

# The munich putsch 1923 – source related study



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1. Source C, *Prelude To Terror* was written by Richard Hanser in 1971 and seeks to discredit Hitler and show him as a coward we know this because he says that Hitler pretended he was shot dead and then fled from the scene of battle. And he also wrote " at no point did he behave heroically" and " he did not exactly cover himself with glory". Hanser also wrote sarcastically that it is extremely hard or maybe impossible for the average man to lift someone even if he or she was a child. " Not an easy thing to do with only one arm in working order". By saying this Hanser thinks the event about Hitler saving a little boy is a story, he thinks source B by John Toland is a story. Source B is a story made up by the Nazis while source C is more likely to be what had actually happened.

Source B on the other hand was published by John Toland in 1976 and is sympathetic towards Hitler, he uses words such as " painfully", " struggled", " slowly" and " agony" to describe how. John's sympathy continues by John describing how Hitler looked whilst he was escaping, he had a " pale face", " cradling his injured arm" and his hair was " falling over his face" , according to John's description of what Hitler looked like when he escaped from the battle. Then John Toland said Hitler wanted to pick up a little boy who was " bleeding profusely", and carry him to safety but schultze (Hitler's driver) told him not to and called someone else to take him.

Source B views Hitler as a hero who cares deeply of Germany and it's citizens. John seems to have based this source on Nazi myth. The writer of source C wants to show Hitler as a coward. Hanser thinks that the Nazis made up a story about a little boy, this story is source B.

2. Source A is written by Konrad Heiden and is more likely to be true than sources B, C and D. It is more reliable than these sources because source A contains information provided by a witness that was there probably at the time of the Munich Putsch and saw the event. However witnesses are people who can forget over long periods of time, the witness information of source A was retrieved thirteen years after the event in which he or she could have forgotten. The witness could lie or be biased because he or she might want Hitler to look bad, as he does in Konrad Heiden's witness account.

Witnesses can get confused over long periods of time if they are not clear of what happened and can slightly change the facts if they give their view of what happened. However eyewitnesses have seen the event that they talk about. A witness, as in one witness is less reliable than several witnesses. If witnesses agree on an event that event is more likely to be true than a single witness who could be biased, lying, confused or forgotten about what happened. Source A agrees with sources C and E.

Source B is probably the least reliable out of all the four sources because, for a start it does not agree with any of the sources except unreliable source D. Which means that it probably is not true. The writer of source B, John Toland had his view of the Munich Putsch published fifty-three years after the event so probably got his information from secondary sources. If there were witnesses or a witness account in the source then John probably would have stated it. It is unlikely that a witness could survive for over sixty years of age

And if he/she did, it would be hard for he/she to remember from the age of about seven. Witnesses or a witness could have forgotten over a long period

of time such as fifty-three years. It is unlikely that John's source had been assisted by a witness or witnesses. Source B is based on the Nazi propaganda of making Hitler and the Nazi party appear the fittest party for ruling Germany. Source B is very unreliable.

Source C was written forty-eight years after the Munich Putsch so also probably was not aided by any witnesses. Richard Hanser the writer of source C agrees with source A that Hitler acted cowardly during the event. Richard says, " at no point did he behave heroically".

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Source A says Hitler " was the first to get up, run backwards and drive away" which means source A also views Hitler as a coward. Although no witnesses were used to assist source C, source C agrees with the witness assisted source A. Source C is reliable.

Source D is a section of the Social Democrats election poster. All parties are expected to discredit all other parties so that they win the most votes and rule. This is what the Social Democrats are doing with source D. We can see this because the election poster says Hitler was " lying flat on his belly in front of the Feldherrnhalle", a building near to where the shooting took place. And that he " crawled" into a car. The poster uses words like " crawled" and " belly" to suggest that Hitler was like a worm, weak and slow, and to say Hitler was not heroic. " Whoever is ill can seek his help with complete confidence" by saying this. The Social Democratic party wants people to think Hitler is weak and slow concerning the ruling of Germany and that everyone knows this.

The election poster is biased towards Hitler and the Nazis because they want people to vote for them and not other parties like the Nazis.

Basically source D is propaganda for the Social Democrats to win votes, this source is very unreliable.

Source E is the most reliable because it was aided by several witnesses, one of those witnesses was Dr Walter Schultz, a German doctor. All the witnesses agree that Hitler did not act heroically, what makes the source much more reliable is that Dr Walter Schultz also mentioned in the source that Hitler did not behave heroically. Schultz is a German doctor, so you would expect him to lie and say that Hitler was a hero. All of the witnesses agree that Hitler " was the first to get up and turn his back" and that Hitler " spirited off to the country home.... Where Putzi's wife and sister nursed him and where two days later he was arrested". These quotes backed up by several witnesses further the reliable theory that Hitler is a coward and not a hero. The doctor did not lie, this is what makes this evidence more reliable than all of the other sources, including source A. The writer of source E seems to have checked the witness accounts with other sources of evidence to make sure the witnesses are telling the truth. Source E is supported by the reliable sources A and C.

3. A writer like John Toland would face the following problems when trying to research exactly what happened during the Munich Putsch in 1923.

Firstly he would need to find witnesses because witnesses are a very reliable source of

Information. Because John Toland's written piece of information was published in 1976 It would be hard for him to find witnesses since most would be dead (humans live for about fifty to sixty years). If he did find a witness that witness would be very old, about seventy and would probably not remember exactly what happened. The witness would not be very clear on what happened and probably would have forgotten parts of what happened during the Munich Putsch. He/she has the ability to lie, be biased or he or she might have forgotten what happened over such a long period of time. A witness's memory could be poor or the witness might be confused or might not be sure what happened. A witness may not be willing to give information about the event or might be ashamed that they took part and deny that they took part, they might hide the fact that they were there.

The available evidence could be propaganda, it could have been made up or changed to make someone change the way they think, or to cover up a mistake made by a person or group of people. A writer like John Toland might face problems with documents, documents can be propaganda or biased to one side. Incriminating evidence could have been destroyed after or during a war to hide or censor information. Because of the long time between John Toland's written source and the Munich Putsch primary evidence such as photographs and written information could have been worn out and be difficult to see or read. Also to take into consideration by a writer like Toland is that a photograph could be made up/posed for, or changed. A way of telling if a photograph has been posed for is if the people in it are looking directly at the camera or if a large number of them are facing the camera. If people in a photograph look surprised or if a few or none of the people

in it are facing the camera, that photograph probably is genuine. To check if a photograph has been changed it will have to be viewed by a powerful magnifying glass or high tech computer to check for any unusual aspects. Written documents can also be forged, destroyed or could have been worn out so that it would be difficult to read or impossible to read. To check if a document was forged the document

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suspected of being forged should be compared with a genuine document if possible. Torn documents can be pieced together like a puzzle if its pieces were found.

4. An opinion is a point of view; it is what a person thinks about something. Opinions are not capable of being true; an opinion cannot be used as proof. The example of an opinion from source C I have chosen is " at no point did he behave heroically". The reason I chose this is because whether a person is a hero or not depends on how a person thinks and feels. This is an opinion, not a fact; it is not necessarily true. A person might say that Hitler was a leader of an army, he should be brave and help his soldiers/secret police in any and every way possible.

He should set an example and raise their morale. He should not be throwing himself down as soon as the shooting began and then running away when he got the chance, he should have fought back and helped his men. This is an opinion. Another person might say that a leader of an army should throw himself down for cover and then run away for safety. This is another opinion. They are both two very different opinions. It all depends on a point of view.

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An opinion is a point of view it can not be fact. However it can still help to find the truth.

5. The fact that reference is made in source E to the testimony of a witness makes it likely to be more reliable than sources B and C. The reason being that source E has been aided by several witnesses that all agree. Witness evidence is a very reliable source of evidence because an eyewitness has actually seen and heard the event; he/she has been there at the time.

However witnesses evidence can also be unreliable. An eyewitness can lie, be biased or confused. They might do these thing to cover up their blame, or they might have regretted something, they might be biased because they may want something or someone

To look better then it is/was. They might have forgotten about the event or what had happened during the time because so much time has gone by.

They might not be clear on what happened or might get mixed up and changed what actually happened, (the fact) to a different story or opinion.

Source E is backed up by a Nazi doctor, who would be likely to say that Hitler acted heroically, but he did not say this, in fact he said the opposite " Hitler was the first to get up and turn back".

Although sources C and B have not been aided by witnesses (no witnesses were mentioned in these two sources), and they have been based on secondary sources; source C is supported by source E in that they both display Hitler as not heroic and cowardly behaved during the Putsch. Sources B and C were published around fifty years after the Putsch, this makes them likely to have been based on secondary sources and without witness



evidence; since witnesses can not usually live long enough up to that time. Source B is not supported by any evidence and seems to have been based on Nazi propaganda, John Toland seems to have not check his piece of writing with other sources. Source B has not been supported by any witness evidence. Source B is the least reliable out of sources E, C, and B.

6.

Source E best supports the explanation of events offered in source A because both of these sources give similar accounts of what Hitler did when the Munich Putsch was occurring.

Here is an example of what I mean, in source E, William L Shirer, the writer, says Hitler " was the first to get up and turn back". He also said " Hitler was the first to scamper to safety". Similarly to both of these quotes from source E, source A's writer Konrad Heiden has written that Hitler " was the first to get up, run backwards and drive away". The last part. In source A it is also said that Hitler did " drive away" during the putsch, source E also states Hitler " hustled into the waitingmotor car".

The final similarity in both sources is that Hitler's soldiers were left behind when Hitler fled from the gun battle. In source A it is written that Hitler left " whilst hundreds of his comrades were still lying on the ground", in source E it is written Hitler was " leaving his dead and wounded comrades lying in the street".

7. A historian would need to consider a large amount of things when using a photograph (source F) and painting (source G), as evidence of the Munich

Putsch. He/she will need to know that a photograph can be a reliable source of evidence, but they can be posed for or faked after the Putsch, which can make them unreliable.

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Source F looks realistic because-

- \* The people in it are not facing the camera, in fact most of their backs can be clearly seen, therefore it was not posed for

- \* There are armed soldiers in it carrying rifles, short lances and they are mounted on horses

This means there was, still is or is going to be trouble, probably between armed people.

- \* The crowd of people in it are looking to the right of the photograph, where something out of the ordinary is happening, has happened or is going to happen, this is where the trouble is

The historian needs to consider why this photograph was taken and who took it. Source F was probably taken by a passer by or by a journalist for a newspaper. He or she has to consider when it was taken. In source F's case it was in 1923 on the 9th of November, the same day the Munich Putsch took place, this makes it more reliable. Source F does not attempt to spread a message to its viewers, it is neutral; a historian needs to be able to check whether a photograph is trying to convey a message or if a photograph is just displaying pure facts.

A historian needs to know that a painting does not usually intend to tell the truth, it displays what the artist thinks about something. Source G is what its artist thinks about the Beer Hall Putsch. This particular painting is Nazi propaganda, it was painted in 1933, ten years after the Putsch when Hitler came to power. It was probably painted to make Hitler seem like a powerful leader who the German people can trust and to make him and the Nazi party more popular. We know this because in the painting Hitler is standing high above all the other people and he is speaking confidently, we know he is speaking confidently because he is using arm movements to enforce his views and to make the people easily understand what he is saying. All different kinds and classes of German people are shown behind Hitler, listening very carefully as if they want what Hitler is saying to become true.

For any paintings and photos to be accepted as evidence they should be checked for reliability against as many sources as possible.