

SEEKING PATRONAGE OR TRYING TO MONOPOLIZE  
REPRESENTATION OF THE GERMAN POPULACE:  
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE *SUDETENDEUTSCHE*  
*HEIMATFRONT* AND TRADITIONAL GERMAN  
BOURGEOIS PARTIES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1933-45

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The relationship between the *Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront* party (SHF), founded in 1933, and the traditional bourgeois parties of the German populace was of a dualistic nature. On one hand, having adopted the concept of a "Sudeten German People", the SHF saw itself as the Germans' only legitimate representation. In view of an impending ban, however, it tried to secure the support of the bourgeois Sudeten German parties, especially the most influential among them, the *Bund der Landwirte* (BdL). In its early stages, the SHF was dependent on such patronage as was extended by the BdL principally for tactical reasons. At the same time, the SHF managed to avoid concessions which would have jeopardized its independence. A rapidly developing organization, and its assuming an ever more prominent position in the Czech agrarian community, however, soon made it possible for the SHF to oppose positions taken by traditional bourgeois parties, and in the end even the political stance of the BdL. Whereas the SHF, regardless of the outcome of its negotiations with other parties, managed to be perceived as the champion of the popular idea of national unity, the established parties oscillated between half-hearted delimitation and rapprochement, neglecting to undertake any attempt to concentrate the Sudeten German democratic forces.