

## Franz von Papen, “A Final Appeal” (November 6, 1932)

### Abstract

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The NSDAP and the KPD emerged from the July 1932 elections as the strongest parties in parliament, meaning that it was not possible to form a governing coalition based on a majority. NSDAP delegate Hermann Göring was elected President of the Reichstag and thus presided over the sessions. At the same time, the NSDAP tried to win the Catholic center Party’s support for appointing Hitler chancellor, but ultimately failed. Due to a lack of parliamentary support, Reich Chancellor Franz von Papen – like his predecessor Brüning – governed by emergency decrees. When the KPD, with the support of all other parties except the DNVP and DVP, tabled a motion of no confidence to protest against Papen’s latest emergency decree, he hurriedly asked President Hindenburg to dissolve parliament again and call new elections. Although Papen had suffered a severe political defeat, he remained in office and hoped to continue what is described as a “presidential dictatorship” with Hindenburg’s support.

On election day, November 6, 1932, Papen gave a radio address, which was subsequently published in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. In this “final appeal” to the electorate, Papen called for unity in the face of Germany’s catastrophic economic and political situation. Referring to the spirit of patriotism and solidarity that had supposedly united Germans of all classes during the war, Papen called on voters to reject “party rule” and instead support his government’s agenda, which was based on a clear rejection of parliamentary democracy.

### Source

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#### Final appeal!

#### Reich Chancellor v. Papen on the radio – harsh words against Hitler

Reich Chancellor v. Papen gave the following speech on the radio on Friday evening:

My fellow Germans!

The election campaign is coming to an end. It is the task of the responsible statesman to once again give the German people a clear picture of the situation and its future.

What is at stake is this: Not whether this or that party leader sits in the Chancellor’s chair, not whether this man is called Hitler, Brüning or Papen. What matters is that we come together to secure the livelihood of the German people.

We all belong together. We want nothing more than to help. No one should be excluded from our joint task and the claim that we want to deprive women of the right to vote is one of the many electoral lies. This government does not represent any party, and it does not campaign for any party. But anyone who is honest about Germany should vote for a party in this election campaign that supports the aims of this government.

The party press of all shades has distorted and slandered what this government wanted and continues to want. But our work speaks for us. It is not possible to get six million unemployed people off the streets in five months, to sort out the shattered finances, to weld together the bloated public apparatus, to carry out the political and economic reforms that the people have for years been waiting for. But everywhere a start has been made to eliminate the results of party rule. In Prussia, an iron hand has been applied to

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reduce the unbearable burdens at the top and bottom through rigorous austerity in administration. Billions have been spent on agriculture and the recovery of the domestic market. The entire financial and economic program is proof of our own strength – our foreign debt has not increased by one penny.

All this work should be crowned by the reform of the constitution, which we hope to implement with the states and their parliaments. This renewal must be our goal when we go to the polls on November 6.

But if we overlook the wreckage created by the incitement of these last few weeks, then we can actually all be inspired by only one thought: Germany can only be saved if everyone is once again filled with the spirit of community and cooperativeness that once united the privy councilor's son and the peasant farmhand in the trenches in a comradeship of death and life. Only this closest bond of the fighting community has enabled Germany to achieve such unprecedented feats in war. Can it not be the same today?

Don't we finally want to work together to build the nation? Don't we finally want to fight the "breakthrough battle of German self-interest"? That is the question of destiny, which I address above all to Germany's great national freedom movement.

There seems to be nothing but hatred and slander behind the political activity of our time. If the medieval pyre had not become so unfashionable, then all that would be left of me and of this government today would be a handful of ashes. I say: away with this pyre, away with this poisoning of our time. We can only build with trust and love. Let us remember our Christian duty and the deep meaning of the sacrifice of two million of our best sons.

If you love Germany, follow the call of your beloved leader in war and peace, who holds his protective and just hand over our country like a landmark. Listen to him – who never tired of calling you to unity. – Close ranks so that after November 6, the true national forces will emerge purified from the furnace of this time of need.

With Hindenburg for a new Germany!

Source: "Last Appeal", *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 6, 1932.

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