

which opinions could differ; it might be a matter of their leaders' acceptance of Magyar hegemony; or of the Magyarisation through education of their potential leaders; or ultimately of mass absorption into Magyardom. But no Magyar denied either that the nationalities were a present reality or that Hungary should be a national state, not an ethnic federation. Within these parameters all could enthuse for the ideal of building the national state. Hence the buoyancy of Magyar public opinion which arguably made Budapest intellectual currents more *engagé* than Viennese.

That this public opinion should be strongly influenced by noble traditions was natural in view of Hungarian history and the noble leadership of the 'first reform movement' of 1825-48. Now that Hungary had achieved a fair measure of autonomy in the bourgeois era they were prominent in the work of implementing the reform synthesis of liberalism, nationalism and capitalism. In a nationalist climate in which all peoples sought inspiration in history it was predictable that Hungarian publicists should exalt the national role of noble leaders, more particularly, in view of the titled aristocracy's pro-Habsburg allegiances, of the middle nobility or gentry, 'in which the patriotic and progressive spirit is incarnated' and who provided the 'democratic element in the past', in early twentieth-century presentations for the English-speaking public.³ These phrases are symptomatic also of a tendency to equate English and Hungarian history as the pursuit of liberty, and make the Hungarian gentry stand *vice* for the missing middle class in that regard. So strong were the English associations that the English word was adopted into Hungarian as *dzsentri* in the 1880s, displacing earlier expressions for the middle nobility as this social group adapted to the new bourgeois order. By the 1890s the emergence of another expression, *úri középosztály*, literally 'gentlemanly middle-class', showed how closely the development of a bourgeoisie in Dualist Hungary was bound up with the fortunes of the old gentry, *úr* being the inherited feudal term for someone in authority, equivalent to German *Herr*.

What underlay these remouldings of terminology was the economic crisis of the former middle nobility (p. 241). However, the expansion of a Hungarian state bureaucracy enabled many scions of bankrupt landlords to find clerical refuge in the modern world, where their gentry values would have made commerce unacceptable. It was to fit both the surviving middle landed class and these bureaucratized nobles that the term *dzsentri* came to be invented. *Dzsentri* life-style, incorporating the old noble code with its emphasis on honour,

exercised a strong attraction for recruits to a burgeoning middle class of non-noble origin, including free professionals, intellectuals, state and private employees and businessmen. Its embrace by those Jewish- or German-born held out the hope of greater acceptance in the wider society and appeared a logical concomitant of Magyarisation in a context where no Magyar bourgeois tradition existed for them to join. It was this heterogeneous product of Hungarian economic expansion in the late nineteenth century, united only in deference to gentry values, that became known as the Hungarian 'middle class', or 'gentlemanly middle class'. Symptomatic of the influence of gentry mentalities is that even in a romantic hymn to scientific capitalism, the *Black Diamonds* (1872) of Mór Jókai, Hungary's most popular novelist, the coal-mine-owning engineer hero must also show his superiority over his noble detractor in a duel - which despite never having wielded a sword in his life he carries off with aplomb!

The *dzsentri*, and particularly its landed wing, remained the core component of this unusual middle class. Landed nobles provided half Dualist Hungary's government ministers and made up 64% of MPs in 1861 and 41% in 1914. Moreover, for the influence of traditional values on those who remained ostensibly bourgeois one need look no further than the only non-noble prime minister under Dualism, Sándor Wekerle (1848-1921), descended from a line of feudal estate managers of German origin and married into the nobility, whose lifestyle he followed; though known as Dualist Hungary's most skilful finance minister, he invested his wealth in a large estate, holding no stockmarket shares. He was active in the foundation of the *Országos Kaszinó*, founded in 1883 specifically to provide a forum where prominent nobles and bourgeois could meet.

The middle class as defined above was a small section of society. At its most numerous, in Budapest, it made up perhaps 12% of the population by the twentieth century, but countrywide, officials and intelligentsia amounted to not quite 4%, to which a business component of some thousands of relatively prosperous and tens of thousands of smaller businessmen and their families may be added. The Budapest estimate is based on housing statistics, for contemporary opinion saw middle-class status as entailing homes of three to six rooms, allowing for one or more maids to live in, a possible governess and an office where required for the husband's professional work. Below this limit began the lower middle class of artisans, small shopkeepers and petty officials and tradesmen, numbering 13% of the population in 1910, and most conspicuously debarred from higher status by the