GERMANY, 1932

In 1932, Hitler narrowly lost his race for the German presidency to the conservative incumbent and legendary World War I general, Paul von Hindenburg. Eighty-four percent of all eligible voters cast ballots.

Parliamentary elections that year were no less spirited, for German voters had to decide which party offered the best solution to the nation’s seemingly endless problems—unemployment, political violence and upheaval, and national humiliation. The decision was not an easy one, and the German electorate was deeply divided.

To appreciate the choices faced by German voters at the time, compare the platforms of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the Communist Party (KPD), and the Nazis (NSDAP).

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM

We are committed to maintaining the Republic and a policy that will allow Germany to take its rightful place among the free governments of Europe.

We will support the present German Republic so that freedom, democracy, and justice will live in the hearts of our German countrymen.

We will honor all of Germany’s obligations, political and financial, in order that Germany’s honor and respect will not be decreased in the eyes of the world.

We plan to create more jobs by undertaking an extensive program of public works.

We will cut government expenditures to lower taxes.

We believe in the right of those who disagree with the party to speak and write on those issues without interference.

COMMUNIST PARTY PLATFORM

We are committed to the overthrow of the presently existing, oppressive Republic and all of its economic and social institutions.  We favor:

The abolition of private property.

The establishment of land reform programs, so that the government can take over the land and distribute it for the common good.

Government ownership of all industrial productive forces, so that they can be run for the benefit of the people rather than the capitalists.

To the German people: The cause of your misery is the fact that French, British, and American capitalists are exploiting German workers to get rich themselves.  Germans, unite to get rid of this terrible burden.

NAZI PARTY PLATFORM

We demand the following:

1. A union of all Germans to form a great Germany on the basis of the right to self-determination of peoples.
2. Abolition of the Treaty of Versailles.
3. Return lands lost in World War I and colonies to give German adequate living space.
4. German blood as a requirement for German citizenship. No Jew can be a member of the nation.
5. Non-citizens can live in Germany only as foreigners, subject to the law of aliens.
6. Only citizens can vote or hold public office.
7. The state insures that every citizen live decently and earn his livelihood.  If it is impossible to provide food for the whole population, then aliens must be expelled.
8. Guarantee for jobs and benefits for workers.
9. No further immigration of non-Germans. Any non-German who entered Germany after August 2, 1914, shall leave immediately.
10. A thorough reconstruction of our national system of education. The science of citizenship shall be taught from the beginning.
11. That German citizens and owners must publish all newspapers in the German language.
12. Eliminate the Marxist threat.