

## WOODROW WILSON'S "FOURTEEN POINTS": BETWEEN THE DIPLOMACY AND PROPAGANDA (ORIGINS OF THE LIBERAL PARADIGM)

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**Abstract:** *The study investigates the sources and peculiarities of President Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" in the context of the diplomatic and propaganda attack of the Entente states on Austria-Hungary and Germany. On January 5, 1918, the President of the United States proposed a liberal model of post-war reconstruction, which contradicted the old ideas of monarchical and colonial powers. Particular attention was paid to the content analysis of Point X, which dealt with complex national issues of the Austria-Hungarian Monarchy. Some aspects of US propaganda activity in the confrontation with the Central Powers during the final stages of World War I are also explored.*

*The liberal peace program that US President Woodrow Wilson made at the end of the war was only partially implemented, particularly in terms of the political self-determination of nation-states that appeared in the region or expanded territorially as a direct consequence of the collapse of Austria-Hungary. However, the United States, like the Entente states, failed to transform the "chaos" of national aspirations in the region into a Danube Federation, following the example of Switzerland.*

**Keywords:** *Fourteen Points, Woodrow Wilson, propaganda attack, Austria-Hungary, Romanian issue, Danube Federation.*

**Rezumat:** *Cele „Paisprezece puncte” ale lui Woodrow Wilson: între diplomație și propagandă (originile paradigmei liberale). În articol, autorii investighează sursele și particularitățile formării celor „Paisprezece puncte” ale președintelui Woodrow Wilson în contextul atacului diplomatic și de propagandă al statelor Antantei împotriva Austro-*

Ungariei și Germaniei. Într-un discurs programatic din 5 ianuarie 1918, președintele Statelor Unite a propus un model liberal de reconstrucție a lumii postbelice, care contrazicea vechile idei ale puterilor monarhice și coloniale. O atenție deosebită a fost acordată analizei de conținut a punctului X, care s-a ocupat de probleme naționale complexe ale monarhiei Austro-Ungare. De asemenea, au fost explorate unele aspecte ale activității de propagandă a SUA în confruntarea cu puterile centrale în etapele finale ale Primului Război Mondial.

Programul liberal de pace pe care președintele american Woodrow Wilson l-a elaborat la sfârșitul războiului a fost implementat doar parțial, în special în ceea ce privește autodeterminarea politică a statelor naționale apărute în regiune sau extinse teritorial după prăbușirea Austro-Ungariei. Cu toate acestea, Statele Unite, la fel ca statele Antantei, nu au reușit să transforme „haosul” aspirațiilor naționale din regiune într-o Federație a Dunării, urmând exemplul Elveției.

## INTRODUCTION

The First World War was a period of tragic trials for all humankind, and 1918 brought many surprises to the battlefields and the diplomatic front, as well as a completely different vision on how to end the global conflict and, most importantly, the foundation for a post-war world where needed. In some ways, the world has become truly global as it has become increasingly interconnected. Multinational European continental empires of the old type, based on monarchical, anti-democratic principles, seemed a geopolitical anachronism in the context of the irreconcilable struggle of the “avant-garde of democracies” advocated by the Triple Entente States – the United States, Great Britain and France. It was necessary to “end” colonialism in this context, attempting to bring in a new global era of free trade with its rationality and economic interdependence among nations. All of these factors of post-war political change should have gradually outweighed the irrationality of the war.

According to Larry Wolff (2020), a contemporary American researcher of President Wilson’s administration policy, Eastern Europe, invented by travellers and philosophers during the Enlightenment, was “found” on the map again in the first decades of the XX century due to US President’s geopolitical intervention. In the speech “Fourteen Points” in early 1918, it was precisely then that the concept of national self-determination<sup>1</sup> was revived, including the oppressed peoples of Austria-Hungary, as a valuable guideline of the Modern era.

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Wolff, *Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2020, 304 p.

Another one of Wilson's beliefs in collective security as a panacea, as Henry Kissinger correctly admitted, implied the integration of countries around the world against aggression, injustice, and, "most importantly, excessive selfishness".<sup>2</sup>

President Woodrow Wilson considered the construction of a future "no-war" world order from such liberal and somewhat idealistic positions. He attempted to develop and present a political mechanism for such a global restructuring in the Fourteen Points program.

Wilson's program included a section on the issue of Russia's "pacification". "Uncontrolled Bolshevism" was already posing a growing threat to Western democracies. Well-known British expert Halford Mackinder did not doubt in 1919 that the Bolsheviks would strengthen and gradually transform into a Eurasian force that the West would still have to face.<sup>3</sup>

Today, more than a century after the end of the First World War, there is a need to return to historical documents to understand the contradictory spirit of the era. This mystery defined the new twentieth century as the century of extremes. The people of the early 21st century need to investigate the liberal contexts of the Great War more closely. This is where content analysis of the most important documents, which together form humanity's "diplomatic memory," will prove helpful. Such unexpected wartime documents undoubtedly contributed to President Woodrow Wilson's Peace Program as part of a complex diplomatic game.

The idea and difficulties of forming a peace program were discussed in detail in the work of the American researcher Lawrence Gelfand<sup>4</sup>, devoted to the activities of "The Inquiry". However, the researchers have not conducted a detailed linguistic analysis of the Fourteen Points. One of the authors of this research produced the first attempt at a textual study of Point X. Despite this, the results of this study were not available to a broader range of researchers due to language limitations.<sup>5</sup> Let us note the importance of analysing the Fourteen Points program in the context of the US propaganda deployment after joining the war on the side

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Diplomatiya* [Diplomacy], Moskva, "Ladimir", 1997, s. 201.

<sup>3</sup> *Democratic ideals and reality. A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction by the Right Honorable Sir Halford J. Mackinder*, Washington, National Defense University Press, 1942, XXIII, 227 p.

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence Gelfand, *The Inquiry. American preparation for peace, 1917-1919*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1963.

<sup>5</sup> Volodymyr Fisanov, *Punkt X myrnoyi prohramy prezydenta Woodrow Wilsona: sprobna tekstolohichnoho analizu* [Point X of the Peace Programs of President Woodrow Wilson: a test of textual analysis], in *Problemy istoriyi mizhnarodnykh vidnosyn, Zb. naukovykh prats'*, Chernivtsi, 1993, s. 5-10.

of the Entente. Walter Lippmann, who was one of the actual authors of Fourteen Points, reflects these aspects in the fundamental work *Public Opinion*. It was Lippmann who, after the war, summarised the impact of the press on education, which was particularly important when preserving democracy in crisis conditions. It was necessary to strengthen Americans' psychological resistance to rumours and lies and examine the state of mind capable of filtering information.<sup>6</sup>

Ukrainian researchers Pavlo Guy-Nizhnik<sup>7</sup> and Tetyana Pron<sup>8</sup> analysed some aspects of the diplomatic activity of US President Woodrow Wilson before and during WWI. The study of the Fourteen Points has been significantly improved in light of the 100th anniversary of their release.

As modern American researcher Thomas J. Knock notes in his close look at Woodrow Wilson's political thought during a critical phase of the October 1918 Armistice negotiations, Wilson told an anxious Democratic senator, "I am now playing for 100 years hence." Furthermore, the author writes that it was "profoundly ironic that Donald Trump's challenges to long-standing international commitments and certain standards of behaviour should have coincided with the one-hundredth anniversary of events such as the Fourteen Points address and the struggle over American membership in the League of Nations".<sup>9</sup> US scholars and experts who have analysed the results and the legacy of Wilson's political thought on American international policy and post-war world order at a reasonably high scientific and analytical level have extensively discussed Wilson and Wilsonianism. Contemporary research, in particular, is primarily dedicated to studying modern dimensions and challenges to the liberal international order at the global and regional levels whilst also showing various points of view. For example, Jacopo Perazzoli, a contemporary Italian researcher, analysed different receptions of Wilsonism in the modern European context, beginning with the first attempts to implement the liberal-democratic grand design, which would end the

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<sup>6</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, New York, The Free Press, 1965, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> Pavlo Guy-Nizhnik, *Politychni pohlyady Woodrow Wilsona u doprezydent's'kyi period yoho zhyttya ta diyal'nosti* [Woodrow Wilson's political views and activities during his pre-presidential years], "Naukovi zapysky Instytutu politychnykh i etnonatsional'nykh doslidzhen' im. Ivana Kurasa NAN Ukrainy", Kyiv, 2008, Vyp. 39, s. 67-77.

<sup>8</sup> Tetyana Pron', *Alter ego zovnishn'oyi polityky i dyplomatiyi prezydenta SSHA Tomasa Woodrow Wilsona (1912-1920)* [The alter ego of foreign policy and diplomacy President of the United States Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1912-1920)], *Naukovy visnyk Uzhhorods'koho universytetu, seriya "Istoriya"*, Vyp. 2, 2013, s.62-67.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas J. Knock, *To end all wars. Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order*, New Edition, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2019, p. VIII.

concert of old European states. He also investigated its influences on the Euro-Atlantic scenario during the 20th century.<sup>10</sup> In his influential article on President Wilson's attitude to the principle of "self-determination" of nations, American researcher Trygve Throntveit noted that even the bare phrase "self-determination" is absent from the text of his famous Fourteen points and almost all his public pronouncements of the war years.<sup>11</sup> In this case, the author explores not so much the content of the points themselves but the reasons for their ineffectiveness between the two world wars, resulting in the eventual loss of peace in Central Europe.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that considerable attention has been paid in this article to the "Balkan" issues, which were reflected in the text of "Fourteen Points" since it was the region where the interests of Austria-Hungary and Russia collided on the eve of World War I. This marked the beginning of a "broad geostrategic strip" stretching from the western coast of modern-day Albania down to the eastern borders of Afghanistan, with the Caucasus and the Anatolia and Central Asian<sup>12</sup> territories included, were further acts of geopolitical confrontation between the states within the Great Game originated and persisted in various nuances in the early twenty-first century.

### ARGUMENTATION

As a result of the unsatisfactory study of the sources of formation of the text of the US peace program itself, a more detailed analysis of previously known and new documentary sources is required, which should first concern the "Fourteen Points" themselves as well as the contextual diplomatic and memoir documents of World War I. Many years of research on First World War documentary sources prompted the authors to turn first to the textual analysis of the Tenth Point of President Wilson's speech in Congress on January 8, 1918. Let us recollect that it concerned one of the critical issues concerning future Central Europe's territorial structure—the future of the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire.

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<sup>10</sup> Jacopo Perazzoli, *Wilson and Wilsonianism in the 20th Century: Influences and Receptions in the Euro-Atlantic Scenario*, 2021, in [https://www.academia.edu/43851031/Wilson\\_and\\_Wilsonianism\\_in\\_the\\_20th\\_Century\\_Influences\\_and\\_Receptions\\_in\\_the\\_Euro-Atlantic\\_Scenario](https://www.academia.edu/43851031/Wilson_and_Wilsonianism_in_the_20th_Century_Influences_and_Receptions_in_the_Euro-Atlantic_Scenario) (Accessed 12.02.2022).

<sup>11</sup> Trygve Throntveit, *The Fable of the Fourteen Points: Woodrow Wilson and National Self-Determination*, "Diplomatic History", 35, no. 3, June 2011, p.446.

<sup>12</sup> Artem Ulunyan, *Balkaziya i Rossiya 1900-1914* [Balkasia and Russia 1900-1914], Moskva, "MAIN", 2002, s. 10.

In one of his famous pamphlets, *The Crank*, Arthur Ponsonby, a well-known critic of the war from the Union of Democratic Control, criticised the British government for the chaos and imbalance in the policy of war goals. "One week we are fighting for France, the next to preserve the Balance of Power, again we are fighting to crush militarism, and yet again to establish a healthy military system here at home, and so on."<sup>13</sup> It was President Wilson who, at the end of the war, proclaimed the United States' peace program and made the allies' military and political goals much more structured and understandable to public opinion in warring and neutral countries, especially regarding Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>14</sup>

This study attempts to interpret US President Woodrow Wilson's speech to Congress on January 5, 1918, as a result of the President's legal and diplomatic activity and that of experts. According to researchers, resources that describe, in this case, rigorous preparatory and expert actions exist in addition to the document. This most laborious and "dim side" of diplomatic document production and evaluation is intended to be covered as thoroughly as possible in this study.

The examination of the known sources of Wilson's administration final Program Paper reveals that one of the key phrases of the famous French historian Paul Leger concerning the autonomy of the nationalities of Austria-Hungary was included in the text. In his fundamental work on Austria-Hungarian problems, the scientist wrote that only a new *modus vivendi* between different races could save the country from political anarchy. That is why, in his view, there was an urgent necessity to "transform the current dualistic monarchy into a federal state where local autonomy of different national groups would be respected and recognised".<sup>15</sup> However, President Wilson did not like the proposed version of the memorandum. Based on Leger's thesis, analysts have taken this into account in subsequent work. A classified letter from Arthur Balfour, the head of the Foreign Office, contained the formula that suited official Vienna. Informing Wilson about secret negotiations with an Austrian representative, the politician said that, while opposing the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, Britain expressed the wish that, in the future, the peoples of the Empire be "given an opportunity for autonomous development".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Arthur Ponsonby, *The Crank written in 1916*, London, George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1940, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> See Alexandr Sych, *Post War (WWI) Central and Eastern Europe: Time of Civilizational Choice*, in "Codrul Cosminului", XXV, 2019, No. 1, p. 146-147.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Louis Leger, *Austria - Hungary. The history of Nations Series*, Ed.-in-Chief H.C. Lodge, Philadelphia, 1906, p. 457.

<sup>16</sup> *The Mirage of Power. British foreign policy. 1902-1922*, vol. 3, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul PLC, 1972, p. 609.

The preceding paragraph was the result of meticulous, analytical work combined with extensive editing: "The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations<sup>17</sup> of the world we wish to see safeguarded and assured must be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development"<sup>18</sup>. However, this text did not satisfy the President and was therefore not final. While trying to reassure Vienna, Wilson decided to demonstrate a commitment to preserve the status quo rather than undermine Austria-Hungary's sovereignty. The President revised the wording in part referring to the possibility of "free autonomous development of peoples", replacing the expression "must be accorded" with "should be accorded". As a result, the tone was softened, and Viennese politicians should have considered Wilson's proposal solely as a suggestion rather than a requirement.

Secondly, the word "world" disappeared from the phrase "among the nations of the world". While saving the first variant, the possibilities of double reading the text were significantly narrowed. After all, the expression "nations of the world" was interpreted exclusively as "states of the world", implying that it was about Austria-Hungary.

In addition, on Lippmann's advice, the document's final form included the word "peoples". In a previous memorandum written by Professor Robert Kerner, an expert on Czech issues, the terms "nations" and "races" were suggested. However, preference was given to the term "peoples", which the experts used in the final memorandum presented to President Wilson.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently, the Americans changed their focus, having to support the liberation movement of the peoples of the Danube Empire.

The final version of paragraph X was as follows: "The peoples of Austro-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous develop-

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<sup>17</sup> Note that the word "nation" in English has, as we know, various meanings: 1) people, nation; 2) state, country. Thus, the phrase "community of nations" means "community of states". It is clear that the Danube monarchy cannot be regarded as a nation. In this case, it was impossible, if necessary, to read "among the nations" as "between the nations", and this did not suit official Washington. By removing the term "world", it was feasible to refer to the word "peoples" with the preposition "whose" and read the text as follows: "Peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among other nations ...". Thus, the content of what was written changed radically.

<sup>18</sup> Arthur S. Link (ed.), *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Nov. 11, 1917 – Jan. 15, 1918*, vol. 45, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 481.

<sup>19</sup> Betty Unterberger, *The United States, revolutionary Russia, and the rise of Czechoslovakia*, Chappell Hill, 1989, p. 95.

ment”.<sup>20</sup> The content of the text could be interpreted in two ways, as the editors of the President’s speech anticipated. Diplomatic circles and observers immediately questioned whom or what Wilson was referring to when he spoke about a guaranteed place in the world community – Austria-Hungary or the peoples that inhabit it.

It is worth noting that this understanding was not readily evident to the contemporaries. Subsequently, some of the researchers made the mistake of trying to interpret the text of the paragraph in their own way. Speaking of contemporaries, the opinion of the Ambassador of France to the United States, Jules Jusserand, is worth mentioning. In a confidential letter to the State Department, the diplomat asked to clarify whose place “among nations” the President hoped to see as safe and secure. He himself believed that these were the Danube monarchy’s people. Wilson’s response stated, “The French ambassador correctly interpreted my peace proposals regarding Austria-Hungary”.<sup>21</sup> In Washington, such an interpretation was “held” as if it were for domestic use, considering the possible changes in the political situation in the Central European region. At that time, Wilson’s version of interpretation (for Jules Jusserand) could not be widely publicised. Considering the current realities, Washington did not mean exclusively peoples since the subject of international law was still the Austria-Hungary, with which the United States hoped to deal. After all, they still hoped for secret contacts with official Vienna in the western capitals, expecting to conclude a separate peace with the Habsburgs. After reading the Fourteen Points, Austrian politicians accepted it, with reservations, as the basis for future peace talks. It is no coincidence that the famous American researcher Victor Mamatey wrote in his time that, in this case, we are witnessing a highly successful “turn of the psychological war”. “Everyone was able to read the text as they want to,” he wrote.<sup>22</sup>

Before moving on to other subjects, it is worth looking at Point X’s sources, which were influenced by two elements. The first is the Mises-Lippmann Memorandum. The second is mentioned in Balfour’s letter to Wilson.

1. Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations ... (as compared to the Memorandum of Experts: “Austria-Hungary may be free to take its rightful place among the nations”).

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<sup>20</sup> Arthur S. Link (ed.), *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Jan. 16, 1918 – March 1918*, vol. 46, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 527, 537.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>22</sup> Victor Mamatey, *The United States and East-Central Europe, 1914- 1919. A study in Wilsonian Diplomacy and Propaganda*, Princeton University Press, 1957, p. 180.



2. Again, the text of the Point: "The peoples ... should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development". Here is an extract from Balfour's letter: "...Our strong desire is to see the various nationalities of which the Empire is composed are given an opportunity for autonomous development ...". Some of Leger's ideas may have had an influence.

As his daughter recalls, Wilson had his "special method" of preparing speeches. At first, he made notes of the speech essence on small pieces of paper, partly printed on a typewriter, partially handwritten, and then inserted them over. The final text was printed on a typewriter on sheets of thin paper with "some corrections neatly entered between the lines".<sup>23</sup> This is precisely how the President's previous version of the Fourteen Points text looked.

In May-August 1918, when the national movement in Austria-Hungary intensified, and it became apparent that Vienna would not make concessions to the Entente countries, the diplomats read the Tenth Point quite differently. On August 19, Secretary of State Robert Lansing wrote to Wilson that the US could support a separate declaration by Austria-Hungarian nationalities seeking to free themselves from German domination. They could count not only on our sympathy, he wrote, but also on material assistance. At the same time, Lansing believed it was possible to establish close contacts with revolutionary organisations and groups opposed to the Austria-Hungarian government, seeking national independence by armed means. "If such a course is approved, the politician said, then Austria-Hungary should be aware that during the peace talks, we will oppose the existence of the empire in its present form and at its current borders".<sup>24</sup>

As well-known publicist Lippmann later acknowledged, the peace program was to establish lines of understanding between the Allies, on the one hand, and the informal circles in Germany and the "subject peoples of Austria-Hungary", on the other.<sup>25</sup> Lansing, in addition, has always been critical of the President's speech in Congress, in particular the Tenth Point, as it proposed to "federalise" the Habsburg Empire. In his memoirs, he wrote that he did not dare to include the issue of independence for Austria-Hungarian nationalities, namely the Czechs, Ruthenians, and southern Slavs, in the US peace program because the President, except Poland ... intended to preserve a dualistic Monarchy in that way. "I didn't

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<sup>23</sup> Eleanor McAdoo Wilson, *The Woodrow Wilsons*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1937, p. 246.

<sup>24</sup> *The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920*, vol. I, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1940, p.140.

<sup>25</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, New York, London, The Free Press, 1965, p. 136.

consider it a wise decision,” – the diplomat wrote.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, what Wilson wrote to Jusserand in the confidential letter cited above, could become possible only in the summer of 1918. Diplomatic circles preferred the following wording: “The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among other nations we hope to see protected and guaranteed, should be given the freest opportunity for autonomous development.” Washington expressed a desire to see the nationalities of the Habsburg Empire as equal members of the international community at a time when the collapse of the Danube monarchy, although expected, was not yet so obvious. Later, Lippmann criticised Wilson’s strategy in Central Europe, outlined in Fourteen Points. Italy’s thesis ignores “strategic considerations”. Serbia has been promised sea access, but Jugo-Slavia is not mentioned since “the unity of the Austria-Hungarian Empire” is prioritised. There is no mention of Czech Slovaks at all. Romania remains “face-to-face with Hungary” within its old borders.<sup>27</sup>

Bulgarian diplomat Stefan Panaretov wrote in his diary on January 8, 1918 (on the day Wilson spoke) the following: I said that the Serbs were not satisfied with the message, especially Point X, which did not aim to destroy Austria and accomplish the Yugoslav dreams.<sup>28</sup>

In point ten, Woodrow Wilson rejected, as historian Charles Neu noted, the division of Austria-Hungary into a series of independent states instead of asking for internal autonomy for various nationalist groups within the Empire.<sup>29</sup>

It is worth mentioning Wilson’s interest in making his Fourteen Points and other speeches widely publicised and recognised as a peace settlement program. Through the staff of his information service, the President instructed George Creel to translate and disseminate presidential messages to ordinary people, first and foremost, in Germany and Russia in a “short and acceptable manner.” Dennis Cashman, an American researcher, paints a striking picture of the propagandistic spread of Wilson’s ideas and speeches. He wrote that Wilson’s official speeches were broadcast on the radio, quickly translated, and spread worldwide. The films about American military efforts were recorded in cinemas. Indeed, thanks to Wing, the cult of Wilson appeared two decades before the cult of personality

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<sup>26</sup> *War Memories of Robert Lansing*, New York, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1935, p. 261.

<sup>27</sup> Walter Lippmann, *The Political Scene. An Essay on the Victory of 1918*, New York, Franklin Classics, 1919, p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> Stefan Panaretov, *Diary 1917-1921*, in Petko M. Petkov, *The United States and Bulgaria in World War I*, New York, 1991, p. 178-179.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Neu, *Colonel House: A Biography of Woodrow Wilson’s Silent Partner*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 332.

associated primarily with Hitler and Stalin. The testimony of this cult was "not only the distribution of leaflets, postcards and photographs in Western Europe but also in Italy and Russia." They were distributed eastward to China, where Wilson's speeches published by Creel became a best-seller even to the West of the Peruvian Andes.<sup>30</sup>

Here are two very different responses to the presidential effort. As one Japanese diplomat mentioned later, all these messages were translated and published by the Japanese press. Every statement that flew from Mr Wilson's lips, every sentence that came out of his pen concerning the war was "read and learned by millions of Japanese".<sup>31</sup> Another witness to the events, Baron Alexei Budberg, a man of Admiral Kolchak's entourage, wrote in his diary on March 17, 1918: "A resident of Moon Wilson exploded with a message to the Russian people; in fact, it's nothing, since 3/4 of the Russian people do not read any messages and very few, if any, are aware of what the United States is and where it is located".<sup>32</sup>

President Wilson and his advisers still hoped for the democratisation of Russia during that tough and chaotic time. However, more experienced British politicians have cautioned the American President about the prospects for democratic transformation in Eurasia. In a letter to Wilson, Foreign Office chief Arthur Balfour emphasised that the new people who came to power in Russia after the fall of tsarism were unlikely to be "so much better than the old". "In Russia, there is no middle class. Corruption has eaten deeply into their vitals, and we must not hope for too much".<sup>33</sup>

Actual politics often differed from propaganda influences. The Japanese are unlikely to have really "studied" Wilson's message, and the Russians ignored them. The truth is somewhere in the middle: most average public seemed indifferent to them, sometimes not even knowing what they were talking about. They received feedback from a small number of politically active individuals.

It should be stressed that the Committee for Public Information, led by George Creel, has used various psychological and propaganda instruments to shape US public opinion since the country's entered the war. Creel personally addressed the famous artist Charles Gibson and proposed that he lead the Division

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<sup>30</sup> Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Age of Titans. The progressive Era and World War First*, New York, 1988, p. 510.

<sup>31</sup> Kiyoshi Kawakami, *Japan and world peace*, New York, Macmillan, 1919, p. 48-49.

<sup>32</sup> *Dnevnik barona Alekseya Budberga*, Arkhiv Russkoy revolyutsii [Diary of Baron Alexei Budberg, Archive of the Russian Revolution], t. 12, Moskva, Terra, 1991, s. 287.

<sup>33</sup> Arthur S. Link (ed.), *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, April 7-June 23, 1917*, vol. 42, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983, p. 329.

of Pictorial Publicity (DPP). The latter was able to attract the best illustrators in the country to focus creative efforts on military issues. Illustrators then created unforgettable images, including at the same time the stern and familiar image of Uncle Sam with the inscription "I Want You for US Army" by James Montgomery Flagg. Today, many researchers are studying other dimensions of allied active propaganda in those turbulent years, including poetry and musical accompaniment of posters and postcards.

Holger Terp from the Danish Peace Academy started an exciting project collecting and publishing songs from the Great War. There are more than 14,000 wartime prints, which represent an essential part of the common European cultural heritage. This collection contains over 80 soldiers' songs, ballads, and peace songs related to World War I. One such piece, *Goodbye Broadway, Hello France*, was dedicated to the American military campaign in Europe: Every soldier's mother drying her eye. /Cheer up we'll soon be there, /Singing this Yankee air: /Goodbye Broadway, Hello France, /We're ten million strong, /Goodbye sweethearts wives and mothers, /It won't take us long. /Don't you worry while we're there, /It's for you we're fighting too /So Goodbye Broadway, Hello France, /We're going to square our debt to you. /'Vive Pershing' is the cry across the sea. /We're united in this fight for liberty.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, one of the leading motives for US participation in the war in Europe was military and political assistance to the allies in France. Still, the issue of the post-war system in Central Europe also attracted public opinion. It was then, in 1918, that those Americans who joined foreign policy and reflected on the country's further tactics in European affairs had some interest in the future of the Danube monarchy. The Liberal weekly newspaper "The New Republic" stated that the Austria-Hungarian problem is now our problem and formulating an effective solution is one of the new international obligations of the American citizen. Assuming the role of builders of New Europe, the West considered it necessary to demonstrate its commitment to plans to form a strong Slavic Federation or Confederation in the Danube Basin. As stated in the Memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria-Hungary on the policy of the Entente countries, almost all the big guns of the political verbal army are firing heavy calibre on problems of military objectives.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Holger Terp, *World War One Songs, Collected and documented*, The Danish Peace Academy, July 2014, in [http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/abase/sange/world\\_war\\_one\\_songs.pdf](http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/abase/sange/world_war_one_songs.pdf) (Accessed 14.02.2022).

<sup>35</sup> *Amerika und die Entente, 22.VII.1918*, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (hereafter: HHStA),

Because of the war, let us note that Americans were compelled to study an ethnographic map of Europe. At the end of 1915, the pages of the aforementioned weekly newspaper included an article dedicated to Ukraine by Alvin Johnson, with the rather loud title *Russian Ireland*. In particular, it referred to the need for a differentiated approach to the Slavic problems of Eastern Europe. The author wrote: for us, all Slavs are the same: Russians, Poles, Ruthenians, Czechs, Slovaks, Croats and Serbs. What do we know about the ethnic and linguistic differences between these nations? Do they speak different languages? Can everyone, without exception, be proud of a kind of folklore, or wonderful social and religious institutions?<sup>36</sup> Let us underline that the leading role in the Austrophobic campaign in the United States was played by "The New Republic". It is emphasised: "The division of Austria-Hungary into four states of Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia with the transfer of Poland, Romania and Italy to territories nationally close to these states would exactly correspond to the American concept of 'fair disposal' of the Austro-Hungarian problem".<sup>37</sup>

Another interesting opinion on Ukraine is worth highlighting. The famous historian and British Foreign Office expert Arnold Toynbee wrote in 1915 about the potential of implementing plans to construct a "detached" Ukrainian state from the Russian Empire, which, of course, was supported by the Ukrainians of Austria-Hungary, living in Eastern Galicia. Such a scenario could become a reality in the case of "dismemberment of the Russian Empire, and contemplate an independent Ukrainian state, extended, under the patronage of the Central Powers, as far as Kieff and Odesa".<sup>38</sup>

However, the official commentary on the "Fourteen Points" expressly referred to the possibility of creating another federation – in the territories of Central Europe: The United States also supported a program aimed at establishing a south-eastern European Confederation.<sup>39</sup> It is worth noting that at the time, the authorities of the American trade unions made a particular statement at an inter-union conference of workers. The following idea was proposed: The Conference confirms President Wilson's Fourteen Points as conditions for the establishment and maintenance of peace "between equal nations". By the way, union officials

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P.A. 898, s. 163.

<sup>36</sup> "The New Republic", 1915, 16 Jan.

<sup>37</sup> "The New Republic", 1918, 15 June.

<sup>38</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *The New Europe: Some Essays in Reconstruction*, London and Toronto, J. M. Dent & Sons Limited, 1915, p. 82.

<sup>39</sup> *Arkhiv polkovnika House* [The Intimate Papers of Colonel House], т. 4, Moskva, 1944, s. 156.

made mistakes in the document's text. Not the "freest opportunity of autonomous development" but the "first opportunity of autonomous development" was granted to the Austro-Hungarian peoples.<sup>40</sup>

The Austrians made a similar error when translating the text of the Wilson note. Even the Minister of the Foreign Affairs of the Austria-Hungarian Monarchy used the text of Point X, which referred to the need to provide the Empire's peoples with "erste Gelegenheit" of autonomous development.<sup>41</sup> In one of the then German publications of the American Peaceful Conditions, where authentic English text is submitted alongside the German version, the translation corresponds to the original text. In particular, we read that the peoples of Austria-Hungary should be given the "freest opportunity of autonomous development".<sup>42</sup>

Contemporary British historian Theo Aronson believes that "endemic separatist movements" in Central Europe have received "unprecedented acceleration" due to the influence of Wilson's Fourteen Points. From that time on, self-determination for all minorities has become more than just a reward; it has become "almost an imperative".<sup>43</sup>

When talking about the fate of Austria-Hungary, it should be emphasised that the Czech lands and Slovakia were considered the most critical geostrategic factors because they were its geographical centre. If they left, the Empire would fall apart. One of the American wartime observers, George MacAdam, considered Czechoslovakia as the keystone in the Mittel-Europa, admitting: "Let the Czechoslovaks become free people, and that great Pan-German structure collapses".<sup>44</sup>

There is an assessment of the leading American "propagandist" George Creel, who generally believed that Wilson's points did not have serious practical significance. He particularly noted that the Fourteen Points should not be regarded as "a definitive practical formula" but rather as widespread promulgation of principles.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, during the preparation of Wilson's speech, the experts advocated combining the line of preserving Austria-Hungary as a federal state with elements of "psychological war" against the Habsburgs, thereby sup-

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<sup>40</sup> *Proposals of American Federation of Labor Delegates to Inter-Allied Labor Conference, London, Sept. 17-20, 1918, Labor's official war record*, in Samuel Gompers, *American Labor and the War*, New York, George H. Doran Company, 1919, pp. 374, 376.

<sup>41</sup> *Nachlass Czernin*, HHStA, P.A.I.1092 A., s. 141.

<sup>42</sup> *Die sieben und zwanzig Punkte des Präsidenten Wilson*, o. O., 1918, s. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Theo Aronson, *Crowns in Conflict. 1910-1918*, London, Murray, 1986, p. 184.

<sup>44</sup> George MacAdam, *Czechoslovakia, the Nation without a Country*, *The World's Work*, Oct. 1918, vol. 36, p. 630.

<sup>45</sup> George Creel, *The war, the world and Wilson*, London, Harper & Brothers, 1920, p. 301.

porting the revolutionary aspirations of the Slavic peoples, first to influence official Vienna to break peace with the Entente countries. However, in January 1918, according to researcher Betty Unterberger, Wilson did not support such a "double bottom" policy.<sup>46</sup>

Almost all researchers agreed that Point X called for internal (or federal) autonomy for national groups within the Austria-Hungarian Empire. Afterwards, Wilson agreed with the collapse of the Empire, leading to the establishment of "weak states in Central Europe, undermining the balance of power and opening the way for Hitler".<sup>47</sup>

It is no coincidence that Baron Musulin, the Austria-Hungarian ambassador in Bern, reported to Count Ottokar Czernin in a telegram on January 28, 1918, that Wilson's and Lloyd George's statements regarding the future policy on the Austria-Hungarian question substantially undermined great-Serbian plans. The information that the dismemberment of Austro-Hungary was not foreseen in the military aims of the Entente caused "great concern" in the Serbian emigrant circles, as the diplomat noted. In connection with this, the Yugoslav Committee in London stated that "the democratisation of Austria-Hungary based on autonomy cannot solve the Yugoslav question". This can only be achieved if the Yugoslavs are entirely liberated from Austrian rule.<sup>48</sup>

Other points in the Peaceful American Program that directly concerned Austria-Hungarian issues are worth analysing to compare them to Point X. Discussing the text of other matters, Wilson and House agreed that the current points of the London Treaty, which gave Italy power over other nationalities, came into conflict with the principles proclaimed by the United States. A minor field note by Wilson on the "Inquire" report on this subject became the Ninth Point. Both politicians agreed that Turkish domination in Europe was over. Point XI concerning the Balkans was sufficiently blurred, as the future of the Monarchy remained uncertain. Point XIII ensured the restoration of Poland's independence. It adhered to the House's principles and, most crucially, to his friend Ignacy Paderewski's promises. One common German friend introduced him to Wilson's assistant. Because of this visit, Poland obtained the Gdansk Corridor.<sup>49</sup>

Evaluating the Ninth Point, Lippmann wrote that it recognised the principle

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<sup>46</sup> Betty Unterberger, *The United States...*, p. 96.

<sup>47</sup> Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Age of Titans...*, p. 512.

<sup>48</sup> *Kriegs-Zile Entente-Staaten*, HHStA, P.A. I.1052., Liasse Krieg 69, s. 21.

<sup>49</sup> George Viereck, *The Strangest Friendship in History. Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House*, New York, Liveright Inc. Publishers, 1932, p. 212.

of nationality, which meant only one thing: the terms of the London Treaty were not recognised. The expert described the territorial demarcation provided by this contract as “semi-strategic, semi-economic, semi-imperialist, and semi-formal”. In his view, the Allies’ sympathy could only result in Rome’s demands being met, leading to the restoration of the “real” Italia Irredenta. All others, according to reliable sources, only “delayed the impending Yugoslav revolt”.<sup>50</sup>

It was explicitly stated in point XI: “Romania, Serbia and Montenegro should be released; occupied territories restored; Serbia must gain free and safe access to the sea”. Further, it was about the borders of the Balkan states, which should be formed according to “historically established lines and the principle of nationality”.<sup>51</sup> Resolving the issue of Serbia’s access to the sea contradicted the plans of keeping Austria-Hungary together. This question seriously affected the Italians, who concluded another important diplomatic document with the Entente - the secret London Pact, on which much of the Adriatic coast, not to mention Trentino, had to be left to Italy after the end of the war. As noted in diplomatic notes, the legal adviser of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Georgiy Mikhailovsky, Sazonov and other leaders of Russian diplomacy “rewarded Italy with the Slavic lands of Austria-Hungary and separated Croatia from Serbia in vain”.<sup>52</sup>

The complicated Romanian issue deserves consideration as well. For the first time during the war, the Entente States debated its political resolution in a joint Note on January 10, 1917, when President Wilson addressed England and France to declare his own military and political goals. The response of the Allied countries, in particular, emphasised the need to “liberate Italians, Slavs, Romanians and Czechs from foreign domination”. It is clear that the term “foreign domination” meant the authorities of Austria-Hungary.<sup>53</sup> During the war, the famous British publicist and supporter of the collapse of the Austrian Empire, Robert Seton-Watson, warned of increasing regional danger if the Romanian problem was not resolved. In a letter to George Moroianu, a well-known social and political figure, a future expert of the Romanian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, he wrote that if Austria-Hungary collapsed, such a massive failure would be the most suitable condition for Transylvania Romania, and Hungary or

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<sup>50</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion...*, p. 137.

<sup>51</sup> Arthur S. Link (ed.), *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson...*, vol. 45, p. 514.

<sup>52</sup> Georgiy Mikhaylovskiy, *Zapiski. Iz istorii rossiyskogo vneshnepoliticheskogo vedomstva* [Notes. From the History of the Russian Foreign Office], 1914-1920, Kn. 1, Moskva, Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya, 1993, s. 100.

<sup>53</sup> *Official statements of War Aims and Peace proposals, Dec. 1916 to Nov. 1918*, ed. by J. B. Scott, University of California Libraries, 1984, p. 37.



Russia".<sup>54</sup> Romanian society has had great opportunities for post-war development, as noted in Professor George Gerron's article *New Romania* in the liberal weekly "The New Europe", noting Transylvania's determination of young democrats in the field of economic transformation. They stand against corruption and archaic Romanian institutions, dreaming of seeing their own country with a well-planned and effective social renewal system.<sup>55</sup>

As previously stated, Walter Lippmann criticised the US President's diplomatic hesitancy in the face of the Central States, leaving Romania, in reality, alone with Hungary on the issue of Transylvania. Under these conditions, representatives of the peoples of Central and Southern Europe, on the eve of the Paris Peace Conference, opposed any federal projects that would lead to the preservation of Austria-Hungary. On October 10, 1918, the corresponding joint Declaration of the representatives of the Romanian, Czech-Slovak, South-Slavic and Polish National Committees was published. Such an international statement was quite appropriate, taking into consideration that on October 17, 1918, the Hungarian Parliament responded to the call of the Austrian Emperor Charles I to reorganise the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with the proclamation of the Kingdom of Hungary's complete independence.

The inquisitive readers may wonder, in the context of the intricate diplomatic struggle that reigned towards the end of the war, "Did Wilson use his knowledge of secret treaties while working on the text of the speech? (...) Fourteen points (...) could not have been formulated without the knowledge of secret treaties," asserted Walter Lippmann in a statement which was published by the Bolshevik government in Russia at the end of 1917. Obviously, excerpts from them were laid in front of the President, as experts and the President himself worked to finalise these crucial documents on military and political goals at the final stage of World War I. However, these topics are unrelated to this scientific exploration.

Concerning the Russian factor and more broadly the leftist, socialist influences on Wilson's external program, the following can be emphasised. President Wilson's position at the end of 1917 was undoubtedly influenced by the "democratic revolution in Russia", whose adherents constantly pointed to the need to adhere to the principle of self-determination for subject nationalities with the subsequent conclusion of the peace with no annexations and no indemnities. Bolshevik proposals at Brest Litovsk for the Central powers demanded this. In

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<sup>54</sup> Cornelia Bodea, Hugh Seton-Watson, *R. W. Seton-Watson și România, 1906-1920*, vol. I, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1988, p. 406.

<sup>55</sup>"The New Europe", 1919, 2 Oct.

addition, a radical peace movement spread among Triple Entente countries. As the contemporary American historian Trygve Throntveit notes in his seminal work, pressure in Britain culminated on December 28, when the Labour Party published a *Memorandum on War Aims* demanding an avowedly Wilsonian program, including a “supranational authority” comprising an international legislature, world court, and mediation council to settle “non-justiciable” disputes.

Moreover, it is worth remembering that in formulating US war aims, President Wilson himself could not ignore the views of the “left” socialist opposition in America. At the end of 1917, the leftist American magazine “The Masses” published the “Program requirements of The People’s Council of America”, which expressed the views of primarily socialist intellectuals. In particular, they insisted on the promulgation of a “concrete statement of America’s war aims” and proclaimed that future peace should be based on the principles of “no forcible annexations, no punitive indemnities, and free development for all nationalities.”<sup>56</sup> Moreover, one of the leaders of leftist thought at the time, Max Eastman criticised the government rather harshly, pointing out that modern America could not wage war for democracy when “industrial feudalism” prevailed at home. At the same time, 2% of the population owns 60% of the national wealth.<sup>57</sup> According to Walter Lippmann, the liberal “Federation of the World”, including the United States, should not be based on old principles. “We shall turn with fresh interests to our own tyrannies - to our Colorado mines, our autocratic steel industries, our sweatshops and our slums,” Lippmann concluded. “We shall call that man un-American and no patriot who prates of liberty in Europe and resists it at home.”<sup>58</sup>

Returning to the problems of Central Europe, it can be noted that Austria-Hungary had to prepare for severe territorial losses. It is no coincidence that Count Czernin wrote in one of the memorandums: “I am confident that we will reach an acceptable peace; something we will have to give to Italy, and, of course, we will get nothing for it. Then we will have to change the whole order of Austria-Hungary, according to the scheme outlined by the French, Federation Dannubienne, and it is not yet clear to me how the transformation against the will of the Hungarian and German populations will be carried out.” “So, I hope, the politician remarked, that we will come out of the war only with a bruise under our eye. However, the old times will never come back”.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> “The Masses”, Vol. IX, №11, Sept. 1917, p. 34.

<sup>57</sup> “The Masses”, Vol. IX, № 12, Oct. 1917, p. 14.

<sup>58</sup> Trygve Throntveit, *Power without victory...*, p. 239.

<sup>59</sup> Ottokar Czernin, *V dni mirovoy vojny. Memuary* [During World War. Memoirs], Moskva,

It should be noted, in this context, that various federalisation projects in the region were discussed. For example, the Balkan Confederation was mentioned. The left-wing British journalist Henry Brailsford wrote about this: "a Balkan Confederation which included Hungary would have become in the military sense a Great Power", and this will make possible the realisation of the ideal of the "Balkans for the Balkan peoples". However, he stressed that the project would be hampered by the attitude of Hungarians, who "think of the Balkan races as Europe thinks of Africa."<sup>60</sup> Unlike arrogant Hungarian politicians, the Americans and the British put forward liberal political projects. British politicians, for example, used their own experience of supporting "strong free nations" within the British dominions. As one of the authors of the League of Nations, Jan Christian Smuts, said in a speech to both Houses of Parliament in May 1917, we must reject the "idea of assimilation" and further ensure that our nations have the right "to develop freely on the principles of self-government". British Commonwealth of nations "does not stand for standardisation or denationalisation, but for the fuller, richer, and more varied life of all the nations comprised in it".<sup>61</sup>

Thus, Washington continued to support, and this was emphasised in the documents, the "movement toward federalism in Austria", which, if successful, would significantly weaken the dualistic system. Americans did not go beyond moderate tactics in the Austria-Hungarian question. This was evidenced, in particular, by the content of the X Point dedicated to Austria from the famous "Fourteen Points of Wilson". Astrid Hausmann, an Austrian researcher of US foreign policy from 1917 to 1919, noted that the formulation of Point X was "typically Wilsonian" - much is said, but nothing essential is mentioned again.<sup>62</sup>

In such a situation, according to another researcher, Steven Blum, the task of politicians was to "limit the national aspirations of each ethnic group as far as possible".<sup>63</sup> On this basis, all other ethno-territorial problems of Central and Eastern Europe were considered important, and such diplomatic tactics remained unchanged until the autumn of 1918. However, under new geopolitical conditions,

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Petrograd, Gosudarstvennoye izdatel'stvo, 1923, s. 238.

<sup>60</sup> "The New Republic", February 13, 1915.

<sup>61</sup> Jan Christiaan Smuts, *War-time speeches: a compilation of public utterances in Great Britain*, London, New York, Hodder and Stoughton, 1917, p. 33.

<sup>62</sup> Astrid Hausmann, *Die amerikanische Außenpolitik und die Entstehung der Österreichischen Republik von 1917-1919*, Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktor-Grades an der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Wien, 1972, s. 86.

<sup>63</sup> Steven Blum, *Walter Lippmann: Cosmopolitanism in the century of total war*, Ithaca, 1984, p. 50.

US diplomacy was forced to go on a “new read” of the Wilson’s Point X. An official note sent on October 18 to Austria-Hungary stated in particular that, from the day of the proclamation of Fourteen Points, extremely important events had taken place. The US government has recognised the “fair national demands” of Czechoslovakians and Yugoslavs. “Therefore, the president,” the document emphasised, “cannot consider” mere autonomy “for these peoples”.<sup>64</sup>

In general, the political tactics of the United States were actually twofold: knowing that other developments of events in Washington were possible, they partially supported the national movements of Czechoslovakians and Yugoslavs aimed at disintegrating the Habsburg monarchy.

On October 16, 1918, in a confidential conversation with the head of the British Secret Service in the United States, William Wiseman, President Wilson noted a change in the official position on Austria-Hungary; two new facts had arisen, which modified the declaration as regards Austria. “These were the recognition of the Czech-Slovaks and the Jugo-Slavs. He would support their full claims”. Wiseman remarked that the Austrian government might send representatives to the Peace Conference claiming to speak on behalf of the various nationalities of their Empire. The President replied very promptly: “We have already recognised Masaryk, Dmowski, and their groups, and we cannot listen to anyone else.”<sup>65</sup> Although, as later noted by the renowned expert on Austria-Hungarian affairs, Robert Kann, the most optimal solution for the West at the end of the war could be the creation of a “great Eastern European Federation” in the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>66</sup>

However, when discussing the impact of President Wilson’s program after the war, one may agree with Roger Ransom, a researcher at the University of California. He rightly points out that, looking back on the speech a century later, one can see how much his ideas were ahead of his time. Neither the allied leaders nor those of the Central Powers paid much attention to the Fourteen Points at the time of the speech, and they were hardly eager to accept all of Wilson’s suggestions. As it turned out, Wilson himself mismanaged the attempt to incorporate some of his principles into the post-war settlements. An inevitable failure

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<sup>64</sup> Arthur S. Link (ed.), *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Princeton, N. J., vol. 51. Sept. 14 – Nov. 8, 1918, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1986, p. 383.

<sup>65</sup> Wilton B. Fowler, *British-American Relations, 1917-1918: The Role of Sir William Wiseman*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1969, p. 285.

<sup>66</sup> Robert Kann, *The Habsburg empire. A study in Integration and Disintegration*, New York., 1973, p. 166.

of the policy "to do so was underscored by the refusal of his own countrymen to allow the United States to join a "League of Nations" in 1920".

Nonetheless, the Fourteen Points' exceptional spirit is worth recognising, as it contributed to the victory of unrestrained human nature in the terrible war of the early twentieth century. Ultimately, it was a war of the free world for the individual freedom of every person. The famous British philosopher Bertrand Russell wrote about this in a letter to the liberal American magazine "The Masses". He hoped that a "new sort, men who value the liberty of mind more than the liberty of body" would gradually be formed after the war. In general, he looked for a better future in the United States, where "individuals enjoyed the highest degree of political liberty" than in Europe. He concluded that they believed "in your President, but we are aware of the terrible forces against which he has to contend".<sup>67</sup>

As evidenced by the textual analysis of Wilson's Fourteen Points program and contemporary comments from other diplomatic sources – memoranda, diaries and memoirs of contemporaries, as well as press material of the time, first, the experts closely monitored the attitudes of Central European politicians and scientists from the Entente countries, most notably the United Kingdom and France while preparing the President's January speech to Congress. Secondly, most diplomats and interested experts recognised that the published version of the text of the Points, notably Point X, concerning the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was not monosemantic in interpretation. Third, the content analysis of the document as a whole and specifically of the phrasing of Point X showed that, throughout the year, US diplomacy had repeatedly interpreted its individual positions differently until the autumn of 1918.

President Wilson outlined only the indirect US military and political aims in his speech on the post-war peace program at the war's end. Another presidential address to Congress (February 11, 1918) said explicitly that such declarations signify nothing more than the earlier "sketch of principles" for America. Following that, the program document was regularly corrected. The future of the Habsburg monarchy was the fundamental topic of Wilson's points regarding Eastern Europe. Hugo Grotius argued in his time on the need for intermediate, indirect goals in war because that is how politicians' true motivations are revealed.

Concerning Austro-Hungary, President Wilson had two leitmotifs in 1917-1918: give peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire autonomy and keep it as much as possible as a subject of international law on war. Furthermore, many analysts and politicians saw internal reform as an important direction for the

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<sup>67</sup> "The Masses", Vol. IX, No. 9, July 17, 1917, p. 5.

Empire's future transformation. However, Americans frequently cited the excellent example of Switzerland, where the cohabitation of three ethnicities was founded on free and federal democracy. All this aligns with the US foreign policy strategy in the Danube basin when the war revealed the interdependence and national pluralism of the twentieth century.

Thus, American diplomatic experience and propaganda efforts during the Great War again prove that one must always consider the most unpredictable and unexpected scenarios at crucial moments so as not to be caught up in the historical picture behind which Clio, the ancient muse, ironically smiles.

### CONCLUSIONS

The end of World War I brought a new geopolitical configuration, first of all, for the Central and Eastern European region. The program of peace presented to Congress by President Woodrow Wilson in January 1918 was partially implemented, particularly in terms of the political self-determination of nation-states that emerged in the region after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy or had been territorially expanded. However, the United States, like the Entente states, failed to transform some of the region's "chaos" of national ambitions into the Danube Federation, following the example of Switzerland.

The situation in 2018-2022 is comparable to the configuration that emerged in the world after the Great War. It has forced states of all sizes to seek new global and regional challenges. After all, just as it was in those times, traditional players are also getting weaker nowadays, with some completely living in the past, and new ones refusing to play by the old rules. Conflict growth impedes cooperation in accomplishing common goals and international development objectives. This is especially dangerous in light of the present US administration's preference for foreign policy sovereignty over the likely restructuring of the liberal international order at the turn of the twenty-first century in response to the "paradox of globalisation."

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