circular field on read; armed also with blackjacks and, it is popularly whispered, revolvers.

According to a reliable specialist informant, there are probably 400,000 military rifles and 150 cannon still concealed in Bavaria. So that some fine day Hitler's legionaries might well make their debut with rifles.

Hitler's strength is in the combination of his undeniable great gifts as an orator and organizer. He exerts an uncanny control over audiences, possessing the remarkable ability to not only rouse his hearers to a fighting pitch of fury, but at will to turn right around and reduce the same audience to docile calmness and good order. A typical instance is related by the informant mentioned: "At the height of the recent Bavarian Government crisis Hitler was holding a mass meeting in Munich and had worked up the big audience when a rumor spread through the hall that he had planned a coup and that he would overthrow and seize the Government that night and was about to give the signal at this rally. His followers burst into an enthusiastic uproar, drew and brandished blackjacks and revolvers, and with shouts of 'Hell, Hell, Hell,' prepared to follow Hitler and storm anything.

"With a few electric words he worked a magic change in the audience. Their duty, on which the success of the cause depended, he said, was iron discipline and implicit obedience to orders when orders were given. The time for action had not come yet. And the riot was nipped in the bud."

#### A Different Show of Power.

A different exhibition of Hitler power; during a mass meeting in Nuremberg, a stronghold of Bavarian socialism, the radical elements undertook a counter-demonstration, massed outside the meeting hall and sang the "Internationale." The strains of the hated tune heard in the hall enraged Hitler's followers. At his word of command shock troops of gray shirts with fine discipline marched from the hall, pulled their blackjacks, charged and dispersed the crowd with many a broken head.

Hitler is credited with having a rapidly increasing following among the workers disgruntled by the high cost of living. It is also said many ultra-radicals, including Communists, have flocked to his reactionary banner. He is beginning to draw support from the politically sluggish middle classes, which in Bavaria, however, are not so sluggish as in Berlin. Even more significant there is some active, more passive support and to a still greater extent sympathetic interest for the Hitler movement among the Bavarian loyalists, among monarchists and militarists, and in government and political circles, apparently coupled with the idea that the movement would prove a useful tool if it could be controlled by their special interests. But there is also the latent fear that the movement might wax beyond control.

Hitler, in addition to his oratorical and organizing abilities, has another positive asset—he is a man of the "common people" and hence has the makings of a "popular hero," appealing to all classes. It is reported that he was a worker before becoming leader of the Bavarian Social Nationalists. He served during the war as a common soldier and won the Iron Cross of the First and Second Classes, which for

a common soldier is distinctive evidence of exceptional bravery and daring. To Bavarian mentality he talks rough, shaggy, sound horse sense, and according to present Bavarian public opinion a strong, active leader equipped with horse sense is the need of the hour.

#### Chief Points of His Program.

Hitler's program is of less interest than his person and movement. His program consists chiefly of half a dozen negative ideas clothed in generalities. He is "against the Jews, Communists, Bolshevism, Marxian socialism, Separatists, the high cost of living, existing conditions, the weak Berlin Government and the Versailles Treaty." Positively he stands only for "a strong united Germany under a strong Government."

He is credibly credited with being actuated by lofty, unselfish patriotism. He probably does not know himself just what he wants to accomplish. The keynote of his propaganda in speaking and writing is violent anti-Semitism. His followers are popularly nicknamed "the Hakenkreuzler." So violent are Hitler's fulminations against the Jews that a number of prominent Jewish citizens are reported to have sought safe asylums in the Bavarian highlands, easily reached by fast motor cars, whence they could hurry their women and children when forewarned of an anti-Semitic St. Bartholomew's night.

But several reliable, well-informed sources confirmed the idea that Hitler's anti-Semitism was not so genuine or violent as it sounded, and that he was merely using anti-Semitic propaganda as a bait to catch masses of followers and keep them aroused, enthusiastic and in line for the time when his organization is perfected and sufficiently powerful to be employed effectively for political purposes.

A sophisticated politician credited Hitler with peculiar political cleverness for laying emphasis and over-emphasis on anti-Semitism, saying: "You can't expect the masses to understand or appreciate your finer real aims. You must feed the masses with cruder morsels and ideas like anti-Semitism. It would be politically all wrong to tell them the truth about where you really are leading them."

The Hitler movement is not of mere local or picturesque interest. It is bound to bring Bavaria into a renewed clash with the Berlin Government as long as the German Republic goes even through the motions of trying to live up to the Versailles Treaty. For it is certain the Allies will take umbrage at the Hitler organization as a violation of the military clauses of the treaty and demand disbandment, even as in the case of its predecessor, the Orgesch.