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Why is this street named after Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934)?

2.

The naming of the previously nameless unpaved road "from Burger at the Waldkircher Straße to Sexauer Straße" after Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934) was decided by the municipal council of Denzlingen on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1915. At that time, the field marshal enjoyed great prestige throughout the Reich as the "Victor of the Battle of Tannenberg" (26-30 August 1914). In 1915, it was not foreseeable that 18 years later he would appoint Adolf Hitler as Reich Chancellor and make Hitler's dictatorship possible with the enactment of the Enabling Act.

In 1925, Hindenburg was elected Reich President. In 1932, the parties of the Weimar Coalition urged the now 84-year-old to run again in order to prevent Hitler from being elected Reich President. In the second round of voting, Hindenburg was re-elected on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1932, with the support of the SPD, the Left Liberals and the Centre Party.

Less than a year later, on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1933, he appointed Adolf Hitler as Reich Chancellor and issued the "Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of the People and the State". This was followed on March 24<sup>th</sup> by the so-called Enabling Act, which paved Hitler's way to dictatorship. After Hindenburg's death on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1934, Hitler assumed the offices of Reich Chancellor and Reich President.

It is not surprising that no one in Denzlingen thought of renaming Hindenburgstrasse even after Hitler seized power: in the Reichstag elections on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1933, the NSDAP achieved 59.6% of the vote in Denzlingen (in the Reich: 43.9%).

After 1945, when "Adolf-Hitler-Straße" (Hauptstraße) and "Robert-Wagner-Platz" (Kirchplatz) lost their offensive names, the time would have been right to rename Hindenburgstraße as well. However, this street name was not discussed at the time and was apparently not criticised by the French occupation.

The lower part of the street, on the other side of the railway line, was given the name "Im Untergraben" in 1972; this is why Hindenburgstraße today begins from Theodor-Heuss-Platz with house number 65 (to 125). Occasional attempts to change the offensive street name have met with no significant response.

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Denzlingen municipal council decided by a majority (17 : 4) in public session not to change the street name, which had become established 117 years after it was named and 88 years after Hindenburg's death, especially since the residents of Hindenburgstrasse, who would have had to bear the financial consequences of changing the street name, voted by a large majority against renaming it. However, by providing information about the fateful role Paul von Hindenburg played in German history, the justified criticism of the street name should be taken into account.

Instead of creating the impression that there had never been a street named after Hindenburg in Denzlingen by renaming it, providing data about the historic figure of Hindenburg is regarded to be the appropriate way to inform the public. The danger of a posthumous veneration of Hindenburg, who can indisputably be regarded as a forerunner of the Nazi dictatorship, should no longer exist by retaining the old street name.

**Literature reference:**

Wolfram Pyta, Hindenburg. Herrschaft zwischen Hohenzollern und Hitler. 2nd edition Munich 2007 (with sources and further literature: pp. 1062-1103).