

an amorphous quality and turned it into the ideological fig-leaf for a governing machine. By the 1890s the problem lay deeper. Liberalism was losing its appeal not just for reasons of expediency but as part of a European-wide questioning of its precepts, which had played its part in Austria, as we have seen. In Hungary, however, the crisis of liberalism took a form which reflected the gentry heritage and the nature of the Hungarian economy. The result was an upswell of what contemporaries called 'agrarian' protest against a liberal system now dubbed 'mercantilist', with currents of political Catholicism and anti-Semitism joining in the fray.

The roots of agrarianism lay in the economic plight of the landed gentry and more widely the Hungarian middle classes. In general, the competition of North American grain during the 'Great Depression', in particular the down-turn of the economy in the early 1890s, no doubt also the example of German agrarian organisation through the *Bund der Landwirte* (1893) underscored doubts about liberal *laissez-faire* principles. Very important, too, was the role of the landed aristocracy which, though overshadowed by the more militant gentry in national mythology, had greatly increased its share of the land, while retaining a steady 12-16% of seats in the Lower House and supplying the majority of Dualist prime ministers. In aristocratic ranks were those who most hankered after the conservative banner a landed elite normally waves; the ideologue of agrarianism, Count Sándor Károlyi, came from one of the country's richest families. His nephew Michael Károlyi has described the splendidly *grand seigneur* response of his cultivated uncle when he found Michael influenced by liberal economic doctrines: it was to give the boy Karl Marx. The gambit misfired and Michael Károlyi later in life became 'the Red Count' and a 'class traitor'.

The agrarians' chief concrete demand was for higher agricultural tariffs. But at a more emotive level they were able to exploit mounting middle-class resentment of Jewish prominence in public life. Charges that the culture of Budapest was not really Magyar linked gentry romanticism and anti-Semitism in ways which retain an echo today. Finally, Leo XIII's determination that the Catholic Church should not leave modern society to the liberals and Hungary's version of the *Kulturkampf* (see below) led to the emergence of political Catholicism through Count Zichy's People's Party in 1895, and by 1903 a Christian Socialist movement, albeit within the framework of Zichy's party. Powerful thinkers like Ottokár Prohászka (1858-1927) and Sándor Gresswein (1856-1923) challenged the liberal

intellectual hegemony from neo-Thomist positions; that is, like St Thomas Aquinas they sought to show how Catholic doctrine could be rationally expounded without contradiction of the world in which they lived.

From this brief account the irony of Apponyi's view of Dualist Hungarian society for the modern historian should be apparent. Apponyi correctly identified the central role of a kind of social synthesis in the Magyar hegemonic elite, but he blandly overlooked both the problems this synthesis posed for the body politic and the tensions within the elite itself. In this he was not alone. Government in Dualist Hungary required not only tactical agility but the rarest of political skills, the ability to recognise national sacred cows, and the courage to tackle them. This challenge was only imperfectly met.

### Elite Politics in Dualist Hungary 1875-1905

The Hungarian half of the Monarchy did not lack talented statesmen. Ferenc Deák and Kálmán Tisza have already been mentioned. Deák, however, went increasingly unheeded before his death in 1876, at a time when the Dualist regime was still far from consolidated. State income from 1868 to 1875 rose more slowly than expenditure (22% to 58%), government bonds issued to bridge the gap circulated at 55 to 75 in the European money markets and the national debt increased two and a half-fold. Meanwhile, party political alignments were in flux and the dissension-fraught governing Deák party came to the brink of collapse. Kálmán Tisza's achievement was to pull this situation round.

Tisza was a member of the predominantly Calvinist nobility of eastern Hungary. His merit as a practical politician was to recognise that Hungary lacked the strength either to reject the 1867 Compromise - the line of the Kossuthite 1848 Party - or to press Franz Joseph to accept his own Centre Left Party's version of it: the Bihar programme of 1868, which would have shorn it of its joint institutions like the common army, tariff and Delegations. The end of international instability after 1871, too, deprived Hungarian nationalists of a possible bargaining counter. Persuaded of this, Tisza waited for the right moment to engineer a fusion with the Deákists, emerging as leader of a new governing 'Liberal Party' in 1875, while those of his former centre Left associates who refused to follow him formed a second anti-Dualist grouping, the Independence Party. Even in