

**“The Parting of Ways:” The Shifting
Relationship between Anna Lesznai and Emma
Ritoók, and the Restructuring of Hungarian
Cultural and Political Life in the Early 1920s**

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In the early 1920s, the failure of the bourgeois and communist revolutions of 1918-19, coupled with the traumatic territorial losses imposed by the Trianon peace agreement, left the Hungarian nation reeling and searching for new ideological directions and symbolic definitions. The decimation of the political left by the counter-revolutionary backlash of the new regime under Miklós Horthy¹ gave more clout to conservative parties, among them the Independent Smallholder Party and the Christian National Unity Party,² who consolidated their power and influence by appealing to a population desperate to protect the nation from further trauma and loss. Crucially, the disproportionately high representation of Jews amongst the left-leaning, radical intelligentsia, whose willing participation in revolutionary action had (in the eyes of the counter-revolutionaries) steered the nation to the brink of total destruction, instigated the re-definition of the nation along ethno-religious lines and authorized the resurgence of virulent strands of anti-Semitism in the social and political arena. Powerful rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘them’ shaped public opinion, and laid the groundwork for the dangerous political trajectories that would gain strength throughout subsequent decades.

The anti-Semitic rhetoric that emerged in Hungary in the 1920s was not new, but rather the recapitulation of debates that had gripped the social and political life of the nation for decades, now augmented by grief, blame and fear. Despite the Jewish population’s patriotic assimilation and active participation in national culture and politics throughout the 19th and early 20th century, anti-Semitic sentiment continued to bubble under the surface, overflowing during times of national crisis.³ By the 1920s, how-

ever, the liberal spirit that had tempered the debates over the so-called ‘Jewish question’ throughout previous decades had largely been eroded by the turmoil of war and revolution. From their exile, many of the artists and intellectuals, who had been involved in liberal, leftist and radical movements, could no longer exert an influence on Hungarian social, cultural and political life. This gaping void left a conservative, right-wing majority to determine *who* and *what* constituted the Hungarian nation.

The intellectual life of the nation was also forced to adapt to this new social and political climate, stripped of its primary actors. Priorities shifted and new patterns of affiliation and exchange were established, leaving former peers standing on opposite sides of an irreconcilable divide determined by tenuous bloodlines, and perpetuated by popular stereotypes and reactionary politics. Among those whose relationship was irrevocably affected by these shifts were Anna Lesznai⁴ and Emma Ritoók, two of the most prominent female participants in Hungarian cultural and intellectual life at that time. This paper will examine the nature of the division between the two women and the extent to which it is indicative of the reactionary patriotism and accompanying anti-Semitic rhetoric restructuring Hungarian cultural and political life in the early 1920s, the repercussions of which are still being felt today.

Both Lesznai and Ritoók were accomplished writers whose work earned the respect of their (mostly male) peers. In 1905, Ritoók’s first novel, *Egyenes úton, egyedül* (On the Straight Path Alone) won the annual literary prize of the conservative literary weekly, *Új idők* (New Times). From 1908 onwards, Lesznai regularly published her poetry in the liberal literary journal, *Nyugat* (West). Lesznai was also active in many other aspects of Hungarian cultural life, designing book covers and exhibiting her embroidery with a prominent group of avant-garde painters, *Nyolcak* (The Eight). Ritoók focused on her intellectual career, writing scholarly articles and translating literature from French and Norwegian. While their academic backgrounds differed dramatically (Lesznai was home-schooled, while Ritoók had earned a doctorate in Hungarian literature), they both gravitated towards the intellectual circle developing around the philosopher György Lukács. Like Lukács, Ritoók studied with the German sociologists Ernst Bloch, Georg Simmel and Max Weber, while Lesznai, too, grappled with their core philosophical concepts throughout her diaries.⁵ Alongside Lukács, Béla Balázs, Arnold Hauser, Károly Mannheim and Lajos Fülep, Ritoók and Lesznai became core members of the so-called ‘Sunday Circle’, an informal gathering of intellectuals that began meeting

every Sunday in 1915, in order to discuss the pressing philosophical and political issues of the day.

As prominent female members of a male-dominated intellectual milieu, Ritoók and Lesznai shared many common experiences that should have formed the basis for greater solidarity between the two women. But in the aftermath of the war, Ritoók could no longer overlook Lesznai's Jewish roots and, on those grounds, severed all ties between them. This rejection was not sudden or unexpected. For years, Ritoók had made it clear that her Christian upbringing and conservative political leanings distanced her from the rest of the Sunday Circle.⁶ Indeed, with the notable exceptions of Lajos Fülep and Béla Zalai, the core members were largely the offspring of (often wealthy and/or ennobled) liberal, assimilated Jewish parents. Lesznai, herself, came from the prosperous Hatvany family on one side, and the influential Moscovitz family on the other.⁷ In a diary entry from 1920, Ritoók acknowledges that Lesznai and her family had indeed made a sincere attempt at assimilation: "Amazingly [Lesznai] was also able to adopt Hungarianness within her spirit; their whole house resembled that of the rich, Magyar gentry... In her verses, she poured Körtvélyes⁸ into her rhymes... the love of the earth. Even after her appearance, I still wouldn't have believed her to be Jewish."⁹ But for Ritoók, such an attempt at assimilation could only be successful on a superficial level. Under the surface, the plain fact remained. By the end of the war, she had conflated that Jewishness with an inherent radicalism and hostility towards the nation, eliciting a more hard-line, essentialist stance.

The foundations of the conceptual rift between Lesznai and Ritoók can already be seen in 1917 in their individual contributions to a special double issue of the sociological journal *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century) that sought to explore the subject of the 'Jewish question' from multiple perspectives. Throughout subsequent years, the questions raised and conclusions drawn in those brief articles are re-articulated in their diaries and personal correspondence, as well as in each of their respective *roman-á clef* — Ritoók's, *A szellem kalandorai* [Spiritual adventurers], 1921 and Lesznai's, *Kezdetben volt a kert* [In the Beginning Was the Garden], 1966 — characterizing the social and political climate of this period. An examination of these writings reveals that Lesznai betrays an ambivalent attitude towards how her identity is shaped by her Jewish roots, combined with a sense of disillusionment over the increasingly powerful social forces defining her as 'other'. Ritoók's initial critique and eventual total rejection on the basis of Lesznai's Jewishness was a painful indicator of the impotence of political idealism in the face of historically rooted and

emotionally fuelled social divisions. Ritoók, on the other hand, sees the ‘rootlessness’ and ‘foreignness’ of her Jewish peers as a danger to the cultural and political life of the nation, as a concrete obstacle to reconciliation and regeneration. Instead, she establishes new personal and professional bonds, consolidating new patterns of affiliation along ethno-religious lines.

While politically, socially and economically the status of Jews in Hungary followed the general historical trajectory of the region,¹⁰ the initial flowering and subsequent transformations of Magyar nationalism had a decisive ideological impact on the ways in which Jewish identities developed throughout the 19th century. The commitment of the ‘first reform generation’¹¹ to liberal political and economic reform, and the establishment of a modern nation, encouraged the initial move towards Jewish emancipation. Though Jews did not achieve full political rights and equality before the law until the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, Law 29 of the 1840 Diet removed some restrictions on native-born and naturalized Jews. Significantly, they were granted the right to settle in any of the cities in the land (excluding mining towns).¹² While the upper house of the Diet did not grant all of the proposals of the liberal reformers, at the very least this concession represented a symbolic step forward, allowing Jews greater social and economic mobility. As a result, many Jews were drawn into the revolutionary spirit of reform, pledging allegiance to a vision of nationhood in which they could hope to be included and protected. The nation came to be the primary touchstone of identity for emancipated Jews, and their new-found freedom to participate in the building of that nation fuelled a patriotic impulse towards magyarization¹³ and assimilation.

Like for many members of her generation, it was extremely difficult for Lesznai to identify with her Jewishness, having been raised in an assimilated Jewish household where the Hungarian nation was the primary source of identification and commitment, yet growing up in an environment that was increasingly hostile towards the participation of Jews in the cultural and political life of that very nation. This tension was a source of anxiety for Lesznai and her peers, eliciting a variety of responses. Lesznai’s situation was further complicated by the fact that as a child she was christened as a Calvinist. The details of this conversion are vague and given very little voice by Lesznai, herself. As Petra Török explains, following a childhood illness, she was christened, but it is not clear whether this was her mother’s decision or at the urging of the local minister.¹⁴ In 1923, Lesznai emphasizes that she is a “converted Calvinist

with no religious affiliation.”¹⁵ Whatever the circumstances, prior to World War I, neither religious identification seems to have had a significant impact on her outlook beyond a theoretical interest in Jewish mysticism occasioned by Lukács. The reality was, however, that in spite of her own ambivalence in respect to her Jewish roots and her early conversion to Christianity, external forces continued to define her as Jewish amidst a growing tide of anti-Semitism.

Where Lesznai remained relatively silent on the subject of this growing tension, her close friend, the writer Béla Balázs, acutely felt the fundamental incompatibility between his fervent Magyar patriotism and his Jewish/German heritage. Like Lesznai’s conversion to Calvinism, his choice of Catholic conversion did little to ensure his inclusion in the national community. Around the same time that Lukács began exploring the philosophical possibilities of Jewish mysticism,¹⁶ Balázs confesses in his diary, “I am Jewish and I can’t find peace within myself, I can’t see my ultimate purpose”.¹⁷ Just over a year later, in 1912, his sense of alienation appears to be even more intense, as he conveys a hostility towards the circumstances of his birth:

But what will become of me? I hate the contemporary Jewish literature more than them, I feel more distanced from it than they do — but neither do I find any community with them. They do not accept me. My name is German, my blood is Jewish and my writings will never reflect the special character of the Magyar race.¹⁸

In light of this problematic position, Balázs made the choice that he felt might resolve some of these tensions. In 1913, around the time of his marriage to Edit Hajós,¹⁹ Balázs converted to Catholicism and officially changed his name from Herbert Bauer to Béla Balázs. While Balázs hoped that his choice of values would allow him to be fully accepted as *Magyar*, he grossly underestimated the growing resentment against those ‘rootless’ Magyars who attempted to find ‘roots’ in the Magyar nation. It was within this context that Lesznai began to re-assess her relationship to her Jewishness, not as a matter of religious practice or abstract philosophy, but as a matter of identification and affiliation.

In her novel, *Kezdetben volt a kert*, Lesznai reflects the shifting moods and attitudes amongst the Jewish and non-Jewish populations throughout the late 19th-early 20th century. The protagonist Lizó’s (Lesznai’s) father is a quintessential representative of the upwardly mobile, assimilating Jews of Lesznai’s parents’ generation. He fervently believes that his identity can become coherent through a total identification with the

nation, effectively negating his ‘otherness’. Pledging allegiance to the ‘spirit of ‘48’, reciting the poetry of Petőfi, entering into public life, adopting the lifestyle of the Magyar nobility, trusting in the legislative fruits of liberalism, István Berkovics (Geyza Moscovitz) was able to identify himself as Magyar first and foremost. As he emphatically asserts, “István Berkovics is neither Jewish, nor Catholic, but a Magyar gentleman, period.”²⁰ Meanwhile, it is Lizó’s older brother, János (Iván), who first begins to recognize the tenuousness of this Jewish-Magyar amalgam and the fundamental incompatibility between this patriotic commitment and the persistent ways in which their ‘otherness’ was continually reinforced by reactionary forces in their homeland. As he expresses, “There is too much of a flagellating duality within me, like this, my unlucky half-Jewish, half-gentry condition. János Berkovics Rozgonyi. I don’t trust in this amalgam. My father did, but today it is difficult to do the same, and tomorrow it will be impossible.”²¹

Unfortunately, János was right. Yet, Lizó must come to terms with this reality for herself. There are several points throughout the novel where she is confronted with the fact that she is Jewish, shattering the illusion of her assimilation. Each time, her ‘difference’ is exposed to her by someone she is close to, highlighting the growing divisions between members of the cultural and intellectual avant-garde over the ‘Jewish question’. While, in the real world, such divisions crystallized in the rift between herself and Ritoók, in the novel, this plight is effectively illustrated in a conversation with one of her brother’s friends, whom she had assumed to be a peer in both a social and intellectual capacity. In discussing whether or not her brother will be elected to the National Casino²² like her father before him, the cracks begin to show between their positions. The conversation is worth quoting in its entirety for it outlines the dominant arguments being wielded on both sides:

[Hudák]: “When your grandfather was selected [to the Casino] a liberal current flowed through Hungary, István was still able to follow in its footsteps at that time. Since then, the world has become more conservative. It’s understandable too, they have to protect against the emergence of strengthening left-wing factions. And another thing... There is still the fact that even those inclined towards moderate liberal ideas are today leaning in an anti-Semitic direction. And not without good reason...”

Lizó pulled her hand away from Hudák’s grasp. She couldn’t believe her ears that János’s best friend, and her former suitor, was trying to reason that it is the domineering nature of Jewish spirit that meets its ‘rightful opposition’.

“The Jews are running everything,” Hudák became more heated in his arguments, “in the banks, in industry, in the press. The large estates, too, are slowly coming into their hands.”

“And in medical science,” broke in Lizó, “but that is so they can help; and in literature and social sciences! Everywhere where they are struggling for regeneration, we are there and taking our places!”

[Hudák]: “Ady and Móricz²³, your own demi-gods, they aren’t Jewish.”

[Lizó]: “But the Új szó [Nyugat] editors, who paved their road and a bunch of the wonderful writers around them, and their public who buy their journal and their books, those are also Jewish! Don’t you think we are serving the Hungarian nation in this?”

[Hudák]: “I don’t think so, Lizó. Every people wants to draw their own intellectual leaders from their own blood. If they are presented with fanatics, like Ákos Faludi [Jászi], whom you unfortunately greatly esteem and love, who want to ravage the foundations of the old Magyar world, then naturally...”

Lizó interrupted with indignation, “Ákos wants to help the Magyar peasants!”

“Yes, but meanwhile he is bringing the nationalities down on us with his extreme principles. There is no way he could understand our roots.”²⁴

Here, Hudák’s main argument is two-fold, revolving around the disproportionate involvement of Jews in the professions and cultural life,²⁵ and their perceived penchant for radicalism, foreign to the ideals of both the conservative and liberal factions of the Magyar gentry. Hudák’s arguments were by no means exceptional at the time. Ritoók, herself, wields very similar arguments throughout her writings. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of the ‘Jewish question’ throughout the first two decades of the 20th century was an anxiety over the growing influence of Jews in the professional and cultural life of the nation. This anxiety forced the ‘Jewish question’ into a position of prominence alongside the ‘nationalities question’ as one of the most pressing domestic issues facing the integrity of the nation. But, what exactly was this ‘Jewish question’? Where the ‘nationalities question’ could be centered on linguistic and cultural difference, and enacted through debates over political rights and/or independence, the ‘Jewish question’ was far more vague and complex. The patriotic commitment to the nation by assimilated Jews, and the existence of legislative and legal equality, suggested that there should be no ‘question’ about the status of Jews in Hungary. At the same time, the persistence of anti-Semitism, the emergence of a more prominent non-assimilated

Jewish community²⁶ and the ‘anti-Magyar’ radicalism of the ‘second reform generation’ suggested that there were pressing questions about the ideological divisions being drawn along religious lines and forcing people into increasingly polarized positions.

In 1917 Oszkár Jászi²⁷ decided to launch an investigation into the complexity of this ‘question’. He recognized that the intensifying climate of anti-Semitism, compounded by the failure to come to any agreement about the nature and scope of the problem, was destructive and anti-productive, and hindered the establishment of the modern nation. Jászi felt that only through thoughtful debate and discussion could the nation come to any sort of agreement as to what this ‘question’ actually was and generate concrete solutions to this divisive and alienating issue. In order to accomplish this, Jászi sent three questions to a cross-section of professors, writers, politicians, editors, lawyers and other professionals who were invited to add their voice to the debate. He then compiled the responses into a special double issue of *Huszadik Század*. While certainly this ‘cross-section’ was largely restricted to middle-class, urban, male intellectuals and professionals, effectively silencing many of the most virulent strands of anti-Semitism emerging in rural areas and in the women’s movement, Jászi did attempt to survey the political and religious spectrum, “in the hopes that, in inviting opposing opinions, we should be able to reflect the existent, certainly disparate, opinions and moods regarding the issue of Jewishness”²⁸.

Of the sixty respondents, only two were women: Anna Lesznai and Emma Ritoók. These responses represent the first real attempt by both women to concisely and comprehensively express their views on the subject. Up until that point, neither woman had stated her position so plainly. For Lesznai, her silence had been partly due to her philosophical outlook that did not allow her to forge an identity based on ‘difference’, and partly due to the fact that, like her father, she believed a patriotic commitment made such questions irrelevant. Ritoók, on the other hand, had genuinely wanted to participate in a community founded on intellectual principles, regardless of religious affiliation. But, when those intellectual principles began diverging from her own in the form of concrete political action, Ritoók was forced to re-evaluate her priorities. In *Huszadik Század*, she struck the first blow, irrevocably cleaving her from her former peers. Interestingly, the two women’s responses bear some similarities in how they seek to approach the subject both from a personal and seemingly ‘objective’ perspective. Both women attempt to identify certain ‘special’ characteristics that position Jews as outsiders within the

Hungarian nation. The big difference is that where Lesznai judges these distinguishing features to be positive attributes capable of contributing to the continual regeneration of the nation, Ritoók concludes that the Jew's 'difference' is fundamentally hostile to the nation.

Each contributor was asked the same three questions:

1. Is there a 'Jewish question' in Hungary, and if so, what do you see to be its essence?

2. What are the causes for the Hungarian 'Jewish question'? Is it symptomatic of Hungarian society; the societal relations, institutions, characteristics, customs of Hungarian Jewish, as well as non-Jewish populations, that play a role in bringing about this question?

3. Wherein lies the solution to the 'Jewish question' in Hungary, and what social or legislative reforms do you feel are necessary?²⁹

The sixty responses were then divided into two categories: those who did not think there was a 'Jewish question' and those who thought there was. Notably, many of those included in the first category were assimilated Jews who felt that if the 'question' was about political or legal rights, then the achievements of the 19th century meant that there was no 'question'. If the 'question', however, was about the position of the Jews within the daily life of the nation, then the patriotic commitment of the assimilated Jews also suggested that there was no 'question'. Like Geyza Moscovitz, the belief in the compatibility between their commitment to the nation and their Jewishness essentially negated the 'question'. Through this lens, the 'Jewish question' appeared to be a one-sided question, as expressed by Lajos Szabolcsi, the editor of the journal *Egyenlőség* (Equality).³⁰ In his response, he argues:

This is only a question for those who cannot resign themselves to the fact that we, Hungarian Jews, believe this land to be our home as much as Hungarians of other faiths. It is only a question for those who believe that our presence, our existence, our merits, our resilience, our progress are not facts, not positives, but domestic unrest and unsettling irresolution, in a word: questions.³¹

Others, however, suggested that the existence of these questions challenged the very basis of their identity and therefore an analysis of the reasons for those questions was necessary, in order to come to any sort of resolution on both a national and personal/psychological level. From this perspective, the professor Bernát Alexander and many of the cultural/

intellectual avant-garde, including Lesznai, believed that there was a 'Jewish question'. While Alexander agreed with Szabolcsi's assessment that a large part of the 'Jewish question' had to do with external judgments beyond the control of the Jewish population, the existence of those who considered it "a very serious problem what they should do with the Jews"³² added a more complex dimension to the problem. In effect, the questioning of the very basis of assimilation as a valid identity was the source of another deep 'question' for the Jewish-Hungarian population. As Iván Moscovitz acknowledges in *Kezdetben volt a kert*, the emergence of a 'Jewish question' served to erode their feeling of belonging within their home and create an alienating duality within the 'self'. Thus, a big part of this 'Jewish question' was how to negotiate the resultant identity-crisis and discover a productive basis for new identities.

Following Bernát Alexander, Lesznai reinforces the internal dimension of the 'Jewish question'. "The Jewish question does exist," she argues, "even if the Jew is sitting alone in his/her room behind closed doors."³³ With this as her starting point, she attempts to discover how her Jewishness has shaped her identity despite her assimilation. Was there a discernible 'difference' defining her as a Jew? She reflects on the experience of growing up in a noble, Magyar household. Through the privileging of national and class affiliations, Lesznai's father had effectively dissolved any traces of their Jewish heritage. At the same time, she had spent a lot of time with her grandparents in Pest who maintained the religious and cultural practices of their faith. Meanwhile, she was drawn to the sights and sounds of the Catholic rituals of the village peasants, yet she, herself, felt the 'foreignness' of the orthodox Jewish merchants. Pulled between these poles, she began to sense her own 'difference', giving rise to the 'Jewish question' within herself.

For her, this 'difference' was determined by a lack — the lack of a true home and more human community within which she would no longer feel alienated. As she reflects: "Sometimes I joyfully believed 'I am home', when I surrounded myself with those Jews and those Christians with whom I felt a special community according to my memories and my inclinations. But never, in no circle, have I seen that synthesis of remembrance, culture and temperament in which I can fully be immersed."³⁴ She concludes that it is this feeling of 'homelessness' that is particularly characteristic of the Jew, rooted in the historical experience of ghetto life. Characteristically, however, Lesznai wants to ascertain how this 'lack', this sense of alienation, might be translated into a positive, constructive attribute. She suggests that, "The Jew's feeling of belonging nowhere

gives rise to an impatient, restless desire for belonging somewhere.”³⁵ It is this characteristic restless impulse that had authorized a variety of divergent responses across time and place. In this way, Lesznai is able to forge crucial ideological links between the patriotic desire of her parents’ generation towards assimilation, the emphasis of the non-assimilated community on the preservation of language and tradition, and the utopian vision of Theodor Herzl’s Zion.

In light of this analysis, the problem of ‘homelessness’ and alienation at the root of the internal ‘Jewish question’ could only be solved through a complete transformation of the social, political, economic and cultural conditions defining that ‘difference’ as ‘otherness’. It was this desire for transformation that inclined Lesznai and her peers towards revolutionary action, despite widespread skepticism over the methodologies and aims of Communism. Yet, in the absence of such transformation, temporary strategies of community-building could help foster understanding. Lesznai proposes more inter-marriage as one possible strategy.³⁶ This suggestion, however, exposes the flaw in her analysis—her underestimation of the ‘external’ ‘Jewish question’ and the conscious effort by people like Ritoók to determine and maintain the ‘otherness’ of the Jew.

In her response, Ritoók articulates arguments similar to Hudák’s in *Kezdetben volt a kert*, expressing concerns over the prominence of Jews in influential positions. She argues that the resentment towards Jews is ‘justifiable’ because their sudden success in finance and culture meant that young Magyars at the beginning of their careers had to take low-ranking positions with little possibility of upward mobility. More worrying is Ritoók’s evaluation of the ‘culturelessness’ (*kulturátlanság*) of Jews. She argues that, in abandoning their roots and traditions, they had severed their ties to the past. With no responsibility to the past, they had no responsibility for the future and were thus only concerned with the present. This disconnected way of being allowed for the overvaluation of money and financial gain. Additionally, their lack of tradition led them to grasp towards the ‘new’, giving rise to the ‘bastardized’ Magyar language of the urban, assimilated Jew and the ‘unprincipled’ art of the new avant-garde. Ironically, Ritoók’s judgments on modern art, as expressed in her 1916 work *A rút a művészetben* (The Ugly in Art), are very similar to those of Lukács, whose 1910 article *Az utak elváltak* (The Parting of Ways) praises monumentality and Classicism in art.

Thus, Ritoók’s comments in *Huszedik Század* do not necessarily reflect the reality of her adopted intellectual milieu, but rather rest on

common, divisive stereotypes about the ‘nature’ of the Hungarian Jew. As such, they expose the deep ideological divides amongst the avant-garde and the persistent weight of dominant ideologies framing the scope of thought and action. Like Lizó facing Hudák, the Jewish members of the Sunday Circle were deeply pained to hear Ritoók reiterate the growing anti-Semitism of their social and political environment, re-casting their genuine goals of regeneration as the desperate, unprincipled strivings of ‘uncultured’, detached individuals. In the face of this hostility, the theoretical interest in Judaism as a redemptive philosophy (Lukács), or the decisive attempt to erase that ‘difference’ (Balázs), could not counteract the very real anti-Semitism that thrived on ‘difference’ and sought to make that ‘difference’ the basis of a new politics.

By the following year, the conceptual rift that was revealed in *Huszadik Század* culminated in Ritoók’s total rejection of her former peers. Instead, as previously mentioned, she sought out like-minded individuals and forged new alliances. Unlike in the Sunday Circle, where common intellectual and philosophical principles formed the basis of discussion and exchange, in the years following World War I, Ritoók privileged ethno-religious affiliation above else as the basis of new patterns of interaction and solidarity. Active in both literary circles and the right-wing women’s movement, Ritoók fought to re-define the ideological basis and aims of those programs. Primarily, she wanted to distance Hungarian cultural and political life from ‘foreign’ Jewish influence, and was able to cast this as a positive, productive approach serving the best interests of the nation. The new direction of Hungarian culture and political life had to be *Magyar*, and for Ritoók that meant, in no uncertain terms, that it needed to be rid of Jewish participation.

It is a great tragedy that a large proportion of the (for the most part) assimilated Jewish intelligentsia who participated in the production and reception of a new Magyar culture in the first two decades of the 20th century also participated in, or at least supported, the revolutions of 1918-19. Thus, following the collapse of the short-lived Communist Republic, the aesthetic and intellectual endeavours of the Hungarian avant-garde came to be seen (albeit mistakenly) as a critical cause for the Trianon peace treaty. The reality of the situation was that no governing body would have been able to alter or reverse the outcome of Trianon, but the knee-jerk reaction was to find a scapegoat on which to pin the losses. And a conservative public could not help but judge the socially and politically active Jewish-Magyar culture as ‘foreign’ (a word that Ritoók repeats often) and hostile to the ‘true’ interests of the Magyar nation. Tragically,

forced into exile by the counter-revolutionary backlash, many of those artists and intellectuals had indeed become ‘foreigners’ in a real, physical sense.

Meanwhile, the consolidation of a reactionary, xenophobic patriotism concretized their positions as ‘outsiders’ in a symbolic sense. The old, reactionary rhetoric touting the dangers of Jewish dominance in the professions and in cultural life regained currency. Ritoók, herself, complains vehemently about the dominance of Jews in cultural and intellectual circles, pointing to the relative success of *Nyugat* and the influence of the Sunday Circle in intellectual and political circles as living proof of the dangers of collaboration and co-operation. As she expresses: “If I were to begin a cultural society with Jews then a year later 90% would be Jewish, just as it was everywhere before the war; suddenly we saw that whatever we started ended up in the hands of Jews, and was turned into something completely different than what we wanted.”³⁷

With this in mind, Ritoók looked to build her own cultural/literary society free of Jewish influence. She turned to her friend, the writer Cécile Tormay to establish the conservative *Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége* (MANSz; The National Association of Hungarian Women). Ritoók also contributed to Tormay’s new literary journal, *Napkelet* (Orient).³⁸ Despite personal issues between the two women,³⁹ from Tormay’s diaries and other writings it is clear that she and Ritoók shared the same convictions about Hungarian cultural and political life and its aims. Both women naturally supported the introduction of the *numerus clausus* of 1920 that capped the percentage of Jews able to enroll in universities. The widespread support of the *numerus clausus* was a clear sign of the extent to which reactionary and xenophobic ideals of nationalism had triumphed in the public sphere. As Tormay argued: “We demand the enforcing of the *numerus clausus* law not in order to oppress the alien race but in order to promote our own race, because we think it would be insane and suicidal on the part of the nation not to want to recruit its intelligentsia from among its own, native race.”⁴⁰

Needless to say, membership in MANSz was not open to Jewish women. Furthermore, Ritoók and Tormay consciously sought to distance their organization from the pre-World War I feminist movement that had owed much of its success to the work of radical Jewish women.⁴¹ Thus, the emergence of MANSz as an influential force in the women’s movement, as well as in national politics, was indicative of the broader shifts taking place in cultural and political life, as networks of affiliation were re-structured along ethno-religious lines.

In a letter written to her friends Kálmán Rozsnyai and his wife⁴² on June 17, 1924, Ritoók outlines the conceptual arguments directing the restructuring of Hungarian cultural life along these lines. The tone and content of the letter reveals a far more frank expression of her anti-Semitism than her response in *Huszadik Század*, perhaps owing both to the personal nature of the letter and the experience of the intervening years that had served to strengthen her convictions. Crucially, Ritoók does not consider her attitude to be anti-Semitic. She attempts to distance herself from anti-Semitic attitudes based on hatred by justifying her stance as being motivated by patriotism, and aimed at the protection and regeneration of the nation. “I want [a new cultural society] to be Magyar,” she states, “Or I won’t do it. Just so there is no misunderstanding: not anti-Semitic, but Magyar.”⁴³ The fact that Ritoók could even make such a conceptual distinction speaks volumes about the nature of the social and political climate in the early 1920s. The revanchist attitude unleashed by Trianon allowed the public to promote anti-Semitic rhetoric in the guise of patriotism, as something both positive and *necessary* to the survival of the nation. It is on the basis of this kind of protective stance that Ritoók must reject her former peers as those who would endanger the nation with their intellectual and political ambitions.

Re-iterating the sentiments expressed in *Huszadik Század*, she discovers the root of this divide in cultural and psychological, rather than religious, differences. “It is not about the fact that we pray at different churches, but about the fact that our whole spirit and their whole mentality are different.”⁴⁴ Emphasizing this difference in ‘mentality’, Ritoók believes that it was the ‘foreignness’ and ‘rootlessness’ of her former friends and colleagues that made it easier for them to choose a revolutionary path that would put the very survival of the nation at risk. As she expresses elsewhere:

Only a degenerate race could search for renewal through destruction. Furthermore, if they want to create anew a world severed from its past, it is not enough to eliminate the last statue, the last book, the last violin, but they would also have to destroy the last person who remembers... At this point we are not talking about philosophy, but about my Hungarianness. And it is this that separates me from them.⁴⁵

Ritoók judges the behaviour of Lesznai and Balázs to be a direct product of their Jewishness and their ultimate lack of commitment to the future of the nation. And it is this perceived betrayal that she cannot forgive.

It is bitterly ironic that the patriotic fervour and deep conviction

with which Ritoók explains the need for new patterns of affiliation and networks of participation mirrors the cries of her Jewish peers decades earlier as they yearned for the development of a *Magyar* culture that could rival the best intellectual and aesthetic products of Europe. As Balázs writes in his diary in 1905:

I was speaking with him [Zoltán Kodály]⁴⁶ about my secret, most sacred dreams, which I have never put into words, neither in conversation nor in writing — about a great Hungarian culture, which we need to make, which shall leap into European development, such that we should lead, just as each one of them has led — English, French, German — just as now, the little Norwegian, who before now no one knew anything about, has leapt in — why not the Hungarian?⁴⁷

Given the patriotic commitment of Lesznai, Balázs, Jászi and most of their peers, Ritoók's claims about their 'rootlessness' and flagrant irresponsibility sound hollow. Furthermore, while Lesznai supported the communist revolution in principle, she did not approve of the trajectories taken by the revolution in practice. She was active in the Writer's Directorate, producing and disseminating fairytales to the general population, but she did not follow Lukács blindly into battle. Lesznai was also skeptical of the destructive and authoritarian nature of Béla Kun's administration as a viable path towards the establishment of new social and political structures, and a stronger foundation for democracy.

In the years following the collapse of the revolutionary government and her subsequent flight to Vienna, Lesznai fills pages of her diary reflecting upon the mistakes of the revolution, the ethics of political action and the very possibility of putting the ideal of democracy into practice. She believes that the institutionalization of the revolution ultimately mired it in authoritarian structures of power and control and that stagnation was antithetical to the goals of regeneration through dynamic forms of community and politics. She maintains, however, that despite its practical flaws, the concept of revolution, itself, should not be abandoned. She argues that, "The revolution becomes a crime as it becomes institutionalized, but the revolutionary attitude of the spirit, the destruction of formulae in the interest of the establishment of more dynamic structures must be a constant factor of ethical behaviour."⁴⁸

Given the social and political rhetoric of counter-revolutionaries like Ritoók, Lesznai recognizes the impossibility of establishing a dynamic, inclusive democracy within a context where people yearn for the

certainty of essentialisms. Such a context could only usher in totalitarian forms of government. As she laments:

The weakness of democracy is that it is rational. There are no either-or codes, it is free of superstition and it is dynamic. The spirits of most people, however, do not know faith without superstition. This is why mass democracy is unbelievable and impotent. Most people want a dogmatic and static image of the world. The ever-perfecting god was an esoteric concept, and those who live in that faith are few.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, Lesznai feels that one cannot abandon the road towards democracy in its ideal form, despite the fact that that road may be impassable under given conditions. Is it then better to sit and wait? Or is it still better to act in hopes of transforming those conditions and clearing the impasse? Can one then judge someone for making the best possible choice from amongst bad choices? Reflecting on these questions, Lesznai suggests:

The ethics of politics is not either-or; everything is a question of degree. The question of right and wrong is also determined by many co-existent layers: the validity, the value of the goal (ideological and material) from the point of view of human progress (towards perfection). This already allows for a great deal of relativity. Furthermore, the level of conviction with which we believe in the goal and its path, and how much we will do in service of it, is entirely subjective. This is the subjective ethical layer, I believe, according to which one can do good even on a bad path.⁵⁰

With these comments, she seems to be assessing her own involvement in the revolution — her own ‘level of conviction’ and ‘service’. Though she did not believe in the outcomes, she continues to grapple with the question of whether the path, itself, was in vain.

Ritoók certainly does not share Lesznai’s acceptance of the fact that, in the absence of ideal forms, sometimes there can be a grey ethical area when it comes to political action. Nor can she view Lesznai’s actions as ‘doing good on a bad path’. Instead, Ritoók wants her former peers to be held accountable for their actions. Her novel *A szellem kalandorai* culminates in a scene that betrays her bitter disappointment in the ideological and political choices made by her peers, and her uncompromising rejection of their Jewishness. At the end of the novel, the male protagonist, Ervin Donáth (thought to be an amalgam of György Lukács and Ernst Bloch),⁵¹ is shot and killed by his childhood friend and long-time devotee,

Gyula Weber. Ervin's friendship with Gyula occasions his first confrontation with the realities of cultural and class difference at a very young age. It is initially on the grounds of the Weber family's relative poverty that Ervin rejects his friend. Later it is Gyula's weakness and subservient nature that Ervin finds distasteful. Throughout the novel, these traits become irrevocably tied to Gyula's Jewishness, creating a fundamental difference between the two men in Ervin's mind—the difference between his spirit and Gyula's mentality. When Ervin discovers that he is, in fact, half-Jewish, the product of an illicit love affair, he must struggle to come to terms with that difference within himself, the reality that somewhere deep within him lay a Gyula Weber. Right before he is shot, Ervin finally expresses his disdain for Gyula, for that part of himself: "I have always hated you," he says to his childhood friend, "Your lack of courage... your lack of talent..."⁵² Clearly, as Agatha Schwartz argues, Ervin's rejection of Gyula can be read as a self-rejection.⁵³ But Gyula's act also raises issues of accountability and responsibility for the nation, and reflects Ritoók's conviction that her Jewish peers had betrayed the nation with their radical action.

Ritoók's portrayal of Ervin's identity crisis reveals an intimate, and often sympathetic, knowledge of the anxiety experienced by many of her former peers as they confronted their Jewishness. Ervin faces a similar 'flagellating duality' as János Berkovics in *Kezdetben volt a kert*, or Béla Balázs in his hatred of contemporary Jewish literature, or Lesznai with her persistent feelings of 'homelessness'. But unlike Lesznai, who sees her Jewishness as the source of special insight and creativity, Ritoók casts Ervin's Jewish half as his weakness and ultimate downfall. Rather than a slave rising up against its master, Gyula's action is symbolic of the 'master's own weakness and selfishness betraying him in the end. Gyula pleads with Ervin that he should return and finish what he started, instead of abandoning those who had followed him into the revolution and leaving the nation in turmoil. Confronted with this choice, Ervin chooses to save himself rather than to fight (albeit hopelessly) for the nation. Ritoók seems to suggest that, in making this choice, he displays the same weakness that he loathes in Gyula. Ultimately, his 'rootlessness' allows him to walk away from the nation in a time of crisis, and for that he pays with his life.

Examining these writings, it becomes clear that Ritoók's complete rejection of Lesznai illustrates the dramatic failure of the 'second reform generation' to consolidate a coherent opposition in the face of deeply ingrained historical divisions. From her exile in Vienna, Lesznai is left to analyze those failures and come to terms with her (now very real) aliena-

tion from her homeland. This alienation is the source of anxiety for her, like many of her peers, as she has to come to terms with the ‘difference’ cleaving her from her former nation, a ‘difference’ that she, herself, had never identified with on any significant level. By 1923 Lesznai presents a dramatically different view of her Jewish identity. Rather than the abstract interest in mysticism as an alternative experiential realm, or an attempt to subsume ‘difference’ to a commitment to nationhood, Lesznai expresses an awareness of how her persistent ‘otherness’ informs and elicits important patterns of identification and affiliation that could not be erased by her conversion. Perhaps, the experience of exile and the complete erosion of assimilation as a viable identity finally led her to identify with her Jewish ‘self’:

Today, Jesus himself would go to the synagogue, not to pray with them, but to be stoned along with them. So I have no right to sit in a Catholic church but should be in the synagogue along with my people. My people, to whose faith, language, traditions, culture — probably even racial stock—I have no binding connections, but who are, nevertheless, I know today, my people, whom I choose above all others (but not against all others).⁵⁴

It is this final statement that most sharply distinguishes Lesznai’s position from Ritoók’s, who chooses her Christian-Magyar peers ‘against all others’. In choosing a community based on ethnic, or one could argue, racial affiliation rather than intellectual/philosophical principles, Ritoók signifies the impossibility of restructuring Hungarian national cultural and political life based on principles of inclusion and broad solidarity. The rejection of her former peers, however, is obviously not without its pain and disappointment. As she expresses:

I have lived amongst only the most intelligent Jews. Sometimes Béla Balázs and Anna Lesznai would put me to shame with their Hungarianness — in their words, and when it came time that they had to make a choice... believe me, with the revolution a whole world fell apart within me when I confronted my horrifying disappointment in these people.⁵⁵

But, she feels that just as they made a deliberate choice, she must also do the same. In doing so, she denies the possibility of broader reconciliation based on gender, class or patriotic commitment. In final analysis, the fact that the relationship between the two women was ultimately destroyed by

the privileging of ethnic affiliation above all other concerns and the return to reactionary, xenophobic ideals of nationhood mirrors one of the greatest tragedies in Hungarian cultural life, the effects of which are still being felt today.

NOTES

¹ Horthy was an admiral in the imperial navy and was appointed regent on March 1, 1920, serving as head of state until October 1944. Horthy was a prime candidate for the role, enjoying strong support from the military, as well as the great powers, and expressing strong anti-Bolshevik, anti-revolutionary, conservative convictions.

² In January 1920, elections were held to fill a 218-member assembly. With the introduction of universal secret ballot, the Smallholders won 91 seats, while the Christian Nationals won 59. The liberals only won 6 seats, while the Social Democrats boycotted the elections. (Tibor Hajdú, Zsuzsa L. Nagy, "Revolution, Counterrevolution, Consolidation," in *A History of Hungary*, ed. Peter F. Sugar et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 312.

³ For example, the murder of a young girl, Eszter Solymosi, in the small town of Tiszaeszlár in 1882, became a national affair, as 13 Jews were accused of a ritual killing. The accused were brought to trial based on the testimony of unreliable witnesses and unsubstantiated evidence, and were eventually acquitted. Yet, the case provided the opportunity for prominent individuals to fan the flames of growing anti-Semitic sentiments throughout the country. The intensifying climate surrounding the Tiszaeszlár affair gave the politician Győző Istóczy, along with the local governmental representative Géza Ónody, the opportunity to strengthen their anti-Semitic movement. Two years earlier, Istóczy had founded the *Nemzsidók szövetsége* (Alliance of Non-Jews) and had begun the publication of his anti-Semitic pamphlet, *12 Rőpirat* (12 Tracts). While the liberal government of Kálmán Tisza attempted to contain the inflammatory rhetoric of Istóczy and Ónody, the politicians found strong allies in the Catholic Church, and used their power in rural areas to agitate for the repeal of Jewish emancipation. In Hungary, equal citizenship and political rights were granted to Jews in 1867 amidst sweeping liberal reforms and the establishment of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

⁴ Lesznai was born Amália Moscovitz, and took her pen name from the name of the neighbouring village of Leszna. Though she lived and worked as Anna Lesznai for the majority of her life, she remained "Máli" to her closest friends and family.

⁵ *Lesznai Anna, Sorsával tetováltan önmaga: Válogatás Lesznai Anna naplójegyzeteiből* [Tattooed by her own destiny, herself: Selection from Anna

Lesznai's diaries]. ed. Petra Török (Budapest: Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, 2010); *Napló* [Diary] (V.3670/43/1-20), 1912-1945, manuscript, *Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum Kézirattára*.

⁶ When she presented the first draft of her roman-à-clef, *A szellem kalandorai* [Spiritual adventurers] to Béla Balázs in 1916, Balázs noted his disappointment over Ritoók's often hostile characterization of their generation, their goals and ideals, and her depiction of the Jew as a "foreign" entity within the nation (Agatha Schwartz, "Emma Ritoók's Novel 'Spiritual Adventurers': A Intellectual Document of the Fin-de-Siècle," *Hungarian Studies* 16/2 (2002): 298-299).

⁷ Lesznai's mother, Hermina Deutsch was a member of the powerful Hatvany-Deutsch family, who were leading industrialists in Hungary, working in produce, construction, banking and eventually sugar production, commanding a large share of the Hungarian and Austrian markets throughout the late 19th/early 20th century. Due to their prominent land ownership and commercial enterprise in the Hatvan region, the Deutsch family was ennobled in 1897 with the name Hatvany. On Lesznai's father's side, the Moscovitz family was ennobled in 1867, owing to her grandfather Mór Moscovitz's medical services during the cholera epidemic of 1831 and his services to the influential, aristocratic Andrassy family. Her father, Geyza Moscovitz, practiced law and was one of the few Jews to be elected to the National Casino. Erzsébet Vezér, *Lesznai Anna élete* [Anna Lesznai's life] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1979).

⁸ Alsókörtvélyes was a small town in the Zemplén province of North-Eastern Hungary, in present-day Slovakia. Lesznai grew up there on the Moscovitz family's sizeable estate. The garden and surroundings of the estate provided the primary motives running through her aesthetic output.

⁹ Quoted in, Csilla Markója, "Három kulcsregény és három sorsába zárt 'vasárnapos': Lesznai Anna, Ritoók Emma és Kaffka Margit találkozása a választáson" [Three romans-à-clef and three Sunday-Circle members locked into their destinies] *Enigma* 52 (2007): 90. All translations from Hungarian are my own, unless quoted from an English text.

¹⁰ William O. McCagg, *A History of the Habsburg Jews, 1670-1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

¹¹ At the end of the 18th/beginning of the 19th century, a group of young intellectuals sought to introduce liberal ideals into Hungarian political life, seeking the radical transformation of the deeply ingrained feudal system that hindered much needed social and economic reforms. Language reform occasioned a renewal of literary and cultural life, while social and political reforms led by Count István Széchenyi established new cultural and educational institutions. The primary actors spearheading the reform movement (Széchenyi, Ferenc Kazinczy, József Eötvös, Lajos Kossuth, Mihály Vörösmarty) became known as the "first reform generation," while the radical reformers of Lesznai's generation became known as the "second reform generation."

¹² George Barany, "The Age of Royal Absolutism, 1790-1848," in *A History of Hungary*, eds. Peter F. Sugar, et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 198.

¹³ In an attempt to secure the Hungarian position in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary's dominant factions promoted the Magyar language and culture, encouraging the assimilation of non-Magyar minorities through the learning of the Magyar language, taking Magyar names, and adopting the values and lifestyle of the Magyar nobility.

¹⁴ Petra Török, "Mindenképpen úgy érzem, ez lenne a fő könyv: Lesznai Anna naplójegyzeteiről" [I feel this is the major book: On Anna Lesznai's diaries] in *Sorsával tetováltan önmaga: Válogatás Lesznai Anna naplójegyzeteiből*, 54.

¹⁵ Quoted in Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and his Generation, 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 71.

¹⁶ In 1911, Lukács first met Martin Buber and was inspired by Buber's interest in the critical significance of Jewish mysticism within the context of Western philosophy. Like Buber, Lukács felt that the tenets of mysticism were capable of counter-acting the rationalism and alienation of modern life.

¹⁷ Béla Balázs, *Napló I* [Diary I], ed. Anna Fábri (Budapest: Magvető, 1982), 483.

¹⁸ Balázs, *Napló I*, 541.

¹⁹ Edit Hajós studied medicine in France and Switzerland, and took part in the Sunday Circle discussions alongside her husband. Török, "Mindenképpen," 507.

²⁰ Anna Lesznai, *Kezdetben volt a kert I* [In the beginning was the garden I], (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1966), 138.

²¹ Lesznai, *Kezdetben volt a kert I*, 355.

²² The National Casino was founded in 1827 at the urging of Count István Széchenyi, in order to facilitate progress through the exchange of ideas and cultural development amongst the upper classes. Despite its liberal roots, the Casino became a restricted and segregated institution reserved for the Magyar nobility. Geyza Moscovitz, however, was one of its few Jewish members.

²³ Endre Ady and Zsigmond Móricz were prominent writers in the early 20th century. The publication of Ady's first book of poetry, *Új versek* [New poems] in 1906 catalyzed a new generation of artists and intellectuals who called for the democratization of Hungarian politics.

²⁴ Lesznai, *Kezdetben volt a kert II*, 245-6.

²⁵ In 1910, around 5% of Hungary's population (approximately 1 million) was Jewish, around 75% of whom were assimilated (to be distinguished from those Jews maintaining their religious and cultural practices). At the same time, this small percentage of the population represented 12% of industrialists, 54% of merchants, 43% of employers at credit institutions, 42% of journalists, 45% of lawyers and 49% of doctors (Géza Jeszenszky, "Hungary through World War I

and the End of the Dual Monarchy,” in *A History of Hungary*, ed. Peter F. Sugar, et al., 275).

²⁶ It is important to note that while still a vast majority, not all Hungarian Jews chose assimilation as a viable option. A significant faction strove to maintain their languages, and religious practices. Beyond the orthodox community the publication of Theodor Herzl’s work, *Der Judenstaat: Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage*, published in Leipzig and Vienna in 1896, gave rise to a relatively small Zionist movement within Hungary.

²⁷ Jászi founded the Sociological Society in 1901 with Ágost Pulszky, Gyula Pikler, Bódog Somló and Ervin Szabó, among others. He sought to bring the scientific rigour of Herbert Spencer to the intellectual and political life of Hungary. He became the editor of their journal, *Husadik Század* that served as a crucial forum for the exchange of social and political ideas. Jászi and Lesznai were married from 1913 to 1920, and while their marriage did not last, they maintained a close friendship throughout their lives, both in Vienna and later in the United States.

²⁸ Oszkár Jászi, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon: A Huszadik Század körkérdése* [The Jewish question in Hungary: The survey of the Twentieth Century], (Budapest: Társadalomtudományi Társaság, 1917), 2.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ *Egyenlőség* was launched in 1882 as a response to the rise of anti-Semitism, and represented the neolog branch of Hungarian Jews.

³¹ Lajos Szabolcsi, in *A zsidókérdés*, 30.

³² Bernát Alexander, in *A zsidókérdés*, 36.

³³ Lesznai, in *A zsidókérdés*, 105.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 106.

³⁶ For which she was criticized by Szabolcsi, Török, “Mindenképpen,” 54.

³⁷ Emma Ritoók, “‘Nil’-hez 1924. június 17.” *Budapesti Negyed* 8 (1995). Par. 2. *Elektronikus Periodika Adatbázis Archívum* <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00003/00007/ritook.htm>. Accessed March 2012.

³⁸ Founded in 1923 with Gyula Szekfű and Ákos Pauler.

³⁹ Csilla, Markója, “Három kulcsregény,” *Enigma* 52 (2007): 67-108.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Mária M. Kovács, “Hungary”, in *Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919-1945*, ed. Kevin Passmore. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 87.

⁴¹ In 1904, the founding of the *Feministák Egyesülete* (Feminist Association) by Rosa Schwimmer and Vilma Glücklich represented a more politically charged, mostly middle-class voice although women of other walks of life, including aristocratic and working-class women, were also among their members.

⁴² Kálmán Rozsnyai was an actor and journalist. His second wife, Gizella Dapsy, was also a writer.

⁴³ Ritoók, “Nil-hez”, par. 2. *Elektronikus Periodika Adatbázis Archívum* <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00003/00007/ritook.htm>. Accessed March 2012.

⁴⁴ Ritoók, “Nil-hez”, par. 2. *Elektronikus Periodika Adatbázis Archívum* <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00003/00007/ritook.htm>. Accessed March 2012.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Markója, “Három kulcsregény,” 91.

⁴⁶ Zoltán Kodály was a composer and ethnomusicologist. He and Balázs were roommates at university. It is important to note that Kodály was not Jewish, but by the 1930s and 1940s, his ties to the progressive movements of the early 20th century resulted in the dissemination of his work restricted under new censorship laws.

⁴⁷ Balázs, *Napló I*, 219.

⁴⁸ Anna Lesznai, *Sorsával*, 174.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 262-3.

⁵¹ Agatha Schwartz, “Emma Ritoók’s Novel,” 298; Markója, “Három kulcsregény”, 85; György Lukács, “Beszélgetés Lukács Györggyel” [Conversation with György Lukács] in Erzsébet Vezér, *Megőrzött öreg hangok. Válogatott interjúk* [Preserved old voices. Selected interviews], (Budapest: Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, 2004), 34.

⁵² Emma Ritoók, *A szellem kalandorai* (Budapest: Pesti Szalon Könyvkiadó, 1993), 508.

⁵³ Schwartz, “Emma Ritoók’s Novel”, 300.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Gluck, *Georg Lukács and his Generation*, 71.

⁵⁵ Ritoók, “Nil-hez”, par. 8. *Elektronikus Periodika Adatbázis Archívum* <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00003/00007/ritook.htm>. Accessed March 2012.

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