

## Joseph de Fontenay, Vilmos de Huszár, the Revue de Hongrie, and Trianon

*Neglected Sources Regarding French-Hungarian Relations, 1906–1920*<sup>1</sup>

Marguerite de Huszár Allen

**Abstract:** This article addresses the still-perplexing question, as put by historian Andrew Ludányi: “Why were [Hungarians] punished the most severely by the Entente?” It does so by contextualizing Viscount Joseph de Fontenay’s influence on Hungary’s fate before, during, and after World War I. Events while Fontenay was French consul to Hungary (1906–1912) embittered him against his former Hungarian friends. He expressed his rancor in a 1920 letter to the French leader who implemented the Treaty of Versailles after Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau resigned. While in Budapest, Fontenay had founded the successful Hungarian cultural journal, *Revue de Hongrie*, in French, to form “a durable bond” between the two countries. Vilmos Huszár, editor-in-chief and later owner of the *Revue*, worked closely with Fontenay. However, historical events drove the journal’s focus toward political issues and support for Austria-Hungary, France’s enemy. Fontenay’s involvement in shaping postwar alliances and sentiment had a negative effect on Hungary’s fate. Huszár’s diplomatic appointment in 1916 to counter Entente propaganda from Switzerland broadened his outlook on events, offering him unique insights that allowed him to bear witness to the devastating effects of false and misleading Entente propaganda and practices in a book of polemical essays. [m.dehuszar@gmail.com](mailto:m.dehuszar@gmail.com)

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**Biography:** Marguerite de Huszár Allen, PhD, has taught comparative literature and German language and literature at Princeton University, Loyola University of Chicago, and Northwestern University. She has also been a Fulbright research scholar in Hungary and a visiting scholar at the Buffett Institute for Global Studies. Her numerous articles have appeared in books and journals including *The Faust Legend: Popular Formula and Modern Novel*. She has published articles in *The Faustian Century: German Literature and Culture in the Age of Luther and Faustus* and *Perspectives on Faust*, as well as the *German Quarterly*, the *Germanic Review*, *Journal of European Studies*, *Law and Literature*, *Hungarian Studies Review*, *Hungarian Cultural Studies*, *East Central Europe*, and *World Literature Today*. The present article is the second in the history of the *Revue de Hongrie*, based on research the author began as a Fulbright Research Scholar, Hungary, in 2008.

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<sup>1</sup> Dedicated to the memory of Tibor Frank, a most extraordinary historian, who first supported my project and guided my research on the *Revue de Hongrie* in Budapest’s archives and libraries.



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*"The Hungarians who have searched for the individuals culpable for the dismemberment of their country have not the slightest chance with the French: impossible to identify the real actors."*

—Marie Ormos, 1996, "Portraits croisés: regard des Hongrois sur les Français et vice-versa, 1918–1920 (Bulletin de la SHMC: Paris, 57)<sup>2</sup>

*"There was a French consul in Budapest called Vicomte de Fontenay, whom many might remember since he played quite a role in our capital's social circles. He founded the French Literary Society which was the publisher of the Revue de Hongrie and sent scholars, writers, [and] politicians from France to hold lectures on various literary, scholarly, and artistic topics. The members of the board were from the very best families and among the members there were several noblemen. These people usually attended for the sake of Fontenay and his forever young wife, but also for the fact that in those days French language and literature were very popular among the aristocratic circles."*

—Vilmos de Huszár 1930 (*Életem Regénye*. Budapest: Athenaeum, 267-8)

On May 22, 1920, Viscount Joseph de Fontenay, French Minister to the Royal Court of Serbia, wrote two letters to Alexandre Millerand, French premier and minister of foreign affairs, whose main task, after the resignation of Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, was the application of the Treaty of Versailles. The letters indicate that Fontenay was an active participant in the discussions and decisions concerning the configuration of postwar Central and Eastern European states. Indeed, he had strong opinions about the region's future composition and Hungary's postwar existence. Written approximately two weeks before the Hungarian delegation was to sign the Treaty of Trianon, these letters confirm Fontenay's ideas on how to attain future tranquility in the region by creating a defense against future threats from "germanisme" and the danger that Hungary might seek revenge or try to revive the Habsburg Empire. Fontenay affirms his preference for a close union among the new states of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and the enlarged Romania, designed to form a solid block of countries faithful to the Entente located to the east of Germany and surrounding a much reduced Hungary. The second letter briefly addresses the future of Poland and his recommendation that Poland join forces with Czechoslovakia. Lastly, he turns to Hungary, as follows:

[A]s for Hungary, the question is more delicate. When speaking about this country, we must not lose sight of what we seem tempted to forget, that the Hungarian government of 1914 is one of those largely responsible for the world war, that its armies committed acts of devastation and cruelty not justified by the customs of war, and that therefore, according to the laws of justice, the perpetrator of these crimes must be punished. This is what the Peace Conference carefully considered by inflicting on the Magyars a punishment proportionate to their crimes. In addition, it should not be forgotten that retribution not only aims to punish but also to prevent recidivism. Therefore, if the punishment is severe, long-lasting, and if the lesson continues from one generation to the next, the goal of the Conference of Peace will be fulfilled.

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<sup>2</sup> All translations in this article from the French and German are the author's. Judit Jokai assisted with translations from Vilmos Huszár's *Életem Regénye*, and Monika Pacziga with those from his polemical essays.

Unfortunately, we observe in the victors a weakening of resolve; they lose sight of the considerations I have just enumerated: the punishment of crimes, the lesson for the future; and we already hear the English feeling pity for the fate of the Magyars, and following the example of the English, others are inclined to be moved by explanations and assurances. When the English in Belgrade defend the Magyar cause, it would be like their explaining away German savagery in northern France; we would tell them that it is obvious the enemy did not fight on English soil.

This indulgence feels unduly driven by two sentiments: the spirit of caste and of commercialism. The English lords remember their relations with Magyar magnates. English commerce is concerned above all with reestablishing the flow of trade and opening up a route to Asia, across Europe. They all forget the punishment of crime and the lesson for the future.

Yet it is indisputable that the chauvinism of the Hungarian people stoked by the magnates presents a real danger to their neighbors if the Entente does not execute the treaty with a firm hand. Undoubtedly, the magnates who own estates [now] in Slovakia, in Transylvania, and in the Banat declare that Hungary, mutilated in this way, cannot exist; but it is their fortune that is affected and not the principle of the races [ethnicities].

It is said that the Magyar government has moved toward support of France; no doubt it is moving in this direction, but when will it find its definitive direction? The day before yesterday, it was Germany; yesterday, it was Italy; today, it is France, and tomorrow....? Have we actually reached the end of trial and error?

We cannot be assured of anything so long as the accomplices of Tisza, the perpetrator of the war, are in power; this was the error the Magyars committed by returning to power those who they should have removed, had they wanted to give the Entente undeniable proof of their change of policy. Everything that goes on in Budapest only proves that the German influence that prevailed during the war is still present nor can it easily fade away. How much credence do statesmen deserve who previously put their faith in Germany and who all of a sudden say, "We have changed!?" We can concede that necessity has won them over to France, but if France does not give them complete satisfaction, won't there be another change of heart?

In any case, as I have said, the corrective and preventive punishment must apply to Hungary, as it does to Germany, Turkey, and Bulgaria. To be concerned from now on only with economic interests, to sacrifice everything to them, runs the risk of stepping out of our required role of conqueror vis-à-vis the conquered, whom we must monitor in order to prevent them from falling back into their bad habits. (*Documents Diplomatiques Français*, 1999, Tome II)

Viscount Joseph de Fontenay repeats the French "party line," which General Franchet d'Esperey, commander in chief of the French Eastern Allied Army, succinctly expressed in a telegram written December 13, 1918, a year-and-a-half earlier:

"Hungary is beaten, and before asking us for peace, it has been one of our most relentless adversaries. Therefore, it ought to pay as the other states in the Dual Monarchy" (Majoros 2009: 88).

In contrast to Fontenay's letter, the general's comment is short and to the point, as one would expect in a telegram where every word counts. The stark contrast between the letter and telegram reminds us that Viscount Joseph de Fontenay was French consul to Hungary from April 1906 to April 1912, and thus had a more personal perspective than the general. It also raises questions: what are we to make of the vindictiveness of Fontenay's condemnation of Hungary eight years after his departure from Budapest, one-and-a-half years after Hungary's defeat, as well as the resentful tone with which he confirms his approval of the most drastic of World War I peace treaties? If nothing else, this letter indicates that we need to dig deeper into the events between April 1906 and May 1920.

During his six years as French consul to Hungary, the author of the above letter launched two highly successful cultural initiatives, to which Hungarian leaders responded enthusiastically. The first, in 1907, was the French Literary Society of Budapest (*Société Française Littéraire de Budapest*, hereafter FLSB), which offered free French language classes and sponsored regular lectures from distinguished French speakers. An immediate success, it formed the basis of Fontenay's popularity in Hungary and was still active in 1930, eighteen years after his departure (Huszár 1930: 270). The following year saw the establishment of Fontenay's most significant legacy: the *Revue de Hongrie*. The first undertaking set the stage for the second in that the literary society became the publisher of the *Revue*. Moreover, the "Bulletins" (newsletters) from the society's gatherings appeared at the end of each issue from March 15, 1908 to September 15, 1912, five months after Fontenay's departure. A monthly Hungarian journal written entirely in French, the *Revue* was a diplomatic endeavor supported by the governments of France and Hungary, as well as the two countries' intellectual, financial, industrial, and social elites, with subscriptions from individuals, as well as prestigious universities, colleges, and libraries in Europe, North America, Australia, and Asia (FLSB; *Revue I* 1908: 396, 574; *Revue VI* 1910: 10; Allen 2014: 310–1).

Viewed through the prism of the *Revue de Hongrie*, the evolution of French-Hungarian relations, as represented in Fontenay's relationship with Hungarian leaders, comes into sharper focus. This perspective illuminates both cultural and political aspects of these interactions before, during, and after the war. This article traces Fontenay's career path as it relates to the *Revue* and French-Hungarian relations, from its peak of positive mutual collaboration in 1906 to 1910 to its nadir in the above 1920 letter and thereafter. The general trajectory of the *Revue* from 1908 to 1920 can be described as follows:

- 1908–1911: Before the war, the journal published contributions primarily from Hungarian and French intellectuals, literary figures, as well as professionals, journalists, politicians, and other experts. The editor, Vilmos Huszár, worked closely with "the agile and kind" (Huszár 1930: 271) Viscount de Fontenay on this effort in cultural diplomacy, which the French Academy honored with its Furtado prize.

- 1911–1914: For financial and organizational reasons, a major restructuring occurred in 1911, shortly before Fontenay’s departure for a new assignment in French Colombia. A new board of directors replaced the FLSB, and Huszár became both the editor in chief and owner of the journal. During this period its focus changed and it began to publish political articles.
- 1915–1918: During the war, the *Revue* appeared bimonthly and became an official representation of the views of the Dual Monarchy. In 1916, Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Josef ennobled Huszár for his work on the *Revue*, leading Huszár to accept a diplomatic post in Bern, Switzerland, where he aimed to counter the overwhelmingly negative foreign war propaganda. He continued to edit the *Revue* in Bern, traveling intermittently back to Budapest as a diplomatic courier.
- 1918–1920: During the immediate postwar chaos the journal fell silent.

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Viscount Joseph de Fontenay was born in Germany in 1864. He was formally admitted to the French Foreign Service, attached to political foreign affairs, in 1893 (Frangulis, A.-F.1933. *Dictionnaire diplomatique*). Before his assignment to Hungary, he worked in Vienna as secretary to Ambassador Marquis de Reverseaux for two and a half years. The only French diplomat with a doctorate in philosophy from a German university (Leipzig), he took care of everything having to do with the German language. Despite his German expertise, he was vehemently anti-German, as were many in the generations following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–1871. Fontenay was a third-generation aristocrat to make a career in the Foreign Service at a time when the Quai d’Orsay was undergoing a process of reform that emphasized the need for professionals and specialists. One of the Quai d’Orsay’s objectives was to reassess the nineteenth-century tradition of a “relatively closed ‘family’ system of personnel,” in which aristocratic offspring could more or less “inherit” a position in the diplomatic service (Lauren 1976: 25, 88–117; Dasque 2008: 14). In this regard, Fontenay’s political approach was rather old-fashioned in that he tended to become deeply attached to the countries he served, as in his attachment to Serbia (Pavlovic 1999: 69; Horel 2013: 5–13), and excessively negative about unexpected setbacks, as in his dealings with Hungary. Moreover, he frequently initiated and fostered policies that differed from those of the Quai d’Orsay.

The impetus for Fontenay’s assignment to Budapest was the constitutional crisis that erupted in Hungary’s parliament in 1904, followed by the elections of 1905, which brought a coalition government to power that leaned toward France instead of Germany. Led by Ferenc Kossuth’s Francophile Independence Party, together with coalition partners Albert Apponyi and Sándor Wekerle, the new government sought more independence from Austria. The nationalistic policies they promoted were reminiscent of those promulgated by the 1848 revolutionaries. In contrast, István Tisza, the leader of the defeated Liberal Party, supported the monarchy. When the coalition presented its nationalistic governing agenda to Franz Josef for his approval, the emperor adamantly rejected it as a challenge to the 1867 Compromise itself that had established

the dual monarchy. An impasse developed that lasted until February 1906, when the king sent Honvéd troops to dissolve the parliament. To bring the coalition back to the negotiating table, Franz Josef threatened to introduce universal secret male suffrage in Hungary, a policy that would endanger the Hungarian ruling class's hold on power. Thus, the coalition capitulated and signed a secret pact with the king, promising to stay within the bounds of the Compromise, even though the agreement prevented it from fulfilling its campaign promises. Moreover, although the king insisted the coalition work on electoral reform, it had no intention of expanding the electoral franchise. The deceptions and misunderstandings that eventually followed from this arrangement produced long-lasting harm to relations at home and abroad.

Shortly before taking up his post in Budapest, Fontenay stopped in Belgrade in 1905, where the government of Serbia was planning to modernize its weaponry. In 1881, Serbia had signed a trade agreement with Austria-Hungary granting it most favored nation status. On the basis of this agreement, the Austrians expected Serbia to buy its weapons from the Bohemian Škoda works, and the Serbs were ready to do so. However, following a bloody coup in 1903, a new king and prime minister came to power who wanted to free Serbia from Austrian economic control. As Fontenay tells the story, he invited the Serbian ministers to dinner, and in the course of a "very jovial, animated dinner" (Berthem-Boutoux 1949: 174), he persuaded them to buy weapons from the French firm Schneider-Creuset with the help of a significant loan and the support of England and Italy. In response to Serbia's change of heart, Foreign Minister Goluchowski demanded that the Serbians make their purchase from Škoda. When they refused, Goluchowski called upon Hungary to block imports at the border from Serbia; namely, pigs, Serbia's chief export. Thus, one of Fontenay's first tasks in Budapest was to pressure Ferenc Kossuth, minister of trade, into persuading Vienna to allow the Serbs to choose between French and Austrian weapons. As it turned out, Prime Minister Wekerle had already agreed with Vienna's non-negotiable position that Serbia purchase guns from Austria. In the end, Serbia bought its weaponry from France and, to keep the peace, purchased mountain artillery from Austria. Eventually, France replaced Austria-Hungary as Serbia's principal creditor with Fontenay playing a direct role in the changing configuration of relations between Serbia, Austria-Hungary, and France, moving Serbia decisively in the direction of France. Fontenay's success would become the basis of his long-lasting attachment to Serbia and a significant realignment in Central Europe (Allen 2014: 304).

Fresh from success in Serbia, Fontenay hoped to achieve similar success in Hungary. He arrived in Budapest in April 1906, just as the coalition was taking office. His mission was to maximize the wedge between Hungary and Austria in order to help Hungary become increasingly independent, while simultaneously drawing it gradually into the French sphere of influence. The evening of his arrival, Fontenay wrote in his diary that the coalition's rule was going to be the "beginning of the emancipation of Hungary from the government in Vienna". The FLSB, along with the free French courses, would help Hungary "enter permanently into contact with Western Europe and to emerge completely from its servitude to Austria" (Berthem-Boutoux 1949: 199). It

would be more than three years before Fontenay learned about the secret agreement between the coalition and the king. In the meantime, by September 1908 enrollment in the French classes exceeded 600. Together with coalition leaders and the Hungarian elite, Fontenay envisioned a diplomatic initiative that would create "a durable bond" between the literary, intellectual, and professional worlds of the two countries. *Revue de Hongrie* would provide Hungarians with the opportunity to reach out beyond their borders in an international language other than German "to educate foreigners about Hungary" (Huszár 1930: 270). All they needed was an editor. Vilmos de Huszár tells the story of how he became the *Revue's* editor:

In January of 1908, it so happened that Gaston Deschamps, the editor of *Le Temps*, author of many excellent literary history books, and member of the French parliament preceding the war, started to talk about ME [sic] during one of his readings. He thought he owed it to the Hungarian audience that while mentioning Brunetière, he should praise me for my work in comparative literature, emphasizing my books about Molière and Corneille. I, of course, was not invited to the reading and only found out the next day from Albert Berzeviczy and Gyula Wlassics, two outstanding scholarly men, who showed goodwill and friendship toward me not only during their days as ministers of culture, but later as well, for which I will always remain grateful (Huszár, 1930: 77–78).

The next day Huszár, a professor of French at the Royal Josef Technical University and lecturer at the university in Kolozsvár, sought out Deschamps to thank him. Through Deschamps, he met Fontenay as well as Pál Kiss, president of the FLSB. By the end of their conversation, Huszár had accepted the position of editor. His responsibilities included the *Bibliothèque Hongroise*, which published French translations of Hungarian classics.

Relatively unknown in Hungary, Huszár was better known abroad, especially in France and Spain. He had a doctorate from the University of Budapest, had studied a year at the Sorbonne, and returned each summer to Paris. A corresponding member of the Spanish Academy, he had traveled widely in Spain and was praised for his articles about and translations of Spanish literature. His first book on eighteenth-century French and Spanish theater, *Corneille et le theatre espagnol*, had inspired the distinguished literary critic and editor of *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Ferdinand Brunetière, to write a sixteen-page highly favorable review, which concluded, "I do not dare decide for whom it is more flattering or shameful, the Spanish or us, that we can thank a Hungarian for this work". This was the source of Deschamps's reference to Brunetière in his lecture to the FLSB (Huszár 1930: 218–223). The French Academy awarded Huszár the Saintour Prize for the first book and the Bourdin Prize for the second, *Molière et L'Espagne*, in what eventually became a trilogy. In addition, he had lived for almost twelve years at the "bohemian" Grand Royal Hotel in Budapest, making friends and contacts among writers, artists, and politicians who would later contribute to the *Revue*. As Albert Berzeviczy, president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for more than three decades, wrote in 1931:

Vilmos de Huszár seemed really born to produce a *Revue* that had the mission of cultivating literary and political relationships between Hungary and other countries, principally between Hungary and France. His vast erudition in Romance literature was recognized abroad more often than in his own country. From modest beginnings he elevated himself through tireless labor to the

highest degree of knowledge. Not content with having become an authority in linguistics and literature, he wanted to enlarge his realm of ideas to questions of high politics, and in order to give more current events to the Revue, he created a publication in which all international questions could be debated. (Revue de Hongrie: XLIV–XLV, November 15, 1931)

"From modest beginnings" alludes to the fact that at age fourteen, Huszár had to drop out of school in order to help support his family. Financial constraints also explain why he did not attend Deschamps's lecture at the FLSB gathering. An autodidact, he later made up the years of school he had missed in ten months of study to pass his gymnasium's final exam with flying colors. An assimilated Jew from northeast Hungary, he possessed a background and early experience of poverty and antisemitism that contrasted sharply with Fontenay's privileged Roman Catholic aristocratic origins and expectations. Nevertheless, Huszár wrote that Fontenay "discussed all editorial matters with me" (Huszár 1930: 271).

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Several events negatively impacted Fontenay's years in Hungary. The first harbinger of trouble occurred in May 1908, just two months after the publication of the first issue of the Revue. The industrialist Miklós Zsolnay, the organizer of a French circle in Pécs, constructed a monument to commemorate the French soldiers in Napoleon's army who had died there. A ceremony for the unveiling was set for May 31. Zsolnay had sent a delegate to Paris to invite French dignitaries to join leaders of the coalition, but when the day arrived, the French dignitaries did not show up, nor did coalition leaders, who bowed out at the last minute. What was supposed to be a patriotic celebration of cooperation between the two countries turned out to be an embarrassing development for Fontenay. He dutifully read the letter of regret to the gathering from French Ambassador (to Vienna) Philippe Crozier, which was reproduced in the Revue (I, 1908: 255–259) next to other letters of regret. In addition, the Revue printed pseudonymous articles, allegedly written by Berzeviczy and Wlassics, that described the ceremony in honor of the French prisoners of war. Patriotic poems addressed to Franz Josef and the empress followed in case they had taken offense. Unknown to Fontenay at the time, one source of his embarrassment in Pécs was the "secret pact" between Franz Josef and coalition leaders forbidding them from engaging independently in foreign affairs. He was also unaware that behind his back Crozier had advised the invited French dignitaries that the Hungarian event was unworthy of their presence. This setback at the hands of the coalition leaders and his own countrymen no doubt contradicted Fontenay's sense of his own importance.

Fontenay's embarrassment in Pécs turned into humiliation when the next misfortune struck, in September 1908. The German Foreign Affairs Ministry office stationed in Vienna reported that Fontenay and Kossuth were discussing "political-economic rapprochement" and that Kossuth had promised "to use his influence to neutralize Austria-Hungary in the Triple Alliance." When Clemenceau heard of this, he reportedly snapped, "Fontenay is an imbecile. He should be recalled as soon as possible" (Poidevin 1970: 96). Days later, the semi-official Berlin newspaper *Vossische Zeitung* ran a series of articles accusing Pichon, French minister of foreign affairs, of



supporting Fontenay in this matter. "Fontenay und die Magyaren" (September 17, 1908) and "Österreich-Ungarn, Der Fall Fontenay" (September 19, 1908) accused the consul directly of offering French capital to fund a separate Hungarian "note-issuing bank." In exchange, the journal charged, the Hungarians promised to loosen bonds between the Monarchy and Germany, thereby weakening the Alliance: Fontenay and the Magyars" 'Fontenay und die Magyaren' (September 17, 1908) and Austria-Hungary, The Case of Fontenay 'Österreich-Ungarn, Der Fall Fontenay' (September 19, 1908). . The German paper published Kossuth's denial a week later, wherein he accused Austria and Germany of jealousy because the coalition had turned to France for expert advice (September 20, 1908; September 28, 1908). Nevertheless, Fontenay's name had featured prominently in negative propaganda, as had Pichon's, casting the Quai d'Orsay in a dubious light. This story took on worldwide proportions when it appeared in the September 20, 1908, New York Times article, "Wicked French Mine For Triple Alliance," with the subtitles, "Pichon Called Inspirer" and "Vicomte de Fontenay, Consul General at Budapest, Disavowed by France Because Intrigues Came to Light." The German government, the article reported, charged

*the French Consul General in Budapest, Vicomte de Fontenay, with carrying on secret negotiations for the establishment of an independent Hungarian State bank with the aid of French capital.[...] Hungary, so the lively story goes, was to repay France for this cooperation by advocating the withdrawal of Austria-Hungary from the Triple Alliance.*

The article assured readers that Fontenay's "alleged machinations" had taken place

*without the knowledge of the French Ambassador to Emperor Franz Joseph's Court, M. Crozier, who expressed his disgust and disapproval at the conduct of such negotiations behind the back of the republic's highest accredited representative. [...] De Fontenay, meantime, has been disavowed, and will shortly be recalled because his intrigues came to light unexpectedly and shattered the French scheme.*

The decisive blow came in September 1909, when the "secret pact" between the king and coalition leaders came to light. The Viennese Reichspost published articles, such as 'End the Comedy' 'Finita la comedia!' and 'Activities in Hungary' 'Die Vorgänge in Ungarn,' in exposing the coalition's duplicity and calling for its leaders to resign ("Kossuth und die Verhandlungen des Bankanschlusses": September 27-28, 1909). From this point on, Fontenay would have realized that his ambitious plans to help the Hungarians economically were untenable. The Reichspost articles would not have been well received at the Quai d'Orsay. Fontenay's superiors in Paris had insisted on a political commitment from Hungary before providing economic assistance, but Fontenay had not insisted on this condition. Now the secret pact revealed that the Hungarians had seriously misled him, for there was no political commitment the Hungarians could have made. Similarly, despite the consul's attempts to establish stronger financial ties between France and Hungary, the large French loan Fontenay had been hoping to secure for Hungary fell through in September 1910. This was, as was later revealed, because Russia, France's ally, "opposed a loan to a country against which Russia was preparing to go to war" (Huszár 1930: 79).

In 1911, the Revue's financial and managerial difficulties caused a major shift in the journal's structure and focus. As recorded in the newsletter from October 20, 1911:

[T]he president [Pál de Kiss] proposed to put the direction of the Revue in the hands of Dr. Vilmos Huszár, professor at the University of Technical Sciences, who has proved himself as editor in chief. [...] We are persuaded that under the direction of Vilmos Huszár, the Revue will successfully continue its patriotic work of penetration and distribution, with the spirit that has always animated it." (Revue de Hongrie: VIII, October 15, 1911)

In addition, Berzeviczy helped Huszár buy the Revue. Thus, by January 1912, a new illustrious board replaced the FLSB board while Fontenay remained an honorary member. The board included the three coalition leaders who had helped Fontenay create the Revue but had also misled him. Count István Tisza, who was now president of the Council of Ministers and head of the National Party of Work, sat on the board. Fontenay would later accuse Tisza of being the instigator of World War I. Other board members included: István de Barczy the mayor of Budapest, and László de Lukács, the minister of finance. Leo de Lánczy was a lifetime member of the upper house of parliament, president of the chamber of commerce, and general manager of the Pest Hungarian Commercial Bank, the largest bank in Hungary. Literary historian Zsolt de Beöthy and philosopher Frigyes de Medveczky joined the board together with Wlassics, president of the Hungarian Supreme Court, and Berzeviczy, who became president of the new Revue board. Count Márcus Wickenburg, a deputy, and Count János Zichy, minister of Culture and Public Instruction, rounded out the politicians, while popular writers Ferenc Herczeg and Gyula Péka represented Hungary's literary community.

This transformation of the Revue along with Fontenay's departure marked the turning point in relations between Fontenay and Huszár, between the French and the Hungarians. From this time on, the paths of the two collaborators, now patriots of opposing alliances, radically diverged and apparently never again intersected. Beginning with the September 1914 issue, one-and-a-half months after the 1914 assassination of the heir apparent to the throne of Austria-Hungary, Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, Huszár placed a banner across the top of the index page of the bimonthly issues indicating the Revue was now "consecrated entirely to the war." From Fontenay's perspective, the journal that he had created with the Hungarians for the purpose of spreading favorable French (and Hungarian) propaganda, while bringing the two countries closer, had turned into its opposite, a periodical representing the views of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, France's enemy. In contrast, Huszár describes the dilemma that faced the Revue at this time:

The world war put our journal in a unique position. Unfortunately, we were at war with France, too. What should we do now? In France, already at the beginning, a press attack like no other ever experienced was initiated against us. Every French paper cried out for the death of Hungary and pinned the squashing of the country on their national agenda. [...] Of course we did not know what was decided in Paris early, but from the foreign papers which we received, we read about the French cries of victory and the prediction that the war was going to be long. This is when I decided to speak to the office of the Hungarian prime minister [Tisza] and the Viennese shared foreign ministry and suggested that the Revue de Hongrie appear [...] every two weeks and written for Austria-Hungary and represent the central government's official views on neutral

territory, even in the Entente countries. (Huszár 1930: 79). [...] One of our goals was to spare the French, because the opinion in our leadership circles as well as among the Austrians was that France was not really an enemy. (Huszár 1930: 82)

The year 1916 brought events that ended any remaining goodwill between Fontenay and Hungarians. First, in January of 1916, Fontenay's twenty-six-year old son Charles was killed "fighting for France" in Massiges. A few months later, in September 1916, his twenty-three year old son Gérardo was killed "by the enemy" in Bouchavesnes-Bergen. In one year Fontenay sacrificed both of his sons, his only direct descendants, to the war. Both sons would have been teenagers when their father took up his post as consul in Budapest. Second, in summer 1916, Huszár moved to Bern, Switzerland, to represent the monarchy by countering the overwhelmingly negative foreign propaganda, though officially in charge of the interned and prisoners of war. He writes that, since Austria and Hungary had banned the foreign press at home, he was shocked to discover in Bern that the world press was blaming Hungary for the war. He immediately began combating Entente propaganda, while editing the *Revue* from Bern, and traveling intermittently back to Budapest as a diplomatic courier. He also published anonymous articles in Entente publications and those of neutral countries. But he admitted that the counteroffensive started too late in the war after what he called the many lies and misrepresentations about Hungary had already taken hold in world opinion.

[N]o matter how important the interned and POWs were, my work was not of a political nature, but as editor of the *Revue de Hongrie* and by special request of Baron István Tisza and the Royal Foreign Ministry, I was responsible for trying to fight against the Entente propaganda campaign." (Huszár 1930: 63)

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Fontenay's vindictive attitude on Hungary during and after World War I was not confined to the letter to Millerand in May 1920. For example, Fontenay renewed the cordial relationships he had developed in Serbia during the 1905 weapons crisis by working as French envoy with Serbs in Albania and during trips to the front in Salonika in 1914 and 1916. In November 1916 and September 1917, his assignment, at the request of French General Sarrail, was fighting alongside Prime Minister and army officer Essad Pacha in Albania. Having proven his commitment to Serbia, Fontenay served as ambassador to Serbia from September 1917 until March 1921, during which time he became a key figure in the formation of alliances among those smaller countries in Europe and the Balkans that were created to prevent the restoration of the Habsburgs and Hungarian revisionism. Fontenay's overall goals were to oppose German influence in the Balkans with a "barrier" policy that gradually expanded to the idea of a ring of countries, the Petite Entente, surrounding Hungary (Pavlovic 1999: 70). Serbia represented to Fontenay the very foundation of future peace in the Balkans. At roughly the same time as the successor states began forming, the decision to break up Austria-Hungary took place in the summer of 1918, winning President Wilson's approval on June 26, 1918. On November 3, 1918, Austria-Hungary signed an armistice with the Allies in Padua, at which time the monarchy ceased to exist. At the end of December 1918, Pichon, who called for a purely "Magyar" Hungary, denied Hungary the right of self-determination. Moreover, Edvard Beneš and Ferdinand Foch, who had served as Supreme Allied Commander during the war, on their own, without consulting the other

victorious powers, drew up a demarcation line that left over a million Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, thus confirming that France was the primary decision-maker for East Central Europe (Pastor 2003: 47–48).

Upon arriving in Belgrade in September 1917, Fontenay first secured a Franco-Serbian alliance, then expanded the alliance he had already formed between France and Romania in 1916 into a three-way alliance with Greece and Serbia, founded on respecting the rights of all nationalities there and represented by Nicolas Pašić (Serbia), Athos Romanos (Greece), and Take Ionescu (Romania). Those who forged the alliance, approved by Pichon on November 27, 1918, specifically excluded Bulgaria as punishment for its behavior since 1913, adding the requirement that Bulgaria was not to benefit territorially from the alliance (Pavlovic 1999: 70). The agreement was a favorable development for the barrier envisioned by Fontenay to halt an advance from Hungary. Fontenay, who participated in the discussions about whether Yugoslavia should be a new confederation to replace the Dual Monarchy or an alliance of small states, wanted a strong, unified Yugoslavia with Serbia at its core, capable of rejecting the former Habsburg provinces and thereby avoiding German influences. However, Clemenceau, Pichon, and Philippe Berthelot, French director of political and commercial affairs and counselor of state, insisted on fulfilling the territorial promises they had made to Italy in the secret 1915 Treaty of London before taking up any other issues. Although Fontenay wanted Serbia to create and dominate Yugoslavia, the Quai d'Orsay disagreed, focusing instead on preventing a union between Germany and Austria. Therefore, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (hereafter SCS) from Austria-Hungary was formed on December 1, 1918 without Fontenay's or French participation. Berthelot officially recognized the kingdom on June 4, 1919. Significantly, it was Fontenay's task to establish the kingdom's borders in a way favorable to France while resolving disputes with Romania and Italy.

Fontenay then sought to facilitate the renewal of relations among Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the SCS (later renamed Yugoslavia). Taking advantage of every opportunity to bring the Romanians and the Yugoslavs together with the Czechoslovakians, he received assistance from Czech politician Edvard Beneš, as well as the Romanian envoy to Belgrade, and SCS Prime Minister Milenko Vesnic, among others. For Fontenay, the alliance represented a first step toward a barrier against German influence in the Balkans. He had encouraged Yugoslavia to form a Balkan alliance with other countries that once belonged to Austria-Hungary, such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, in order to implement his desire to create a circle of Slavic states around Germany. Indeed, diplomatic negotiations were already taking place at the beginning of December 1919, when French military intelligence reported from Vienna the rumored existence of an offensive-defensive military alliance between SCS and Czechoslovakia, supposedly oriented against Italy and Austria, but actually oriented exclusively against Hungary (Pavlovic 1999: 75). Beneš feared the possibility of Hungarian revenge, as well as Hungarian revisionism, in light of the revisionist movement that was spreading in Austria and Hungary. Moreover, there were indications that the Hungarians in Serbia planned to return to their mother country. For

Fontenay, Hungary was the principal enemy, because it had been always allied with Germany, which had been enlarged by the inevitable absorption of Germans from Austria. It is precisely against this alliance between the Hungarians and Germans that Beneš said he wanted to constitute a three-way entente comprising the SCS, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. The defensive alliance between the SCS and Czechoslovakia was signed August 14, 1920, in Belgrade (Pavlovic 1999: 75–77). Romania joined the Little Entente in 1921. At this point Hungary was surrounded by the Balkan alliance except for the border with Austria.

According to historian Vojislav Pavlovic, in the accords that led up to the Little Entente, Fontenay adamantly opposed Hungary. For example, he warned Poland against entering into an alliance with Hungary. When Paléologue, the secretary general of the Quai d’Orsay, suggested the formation of an economic alliance bringing together Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and SCS, Fontenay did everything possible to prevent its establishment. At the same time as his actions resulted in isolating Hungary, Millerand recommended not isolating Hungary because that might make it turn to Germany. As on other occasions, Fontenay ignored his government’s wishes (Pavlovic 1999: 77–78). Moreover, before the Treaty of Trianon was signed, Millerand had attached a note to the treaty suggesting possible revisions in the future as a way to induce the Hungarians to sign the treaty, but no revisions ever occurred.

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Why were the Hungarians punished most severely by the Entente? Late in 1917, when the Austrian-Hungarian army was on the verge of collapse and Fontenay had already begun creating pro-Entente alliances in the Balkans, Huszár dashed off six polemical essays with the Nietzschean title *Ha a Bálványok Rombadőlnék (When Idols Break Down)*, essays written “for the education of the public” and specifically addressed to Hungarian readers, essays that focused on universal moral values—essays, as he later noted, “the French didn’t like.” (Huszár 1930: 300). The context in which Huszár wrote was the clear injustice he perceived and experienced during the war and its impact on him, and by extension on his countrymen, as evidenced in the abundance of vicious propaganda propagated by the Entente press, such as the articles by diplomat historian Gabriel Hanotaux, which were “simmering with hatred” and expressed “the wish for revenge.” Therefore, he turned to Nietzsche’s writings on the subject of values (Huszár 1918: 3-4) and to Max Scheler’s phenomenological analysis of Nietzsche’s concept of resentment, published in 1912, (and expanded in 1915) (Huszár 1918: 27). The editor of the *Revue* wrote not only to set the record straight, but also to maintain his own psychological balance; that is, in order to prevent himself from succumbing to the negative emotions of hate and revenge, even though he realized there was little hope that justice would be forthcoming. What follows is a concise, abbreviated rendering of the heart of his arguments, in the first-person present tense, in his own words (in quotation marks) wherever possible.

What we Hungarians must learn from this war is to think more critically, “in the spirit of Nietzsche, [to] reconsider and reestablish certain values . . .” (Huszár 1918, 4)

From the beginning of the war, Austria-Hungary banned foreign newspapers, fearful that foreign propaganda would depress morale at home. As a result, it is now clear that

“our enemy has won in the press and on the podium” because they have succeeded in making “the whole world believe that we are the aggressors, and they are simply on the defense.” (Huszár 1918: 4; 25-6)

Our enemy builds on the fact that we were the first to declare war on “small” Serbia, forgetting what Mignet, said (“and a French historian at that, ”): “war is not always started by the one who declares it” (Huszár 1918: 57-58). The enemy’s lying slogans are weapons that slowly “poison the word which has affected the souls of peoples, especially through the press” (Huszár 1918: 40). The Allies have spread malicious lies against Hungary in order to justify their actions, but in the process they have betrayed and corrupted their own values. “The horrible orgy of wickedness, of lies, of hatred, and abominable false accusations that the French, English, Italians, and the ‘neutral’ Americans have produced” (Huszár 1918: 8) have overturned the universal positive values of the past (Nietzsche’s “Umwertung der Werte”). In the third essay, “The French Role in Bringing about the War,” Huszár lays bare the deceptive strategy of the French, playing on Hungarians’ “naive liking for the French and excessive enthusiasm for French culture” in the hope of encouraging Hungarian leaders “to ambush Austria” and “get our independence. . . . [T]he main pillar of the French-Hungarian friendship was the hope that Hungary’s frequent skirmishes with Austria would lead to a break, from which the French and their allies could benefit by weakening Germany.” (Huszár 1918: 54-5) Mr. Cheradame and other journalists, like Scotus Viator, who came to Hungary before the war with a false image of it, “gave us a bad grade for our behavior in the school of the Entente and as a punishment they want to partition Hungary.” (Huszár 1918: 55–6) The real reason for their visits was to gather ammunition for their prospective critiques of the situation of the “oppressed” nationalities and to further their plans for partitioning Hungary according to ethnicities.

The Entente claims that the Central Powers wanted the war in order to subjugate the nationalities, whereas France, England, and Russia were fighting for ideals, such as justice and truth, with the goal of creating a “just, fair, and lasting peace.” (Huszár 1918: 85) But when Germany offered its willingness to negotiate peace, the French wanted to “dictate” it in order “to break the German power threatening the world.” What the war is really about is “territorial ambitions,” so the Entente will prolong the war until their territorial ambitions are satisfied. Everyone who reads the newspapers knows that the cause of the war was not the ultimatum to Serbia—that was just the spark; instead, it was the continuation of the “territorial ambitions” of Entente countries, including the partitioning of Hungary. Yet the Entente claims to be fighting for the ideals of “liberalism,” “freedom,” and “democracy” whose effect is to “poison the word” (Huszár 1918: 42).

Nevertheless, Huszár came to the understanding that “a few ignorant and obsessed politicians [...] created a big war and a little peace. The French people are innocent as far as the war and Trianon are concerned.[...] There is no barrier, therefore, to create a friendship with them and to

convince them of the need to rectify the injustice with which we were dealt" (Huszár 1930: 281–282).

We Hungarians liked the French and let's not hate them now either.[...]I would not consider anything more abominable than [...] [to] preach hate against a people that we always liked. But I would recommend to my countrymen to be more careful and not to neglect being a little critical when being in contact with French people. Finally, we cannot just accept that during the course of the great war, writers of this great nation, among whom there have been leading statesmen, too, calmly and determinedly demand the partition of the 1,000-year-old Hungary—Romanian, Serbian, Russian, or any people...." (Huszár 1918: 61)

At the same time, he was aware of the potential persistence of what he saw as wartime lies even after the war was over.

And among future French historians there will be great writers who will eloquently write that this partition was just and justified and it served the higher interests of mankind. Because this is how history is written (Huszár 1918: 62).

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When Pál Teleki and Miklós Horthy paid a visit to Ambassador Fontenay in Belgrade, mid-July 1919, the two politicians appeared to be totally oblivious of the radical transformation that had taken place in Fontenay's attitude. How else can their visit be explained? In Budapest, 1906–1912, the French consul had been very supportive of Hungary and most attentive to Hungarian needs and wishes. In 1919, Teleki, the minister of foreign affairs, asked the French ambassador to help them improve relations with Serbia and in other urgent matters, outlining to his old friend the foreign policy plans and goals of the new government in Szeged. However, as Balázs Ablonczy succinctly put it, "[t]he request was not honored with a reply" (Ablonczy 2006: 57). Ten months later, the ambassador wrote his intemperate letter to Millerand.

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