

The Munich Putsch 1923

On 8th November, 1923, the Bavarian government held a meeting of about 3,000 officials. While Gustav von Kahr, the prime minister of Bavaria was making a speech, Adolf Hitler and armed stormtroopers entered the building. Hitler jumped onto a table, fired two shots in the air and told the audience that the Munich Putsch was taking place and the National Revolution had begun.

Leaving Hermann Goering and the SA to guard the 3,000 officials, Hitler took Gustav von Kahr, Otto von Lossow, the commander of the Bavarian Army and Hans von Lossow, the commandant of the Bavarian State Police into an adjoining room. Hitler told the men that he was to be the new leader of Germany and offered them posts in his new government. Aware that this would be an act of high treason, the three men were initially reluctant to agree to this offer. Adolf Hitler was furious and threatened to shoot them and then commit suicide: "I have three bullets for you, gentlemen, and one for me!" After this the three men agreed.

Soon afterwards Eric Ludendorff arrived. Ludendorff had been leader of the German Army at the end of the First World War and was a strong supporter of the Nazi Party. Ludendorff agreed to become head of the German Army in Hitler's government.

Achtung! Let's see how well you have understood my plans:

- 1) After I entered the beer hall how did I grab everyone's attention?
- 2) Who were the 3 men I wanted to talk to? And how did I get them to agree with me?
- 3) Who was Ludendorff and why was it important that he supported me?



Adolf Hitler now planned to march on Berlin and remove the national government. Surprisingly, Hitler had not arranged for the stormtroopers to take control of the radio stations and the telegraph offices. This meant that the national government in Berlin soon heard about Hitler's putsch and gave orders for it to be crushed.

The next day Adolf Hitler, Eric Ludendorff, Hermann Goering and 3,000 armed supporters of the Nazi Party marched through Munich in an attempt to join up with Ernst Roehm's forces at the War Ministry. At Odensplatz they found the road blocked by the Munich police. As they refused to stop, the police fired into the ground in front of the marchers. The stormtroopers returned the fire and during the next few minutes 21 people were killed and another hundred were wounded, included Goering.

When the firing started Adolf Hitler threw himself to the ground dislocating his shoulder. Hitler lost his nerve and ran to a nearby car. Although the police were outnumbered, the Nazis followed their leader's example and ran away. Only Eric Ludendorff and his adjutant continued walking towards the police.



I need to write up the story of the Munich Putsch for my book - summarise the main events in bullet points for me. Try to make it as positive as you can, I don't want to look like a coward!

After hiding in a friend's house for several days, Adolf Hitler was arrested and put on trial for his role in the Beer Hall Putsch. If found guilty, Hitler faced the death penalty. While in prison Hitler suffered from depression and talked of committing suicide. However, it soon became clear that the Nazi sympathizers in the Bavarian government were going to make sure that Hitler would not be punished severely.

At his trial Adolf Hitler was allowed to turn the proceedings into a political rally. He greatly impressed his audience with the power of his speech against the Weimar government. Although he was found guilty he only received the minimum sentence of five years. Other members of the Nazi Party also received light sentences and Eric Ludendorff was acquitted. Hitler was sent to Landsberg Castle in Munich to serve his prison sentence. While there he wrote *My Struggle* (*Mein Kampf*). Hitler outlined his political beliefs and argued that the German (he wrongly described them as the Aryan race) was superior to all others.

Write a speech for me at my trial. You should include the following points:

- The Weimar Government had 'stabbed' the German people in the back
- The Nazis would save Germany, by getting rid of the Treaty of Versailles and blaming the problems on the Jews.

