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### Source exploration

"Mass Rally in Front of Feldherrnhalle [Field Marshal's Hall] in Munich - Adolf Hitler in the Crowd (August 2, 1914)." GHDI - Image. Accessed November 01, 2018.

[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_image.cfm?image\\_id=3736](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=3736).



This source exploration investigates the photograph that supposedly shows Adolf Hitler among a crowd to hear the declaration of war against Russia that sparked the beginning of World War I. Mass Rally in Front of Feldherrnhalle [Field Marshals' Hall] in Munich – Adolf Hitler in the Crowd. (August 2, 1914). The photograph of a large crowd gathered on the Odeonsplatz, taken

by Heinrich Hoffmann, shows Hitler celebrating the start of World War I. The photo is copyrighted Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz/ Heinrich Hoffmann.

- "Heinrich Hoffmann (photographer)." Wikipedia. September 26, 2018. Accessed November 01, 2018. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich\\_Hoffmann\\_\(photographer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_Hoffmann_(photographer)). The Photographer to capture such a historic photograph was a man by the name of Heinrich Hoffmann. Hoffmann (b. 12 Sept. 1885- 15 Dec. 1957) was a photographer and a publicist who published his works in the Nazi party's weekly magazine the *illustrierter Beobachter*. Hoffmann trained for years under various photographers learning many aspects of the trade. He met Adolf Hitler in 1919. Hoffmann would later become Hitler's personal photographer, the only photographer allowed to photograph him and thus a major player in Nazi propaganda. This famous photograph was published on March 12, 1932; just before Hitler's election to Reich President according to the welt.de article cited further below

Google scholar search with terms "Heinrich Hoffmann", "Odeonsplatz", and "Hitler" returned the result of the book titled "Germans into Nazis".

- Hoffmann, Heinrich. *Illustrierter Beobachter*, March 12, 1932. This was the first publication of the famous Odeonsplatz photograph. The *Illustrierter Beobachter* was a Nazi propaganda publication. I was not able to track down a version of this publication but it is said to have been printed with the magnified image of Hitler (see welt.de citation below) with the caption "Adolf Hitler, the German patriot. When on 1 August 1914 tens of thousands of deeply moved Munich citizens listened to the last notes of the band, suddenly the German anthem washed over the square. In the midst of the crowd stood with shining eyes – Adolf Hitler."
- Hoffmann, Heinrich, and Robert Henry Stevens. *Hitler Was My Friend*. London: Burke, 1955. After World War II Heinrich Hoffmann recounts the story of how he and Hitler discovered this famous photograph. He recounted how Hitler visited him in a café in Munich. When Hoffmann showed Hitler his portfolio containing images of the large crowd on the Odeonsplatz in 1914 Hitler remarked that he had been there that day. Hoffmann then studied the photographs for hours before finally finding Hitler in the last

photo.

In this book Hoffmann gives a great amount of detail into various photographs he took during his extensive career, even recounting the time he spent working for a photographer where he learned to create doctored photographs. This particular photo is shown in the book with just the short caption “When I told Hitler of the vast Munich crowd, I photographed on the declaration of war in 1914, he exclaimed, ‘I was in that crowd.’ After meticulous search we picked him out.” (p. 17) No further reference to the photo or the conversation with Hitler that led to its discovery is mentioned.

- Hoffmann, Heinrich. *Hitler wie ich ihn sah Aufzeichnungen Seines Leibfotografen*. Munich: Herbig, 1974.

Later Hoffmann published another book in which he goes into much greater detail about the finding of this famous photo. Hoffmann claims that after hours of searching and initially not finding Hitler in any of the photographs he remembers at last that there was a negative that was not printed which was intended to be destroyed and when he checked it, at last he found Herr Hitler.

- Fest, Joachim C. *Hitler: Eine Biographie*. Ullstein, 1974.

Fest includes the Odeonsplatz photo in his Biography on Hitler. He tells how Hitler was there among a crowd of people to celebrate the proclamation of war. He says Hitler is seen among the crowd with his mouth half open and burning eyes

- Kershaw, Ian. *Hitler: 1889 - 1936: Hubris*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1999.

Kershaw also includes the photo in his biography on Hitler. He recounts the story of the finding of the photograph and says that the mass reproduction of that photo helped to further the Führer myth as well as making Hoffmann a fortune.

- Schmölders, Claudia. *Hitler's Face: The Biography of an Image*. Translated by Adrian Daub. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

The Feldherrenhalle photo is mentioned as one of the earliest photos of Hitler that we know of. Very little other information is given other than that the photo was taken on 1 August 1914 by Heinrich Hoffmann (p.5) and the image is shown on p. 6

- Fritzsche, Peter. *Germans into Nazis*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2003. p.5

The story Hoffmann tells in his 1974 book is recounted in *Germans into Nazis* by Peter Fritzsche. Fritzsche retells Hoffmann’s story of finding the photo and claims that this

photo “caught the precise moment the Third Reich became possible” (p. 5). Via this photo Hitler was linked to “those August days” at the beginning of WWI when there was a sense of unity among the German people, and this story aided in Hitler’s popularity.

- Williams, John Frank. *Corporal Hitler and the Great War 1914-1918: The List Regiment*. London: Cass, 2005. p. 18

The event and the discovery that Hitler was present when Hoffmann took photos of the rally in front of the Feldherrenhalle is very briefly mentioned in Williams’ book.

Williams also said that a film clip from that same day shows that the square was not as crowded as it appears in Hoffmann’s photo and that the crowd was only as jubilant as the photo shows while the video camera panned across the crowd. Williams cites a 2004 documentary by Knopp and Remy, *The rise and fall of Adolf Hitler*, for this video.

- Hauner, Milan. *Hitler: A Chronology of His Life and Time*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Hauner very briefly mentions that Hitler is photographed on the Odeonsplatz welcoming World War I (p. 12).

Is it a Fake? Meanwhile searching for Odeonsplatz photo Hitler turns up more interesting results regarding this specific image including suggestions that the photo is a fake.

- Kellerhoff, Sven Felix. "Nationalsozialismus: Berühmtes Hitler-Foto Möglicherweise Gefälscht - WELT." DIE WELT. October 03, 2015. Accessed December 06, 2018. <https://www.welt.de/kultur/article10284920/Beruehmtes-Hitler-Foto-moeglicherweise-gefaelscht.html>.

This German language article recounts the finding of the photograph of Hitler on the Odeonsplatz and how that glass plate negative remains missing. The curious delay between discovery and printing is mentioned as well as the information regarding the original publication date and the quotation that went along with it. It goes on to list various other discrepancies in the photo such as Hitler’s hair and cites Düsseldorf historian Gerd Krumeich for much of the article in regards to the doubts of its authenticity. It also mentions doubts by other historians such as Thomas Weber, mentioning his book as well as video clips showing a not so crowded square.

- The Local. „Famous Hitler Rally Picture Probably Faked.” The Local. October 14,2010. Accessed December 06,2018. <https://www.thelocal.de/20101014/30503>.

This article cites the Die Welt article cited above to tell the same story in English.

- “Is the Face in the Crowd Really a Young Adolf Hitler’s?” The Telegraph. November 10, 2013. Accessed December 06, 2018.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/letters/10437122/Is-the-face-in-the-crowd-really-a-young-Adolf-Hitler.html>.

Dr. Lang in his letter to the Telegraph states that the photo is “best regarded as allegedly, rather than definitely, showing Hitler’s presence in the crowd.” As evidence for his claim he mentions How Hitler’s moustache was of a style that was introduced during the war, and that the fashion was not known at the time that the photo was taken. He also mentions that it is hard to trace the original but that there are numerous reproductions available.

- "A Young Hitler Cheers the Start of World War One, 1914." Rare Historical Photos. October 13, 2017. Accessed November 01, 2018. <https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/young-hitler-ww1-1914/> .

This article recounts the finding of the photograph and the caption on the original publication in 1932. The Author claims that the photo may have been doctored but does not go further than to claim that what may have happened was to insert an image to make Hitler more recognizable to the people in the 1930s, not to insist that he wasn’t there at all. The author of this article did not cite any sources aside from noting its first publication in the *Illustrierter Beobachter* and that the photo was also published in *Hitler wie ihn keiner kennt* by Heinrich Hoffmann. I have not been able to track down a copy of that book.

- Pitogo, Heziel. "Famous WWI Adolf Hitler Photo in Odeonsplatz Most Likely FAKE." WAR HISTORY ONLINE. August 09, 2014. Accessed November 01, 2018. <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles/famous-adolf-hitler-photo-odeonsplatz-fake.html>.

This article published on War History Online tells us that the photo has recently been considered to be a fake by researchers. Pitogo claims that the doctoring of the photo was

a propaganda stunt by Hitler and Hoffmann and that you can tell the photo of Hitler is not accurate because of the length of his moustache.

- “Nazi-era Odeonsplatz.” Traces of Evil. Accessed December 06, 2018.

<http://www.tracesofevil.com/2008/01/munich-feldherrnhalled.html>.

The author of this page overlays Nazi-era photos with modern photos of the same location. One of the images he includes here is the famous one of Hitler on that August day. He also links to the local.de article cited above and includes a video clip of the square on that day.