

Pathfinder

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Republic—or Rupprecht?

Sunday, the fourth anniversary of Hitler's defeat, was an uncomfortable day for almost every German with a memory for dates. But, on that day, out of the city of Bonn on the left bank of the Rhine, came news that could make Germans of the future look forward to May 8 as a day of celebration rather than one of regrets. For delegates from Western Germany's 11 states gave final approval to the draft of the constitution for the new "Federal Republic of Germany." The charter was the labor of eight months by representatives of 45 million Germans.

Only the two Communist delegates and a group of Bavarian right-wingers cast dissenting votes. The next step in meeting the July 15 deadline for establishing the new state is ratification by the parliaments of the 11 states. Bonn leaders expect trouble only in Bavaria.

Old Fashioned. Bavaria, the Reich's "bread basket," is in the American Zone. It is Germany's second largest province (area, 27,111 sq. mi.; pop., 9 million). Once a link in the Charlemagne Empire, Bavaria has a proud history which dates back nearly 1,200 years, to when what is now Berlin was still an uninhabited swamp. From the twelfth century to the fall of Kaiser Wilhelm, Bavarians were ruled by the House of Wittelsbach. For years they bitterly opposed attempts at dictation by the "*Saupreussen*," the "Prussian Swine," as they call their northern neighbors. Bavarian right-wingers distrust the new republic for the same reasons they opposed Bismarck, the "Iron Chancellor," and the postwar Weimar Republic. They fear it may destroy their precious rights, make them subservient to the "*Saupreussen*."

Thousands of Bavarians have never forgotten that their province enjoyed its greatest prosperity under the reign of the House of Wittelsbach. Many a householder still displays the blue and white Wittelsbach flag. And porcelain factories still turn out souvenirs of imperial days.

A strong faction is campaigning for the return to the throne of former Crown Prince Rupprecht. The eldest son of King Ludwig III, deposed in 1918, Rupprecht is a tall, thin man of vast education. He led Bavarian troops under Kaiser Wilhelm. In World War II, he was exiled to Italy. Since then he has been living with his family at Leutstetten Castle on Lake Starnberg near Munich.

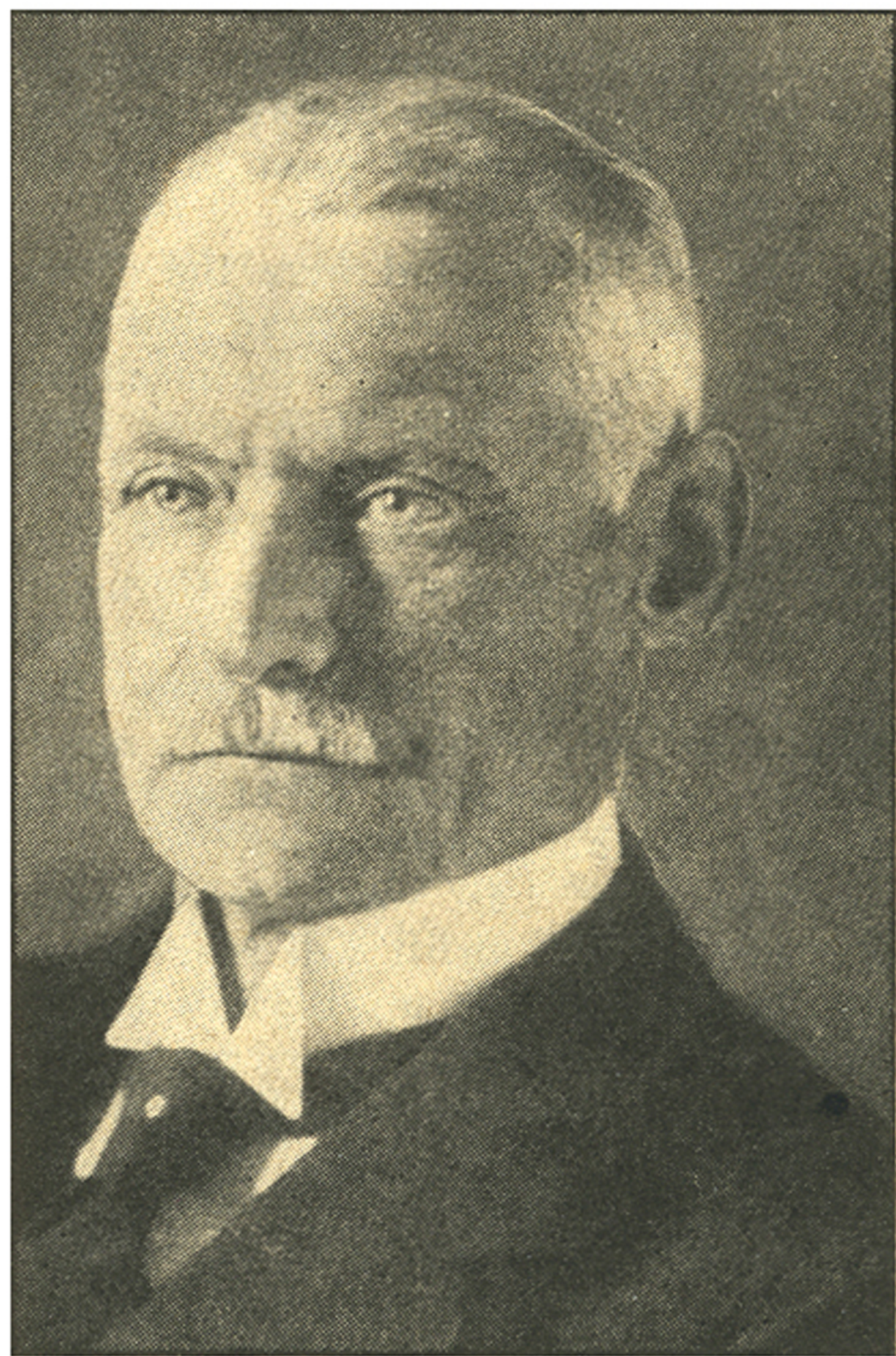
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Young Man's Job? Spearhead of the Bavarian monarchist movement is Josef Baumgartner, 44, son of a well-to-do farmer. Boss of the *Bayernpartei* (Bavarian Party), he is an intelligent, massive man, given to boisterous speechmaking and theatrical outbursts. He is promoting a mass demonstration throughout Bavaria for Rupprecht on May 18, the Prince's 80th birthday.

Because of his age, Rupprecht is not too keen for Baumgartner's campaign, gives it only polite support. Says Rupprecht: "If the Bavarian people desire monarchy, I shall respect their desire."

But the final decision on Bavaria's political future is not likely to be made by Rupprecht or Baumgartner. American observers regard Minister-President Hans Ehard as Bavaria's most influential man. He is one of the top leaders of the Christian Social Union, Bavaria's biggest party, and he is said to control 60% of the state's voters.

Last week Ehard took most of the wind out of Rupprecht's sails, left the aging Prince all but becalmed on Lake Starnberg. Said Ehard: "Bavaria's strong fight for its principles is in no way to be construed as favoring separatism as an alternative. I speak not only for myself but for the . . . state government, for my party and for all sensible-thinking people in Bavaria."



Crown Prince. The head of the House of Wittelsbach. (SEE: Republic)