



Volume 6. Weimar Germany, 1918/19–1933
Reelection of Paul von Hindenburg (August 13, 1932)

Paul von Hindenburg's first term as president came to an end in the middle of severe political and financial crisis. Now 84 years old, the old field marshal's health was worsening and he relied increasingly upon the assistance of his son and the political advice of General Kurt von Schleicher, who urged von Hindenburg to run again for president. The political landscape had changed drastically since the previous presidential election in 1925. Then, von Hindenburg had received his greatest support from the conservatives. In 1932, his support came from defenders of the republic (SPD, DDP, Zentrum) against attacks from the increasingly radical Right. The March 1932 election failed to provide any candidate with a majority. Hindenburg received 49.6% of the vote; Hitler 30.1%; the Communist Party's (KPD) Ernst Thälmann 13%; and the German Nationalist People's Party candidate (DNVP) Duesterberg 6.8%. Although von Hindenburg won the run-off election one month later with 53% of the vote, Hitler had been able to win over much of the conservative, nationalist vote in the second election, as the *Associated Press* report details below.

Hitler Falls Short of Claim

BERLIN, April 10 (AP). – Adolf Hitler fell short of reaching the 15,000,000 votes he had claimed in the run-off election for the German presidency today.

The Nazi leader again carried Pomerania, however, receiving 511,000 votes to President von Hindenburg's 369,000 and Ernst Thaelmann's 64,000, and apparently obtained most of Colonel Theodor Duesterberg's following of last month. He also carried Chemnitz-Zwickau again with 557,000 votes, as against 445,000 for the President and 177,000 for Herr Thaelmann.

East Prussia, perhaps the most hotly contested district of all, where both Chancellor Bruening, in behalf of President von Hindenburg, and Herr Hitler had made their supreme efforts, again endorsed Herr von Hindenburg, who obtained 546,000 votes to Herr Hitler's 493,000 and Herr Thaelmann's 85,000.

Herr Hitler, while gaining 90,000 over his East Prussian vote of March 13, nevertheless failed to draw to himself all the 133,879 Nationalist votes for Colonel Duesterberg in the first poll.

Hindenburg Carries Brunswick

Brunswick, Nazi "paradise," where the police are in the hands of Dietrich Klagges, National Socialist Minister of the Interior, gave President von Hindenburg a majority 53,000 out of the 105,000 votes cast. Herr Hitler gained from both the Communists and Nationalists there, however, polling 44,700 or 42.5 percent of the vote, compared with 36.4 percent March 13. President von Hindenburg's vote was 47.7 percent four weeks ago.

Rainstorms and dismal weather over a greater part of the nation held down the vote.

A National Socialist was shot and killed in a clash between the Nazis and Communists in Hamburg and several persons were wounded there, with a few others injured elsewhere in minor clashes, but the alert police kept down the disturbances. The police of Berlin kept extremists of the Right and Left running, arresting 200 last night and twenty more this morning. Most were released, however. Homes of the National Socialists were searched throughout the day for weapons.

Communists in some of the central thoroughfares pasted over the nameplates of streets with signs, renaming them "Thaelmannstrasse," "Leninstrasse" and after other Communist leaders.

With the Presidential election out of the way, political interest centered upon the Diet elections in Prussia and other States April 24, which it is felt will give a true measure of the political strength of the Fascist movement. On the date elections will be held for the Diets of Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg, Hamburg and Anhalt.

Source: Louis L. Snyder, ed., *Hitler's Third Reich: A Documentary History* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981), 73-74. Reprinted from Associated Press, April 11-12, 1932.