R. M. Smelser's theory¹ that the German National Socialists in Czecho-
slovakia up to 1933 were “Nazis without Hitler” and that their party “had in practice always been democratic” is so much at variance with the situa-
tion known to experts that a restatement of the relevant facts seems advis-
able. The strange allegation that the DNSAP, a basically anti-democratic
movement if ever there was one, was a “radical democratic movement” is
taken over from A. G. Whiteside,² whose early and in many respects valuable
book contains a great number of fundamental errors.

Smelser's insistence on the DNSAP's democratic character is even more
surprising as it contradicts some of his ipsissima verba. He endorses White-
side's statement that the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (DAP), the DNSAP's pre-
cursor, “with its anti-Slav, anti-semitic, anti-liberal and anti-Christian stance anticipated in many ways the later National Socialism of Adolf Hitler” and
adds of his own that the DNSAP “could . . . be seen, in many ways quite le-
gitimately, within the general context of the origin and rise of German Na-
tional Socialism.” Especially pertinent is his remark that during the late twen-
ties the DNSAP “emerges largely as an across-the-border adjunct of the Hit-
tler party.” But he seems to overrate some differences which certainly existed,
the most important of which was the fact that the DNSAP was active in a
country where the Germans formed a minority only and where consequently
any overt emphasis on the Führer-Prinzip would have been ridiculous. Never-
theless, from 1920 onward Hitler was always regarded by the DNSAP also as
their supreme leader, even if for obvious reasons this fact was not stressed
publicly.

Had the DAP in 1904 really been formed as an “expression of resistance a-
gainst the influx of cheap labor into the Bohemian industrial areas of the
Habsburg Empire” or was the exploitation of the misgivings of many German

¹. Ronald M. Smelser, “Nazis Without Hitler: The NSDAP and the First Czechoslo-
workers against the influx of Czech workers, who they feared undercut their living standards, not rather a godsend for a movement in dire need of a popular slogan? The accusations made by the Social Democrats against the DAP of being an organization of blacklegs financed by the entrepreneurs may have been exaggerated but there was at least a grain of truth in it, as employers had good reasons to welcome the emergence of a political formation out to deprive the Social Democrats of their then-monopoly in defending the interests of the workers. The prospect of workers fighting the influence of Social Democracy must have attracted them, even if they most probably disliked DAP propaganda against their endeavors to recruit new (Czech) workers from the agricultural areas of Bohemia, who were prepared to work for low wages and under primitive conditions.

The Austrian Social Democrats, though fiercely attacked for that as "traitors to Germanism (Deutschum)," were not opposed to the employment of Czech workers in the predominantly German areas, because this was an inevitable by-product of the most welcome process of industrialization. They insisted, however, on employment under the same conditions as conceded to "indigenous" workers and protested against the tendency of the governing class of aristocrats and German bourgeoisie to subject the Czech workers to a process of denationalization. Josef Seliger, the leader of the German Social Democrats in Bohemia, whom Smelser mistakenly stigmatizes as "strongly nationalist," denounced this policy in prophetic words when he spoke in the Vienna Parliament in 1909: "I state as a German Social Democrat . . . that the suppression of Czech minorities, mainly the attitude of the bourgeois keepers of power [der bürgerlichen Machtfaktoren] in the German language area toward the Czech minorities in regard to schools, does more damage to the German people as such than to anybody else . . . . The improvement of the living conditions of the Czech workers is likewise very much in the interest of the preservation of Germandom."3

The DAP which in August, 1918, converted itself into the DNSAP had different ideas in this respect. Its main theoretician Rudolf Jung (1882-1945), who was a member of the Czechoslovak Parliament from 1920 to 1933, formulated in his book Der nationale Sozialismus for the first time the demand for the physical removal of a troublesome national minority.4 According to Jung, the survival of Germans in districts with Czech minorities "did not depend on reaching an agreement with the Czechs, but on removing them and increasing the German Lebensraum." Jung's book, originally published in