

on the other hand, where even the lime kilns and sugar refineries beginning to dot the great estates of Hungary were still rare, trade in agricultural products remained as for centuries the chief source of non-landed wealth.

Even in the most advanced parts of the Monarchy would-be entrepreneurs could feel isolation and frustration. Count Buquoy, a reforming Bohemian aristocrat, complained in 1814 of the 'huge obstacles' and 'sad experiences' of those who in 'public spirit' advocated useful innovations.¹⁰ Lack of credit was a universal problem. The Austrian National Bank, set up in 1816 to finance the withdrawal of the already devalued currency of 1811, lent largely to the state; successive proposals for provincial Estate banks were rejected as a threat to government credit, except in Galicia's case, a possible sop to the Poles. While there was no lack of private banks of mercantile origin these, like the National Bank, tended to confine their loans to the state and the wealthiest families, to the tune of an estimated 50 million florins between 1825 and 1846. The Rothschild brothers, ennobled by Francis in 1817, played a key role here. It did not help matters that Hungarian aristocrats, unless they waived an archaic legal right, could send their creditors packing by having their bailiffs shake a stick at them. Minor Hungarian landlords often resorted to pawning, as mortgage finance was hampered by the traditional system of 'aviticity', which made inherited land inalienable. It seems that in the Monarchy as a whole entrepreneurs responded to credit difficulties by self-finance, reinvesting even in times of recession, for want of alternative outlets. The earliest savings bank in Lower Austria dated from 1819, followed by Bohemia in 1825 and Hungary in 1836. Their resources, however, were not large. In 1848 the capital of Hungary's 35 savings banks amounted to 49,469 florins. Dissatisfaction with the financial situation was one of the leading complaints of would-be reformers on the eve of revolution.

More immediately explosive was the discontent felt at the social consequences of economic change. The resilience of the guild system had been sapped, and government work-houses, with a tradition dating back to 1671, had always wavered ineffectually between punishment and training for the outcast poor. Of 30,000 artisans in Vienna in 1845 a half had valuables auctioned off for non-payment of taxes. Journeymen, unable to become masters, became increasingly mutinous; in the larger Hungarian towns they were the tinder which sparked off social affray. Domestic workers suffered likewise from factory competition. The wages of embroiderers had declined

to a quarter or a fifth of their 1800 levels by 1835. Entire communities of glass-workers in the Bohemian Erzgebirge uplands were brought to the brink of famine in the winter of 1843. Factory workers, not surprisingly, came off better. Zenker in the late nineteenth century estimated an average weekly wage of 5 florins for Viennese male workers in the 1840s on which, according to the English traveller Turnbull, it was possible to eat, drink and smoke to one's heart's content. Turnbull, however, was writing of the countryside. Bearing in mind the high rents in the towns, a contemporary calculation showed that a family with three to five children living on that wage would spend more than half its surplus cash on the mid-day meal alone. The real problem of factory workers was that because of Austria's weak competitive position they had little more security of employment than home-based craftsmen.

Economic uncertainty interacted with social hardship. Urban provision was quite inadequate for the inflow of people from the countryside. The failure of Vienna's housing stock to match the influx of population led contemporaries to compare it to a rabbit warren above ground. Horrors were enacted in the industrial suburbs beyond the old city in Vienna, claimed the radical Violand, about which young Viennese women wept sentimentally in reading the Parisian novels of Eugène Sue, unaware how close they were to home. His passionate account of conditions before the revolution of 1848 speaks of Viennese families living in the sewers and coming out at night to steal, also of the under-class forcing itself on public attention in the depression years 1845-46 by its flagrant prostitution, with the girls accompanied by their partners carrying benches and pillows for the performance of their 'horizontal side-line';¹¹ three hundred of the latter were eventually arrested and drafted into the army.

To what extent were workers' problems already threatening the social order before 1848? Crime increased in the Hungarian *Alföld* with the influx of day-labourers working on river regulation and drainage schemes. Miners as always were rumbustious, though they tended to be concentrated in remote places. Salt miners in Transylvania struck in 1804, 1807 and 1810, iron workers in 1837; the 7-8000 miners and 3000 auxiliary workers of the huge precious minerals complex in Transylvanian Zalatna were continually bubbling. There was a demonstration against unemployment in Vienna in 1816 and a government enquiry into unemployment following disturbances in Brno in 1831, little enough to be sure. Otherwise it was not in the capital but Bohemia that discontent swelled into organised