5.11 The Events and Failure of the Munich Putsch, November 1923: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 Give an approximate number of Nazi marchers who took part in the march to the Feldherrnhalle on 9 November 1923.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 Source B: From a short memorandum written by a Bavarian state official, dated 9 November 1923, describing the morning after the Burgerbraukeller events.
"By dawn it was clear that the earlier declarations at the beer hall could not stand. The minister-president refused to be part of any illegal seizure of power. Orders were sent to police units to maintain public order and to prevent any armed band from taking the streets. We acted to defend the constitution of the state."

Source C: From a letter written by a supporter of the putsch, sent to a friend in Berlin on 10 November 1923.
"We were certain that the men of Bavaria would stand with us after the speech, but during the night those in charge betrayed us. At the march the police fired without warning and many good comrades fell. We had the courage but not the support we expected."

How useful are Sources B and C for an enquiry into why the Munich Putsch failed on 9 November 1923?

(Total for Question 2 is 8 marks)

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3 Explain why the Munich Putsch failed within a few hours on 9 November 1923.

You may use the following in your answer:
- the withdrawal of Bavarian state support overnight after 8 November
- the decision of the police to confront the marchers at the Feldherrnhalle

You must also use information of your own.

(Total for Question 3 is 12 marks)

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Mark scheme · 5.11 The Events and Failure of the Munich Putsch, November 1923: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

around 2000 **B1**

Answer: Around 2000

Question 2

Level 1 Makes simple assertions about usefulness with little or no reference to content, provenance or context. **1-2**

Level 2 Makes valid comments on the utility of one or both sources, with some use of content and limited reference to provenance or contextual knowledge. **3-5**

Level 3 Provides a balanced and well-developed judgement on the usefulness of both sources, using detailed reference to their content, provenance and the wider historical context to support the evaluation. **6-8**

Indicative content:

- Source B usefulness: as an official memorandum it offers direct evidence of the Bavarian government's position and orders, showing formal withdrawal of support and police mobilisation. Its provenance as an official document gives it high value for establishing state action.
- Limitations of B: it is an official statement and may seek to justify the government's actions to contemporaries or superiors, so it could be partial or emphasise legality; students should consider whether it underplays earlier ambiguities.
- Source C usefulness: as a contemporary letter from a putsch supporter it provides a personal perspective on morale and the sense of betrayal, illustrating how supporters experienced the withdrawal of support and the police response.
- Limitations of C: as a partisan eyewitness letter it may exaggerate police brutality or the putsch's strength; it offers limited access to official decision-making and is emotionally coloured.
- Combined judgement: together the sources give complementary perspectives, official and partisan, which help explain the failure by showing both state decisions and the putschists' experience, but neither alone gives the full picture so corroboration is needed from other evidence such as police reports, press accounts and later testimony.

Question 3

Level 1 Identifies one or two simple reasons for the putsch's failure with little or no supporting detail. **1-3**

Level 2 Identifies and begins to explain at least two reasons, with some relevant supporting detail. **4-6**

Level 3 Explains several reasons for the failure, supported by accurate and relevant detail, and shows some links between reasons. **7-9**

Level 4 Provides a well-developed and balanced explanation of the putsch's failure, using precise and accurate detail and showing clear analysis of how reasons combined to end the putsch quickly. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- Bavarian state withdrawal of support: Kahr and others reneged on earlier apparent backing for Hitler, meaning the putsch no longer had the crucial official endorsement and so lacked legitimacy and resources.
- Police decision to confront: the Bavarian police were ordered to oppose the march and were prepared to use lethal force at the Feldherrnhalle, which directly caused the shooting that ended the march.
- Poor planning and lack of wider support: Hitler overestimated the willingness of key figures to support a coup and had not secured backing from the Reichswehr or wider political elites, leaving the putsch isolated.
- Confusion and incoherent leadership on the ground: after Kahr, Seisser and Lossow withdrew support, there was no unified command for the rebel forces; mixed orders and uncertainty among marchers reduced their effectiveness.
- Underestimation of resistance: the marchers, c2000 strong, were poorly armed and not trained as a disciplined military force against organised police units.
- Immediate tactical failure at the Feldherrnhalle: the decision to march into a guarded urban location where police could concentrate fire meant the putsch collapsed rapidly once shots were fired and casualties occurred.

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