WOODROW WILSON'S IDEAS AND THE ROMANIAN INTELLECTUALS FROM TRANSYLVANIA AND BANAT

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Abstract. The 14-point declaration of the American president had a strong impact on the oppressed peoples of the old dualist monarchy, leading to profound changes on the map of Europe. Starting from Woodrow Wilson's statements, the leaders of the oppressed peoples of Austria-Hungary joined together and started to fight for national rights, even if the Central Powers Bloc still did not suffer strong defeats at the front. In the case of Romanians from the dualist monarchy, young people were at the front, fighting in the imperial army, while the intellectuals who stayed at home took over the Wilsonian ideas and asserted themselves as their supporters, fighting for the Romanian cause. In this context, several Romanian delegations were active in the major diplomatic centers and pleaded for the separation of the territories inhabited by Romanians from Austria-Hungary, starting from the ideas enunciated by the American president in January 1918. In the fall of 1918, with the end of the war, the new ideas were put into practice. It is the moment when the Romanian leaders also appealed to the Wilsonian ideas so that the newly created state would be recognized by the great powers, which was achieved in the years that followed.

Keywords: Romanians, President, borders, principles, dualism, people

The events that took place in Europe at the beginning of 1918 also affected the situation of the Romanians. *The Fourteen Points* declaration of American President Woodrow Wilson on January 8, 1918, made in front of Congress, was a presentation of "America's war aims"¹, but also the expression of the struggle that was being waged for "justice and peace, for a new international order and a favorable international climate"². Through this statement, the president would affirm "America's role as a peacemaker of the world"³. Through these statements, the president of the White House achieved a "radical distancing from the precepts and experience of the old world", his ideas being based on the American belief about the "essentially peaceful human nature", which is capable of ensuring "the harmony of the world"⁴. The American leader was the one who considered that "the application of the principle of

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self-determination will solve the desires of the populations that claimed the separation from the Austro-Hungarian Empire"⁵, and then the values of the democratic world "proper to the American society which will lead to the harmonization of the interests of the majority and the ethnic minority in the new states, a necessary condition for their integration into a world order based on the acceptance of these values"⁶ will be adopted. The American president was a supporter of autonomy because he considered that "it was not self-determination that had triggered wars, but precisely its absence"⁷. Through what he said, the American president asserted himself as a supporter of the oppressed peoples of Austria-Hungary, stating that they must enjoy an autonomous development and become nations, and that the borders of Austria-Hungary should be drawn taking into account the principle of self-determination. *The Fourteen Points* declaration of President Wilson hastened the process of disintegration of Austria-Hungary and contributed to the formation of a solidarity of the non-Hungarian peoples of the empire who were fighting for their national rights. Romanian politicians in Hungary considered Wilson's message to be "messianic".

The Wilsonian principles were considered by some of the political leaders in the Entente camp to be utopian ideas, but which served some political aspirations. In this sense, the ironic statement of French Prime Minister George Clémenceau is significant: "God was content to give the Ten Commandments. Wilson gives us fourteen"8. The statements of the American leader contained ideas that contradicted the principles of European diplomacy, but they were accepted because the Entente states greatly needed the support of the United States in order to win the war. The ideas of the American leader, even if they were not well received by the great powers in the Entente camp, had a strong echo among the intellectuals of Central Europe, an area heavily affected by the conflict. The principle of self-determination, now also linked to the name of the American president, was often mentioned by the Romanian elite in Transylvania in articles, documents and mass gatherings organized in the fall of 1918.

The approval of Wilsonian ideas as principles of international law gave a real impetus to the national emancipation movement of the oppressed peoples of Austria-Hungary. It contributed to a solidarity of the political leaders of Central Europe, a fact demonstrated by the organization in Rome of the Congress of the oppressed nations of Austria-Hungary on March 27/April 9, 1918. On this occasion, the representatives of the oppressed nations of the dualist monarchy, Romanians, Serbs, Croats, Poles, Czechs and Slovaks, starting from Wilsonian principles, decided to implement the idea of self-determination. Through these decisions, the oppressed peoples of the old monarchy expressed their right to establish their national state or to complete it, in order to achieve their full political and economic independence. The leaders of the oppressed peoples meeting in Rome also decided that they must sometimes act together in order to gain their freedom, a first step in this direction being the consideration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy as a fundamental obstacle to the realization of their national aspirations and rights9. In Rome, the Romanians were represented by Dumitru Drăghicescu, Gheorghe Mironescu and Transylvanian Simion Mândrescu. They are the ones who presented both the problems faced by Romania after Russia's exit from the war, as well as the problems of the Romanians from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Regarding the situation of the Romanians in the monarchy, the Romanian intellectuals declared that they do not want the "suppression of the Habsburg monarchy", but rather that it be "reduced to its just proportions". This would be an "amicable solution capable of ensuring lasting peace" 10.

The decisions adopted in Rome by the representatives of the oppressed nations also enjoyed the support of the great powers of the Entente bloc. Clémenceau soon approved the Rome resolution "affirming the right of every nation to constitute itself into an independent state" while the American government drafted *The Memorandum on the Policy of the United States Towards the Nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire*, which recognized the need for the demise of Austria-Hungary and the emergence of nation-states in Central Europe.

As early as January 1918, the Wilsonian ideas became known to the leaders of the Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Most of them received them with hope and took them over, considering that through what the American president stated, a chance is offered to Romanians, through which the problems in Central Europe and the differences between Romanians and Hungarians could be solved. At the same time, other intellectuals trained in the Germanophile spirit were more skeptical and did not believe in what the American president stated. Among them we mention the university professor from Cernăuți Sextil Puşcariu, who on January 27, 1918 noted in his diary that through what he said the American president had a "remarkable speech both in form and content"12, being the "conciliator" of the moment, but also the one who manifests the desire to be among the winners. The Romanian intellectual notes the way in which Wilson wanted to restore peace, which will have to be guarded "through the participation of all". Sextil Puscariu is distrustful of the new world organization plan proposed by the American leader, who also launched the idea of disarmament, considering that in this way peace could be guaranteed and that "the distinctions between large states with millions of soldiers and small states eternally threatened would no longer exist", and on the "new map of the world, there should no longer be dominated and subjugated peoples" and every citizen should have the opportunity to choose the state where he wants to live. After analyzing the American president's statements, Sextil Puşcariu came to consider him an "idealist professor", who presented utopian proposals: "these ideas are too beautiful not to be utopian". For the Romanian intellectual, the goal of the American president is to be among the great winners who will decide the future of the world. Puşcariu emphasizes that the president stated that "America is ready to initiate such a peace, but it is ready to prevent with its forces a peace that would be dictated by the victor and would mean a new subjugation of the vanquished"13.

During 1918, Sextil Puşcariu's ideas became more nuanced, the Transylvanian intellectual accepting the important role that belonged to the American president. On August 18, 1918, Puşcariu, having arrived in Cernăuţi, noted in his notes that he was worried about the position acquired by America, because "every day it proves to be an increasingly formidable power, with an unsurpassed organization, with perfect technical means, as a reservoir of people not dried up". Taking into account these findings, he claimed that "the opinion of those who maintain that Wilson will be the one to dictate peace becomes more and more probable" 14.

Most of the Romanian intelligentsia took over the Wilsonian ideas and worked so that they could also be implemented in the case of the Romanians in the dualistic monarchy. The first followers of the new ideas were the Romanian intellectuals who emigrated from Banat and Transylvania who were active in France and the United States. Among them we mention Traian Vuia, who was settled in Paris, or Vasile Stoica and Vasile Lucaciu, who arrived in the United States. The Romanian intellectuals in the French capital were even supported by the American president W. Wilson, who "showed his adherence to the national aspirations of the Romanians". On May 10/23, Romanian politicians from Paris protested against the conclusion of the peace in Bucharest and considered that the conditions imposed on Romania denied Romania's "political and economic independence".

Among the Romanian intellectuals from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy who were active in Paris, Traian Vuia stood out as an important follower of Wilsonian principles. Having legal studies, he believed that through what the American president stated, he wanted a true peace, which would be based on the respect of the rights of all peoples. The ideas stated by Wilson were taken up and debated in several articles published by the Romanian diplomat in Paris in the publication La Transylvanie. Through these articles, Vuia contributed to French diplomacy's awareness of the problems faced by the Romanians in the dualist monarchy. In the article entitled "The Problem of Austria-Hungary", the Romanian diplomat analyzes the situation in this empire based on the statement of the American president, according to which the political class there is "incapable of adopting the mentality of civilized peoples" 15. Working in the French diplomatic environment and being a good connoisseur of international law, in November 1918 Traian Vuia again analyzes the Wilsonian ideas, to show how the union should be achieved. The diplomat shows that there must be a union, not an annexation, he emphasizes that the Wilsonian principles are respected through the union, because the union is a bilateral act, desired both by the Romanians from the Old Kingdom and by those from the dualist monarchy, while the annexation it is an imposed, unilateral act, which is not based on Wilsonian principles, and can be challenged by other states at any time. Against the background of the events of the fall of 1918, the Romanian diplomat shows that the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy began with Wilson's declaration of January 1918, because through what he said the peoples of the former monarchy "will have to judge which action of the Austro-Hungarian government will satisfy their aspirations about their own rights and about their destiny as members of the families of nations"16. In this context, Traian Vuia opines that starting from the statements of the American president, the union of Romanians can be done, a first step being "declaring the independence of the subjugated Romanian regions"17. The moment is considered by Vuia as a stage of "transition", which is necessary, because President Wilson does not accept the annexation of territories, but only the union "by free consent". He also shows that the Wilsonian principles do not admit the plebiscite either, because it consists in "consulting the will of a country under the supervision of the existing authorities", so that a falsification of the truth could be reached, as a result of the pressures exerted by the state authorities who still hold the power. In order to avoid this situation, the Romanian diplomat calls for the proclamation of the independence of the Romanian nation, so that "the existing authorities lose their power, the country appoints its own authorities and expresses its will under the control of the authorities it has chosen" On December 15, 1918, Vuia published in Paris an article with the suggestive title "Romanian National Unity", where he saluted the National Committee of the Romanians from Transylvania, Banat, Crişana and Maramureş for "the thoughtful way in which it solved the problem of the national unity of the Romanians according to the principles of the great Wilson, principles adopted by the civilized world", forcing the Hungarian authorities to recognize the Romanians' right to "freedom and independence, under a Romanian national government" On the sound of the support of the Romanians' right to "freedom and independence, under a Romanian national government" On the support of the support of the Romanians of the Romanians' right to the support of the Romanian of the Romanian of the Romanian of the Romanian of the Romanians' right to "freedom and independence, under a Romanian national government" On the Romanian of the Rom

At the same time, Vasile Stoica and Vasile Lucaciu were active in America, making the Romanian problem known to the American world, as well as the abuses of Hungarian politicians. The Greek-Catholic priest Vasile Lucaciu was received on July 2, 1918 at the White House by the Secretary of State Robert Lansing, on which occasion he presented the purpose of his mission, claiming that after the war "Romania hopes to achieve the union of all Romanians, including those from Transylvania, Banat, Bucovina, with the Motherland, forming Greater Romania" In response, Robert Lansing declared that the United States will give all support for the achievement of the national unity of the Romanians. Vasile Lucaciu also sent several telegrams to American President Wilson. In one of these telegrams, Vasile Lucaciu estimated that there will be peace in Europe only when "the subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the Subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the Subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the Subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the Subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the Subjugated peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the Subjugated Peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the Subjugated Peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only when "the Subjugated Peoples of Austria-Hungary are free" Europe only

The teacher and publicist Vasile Stoica was active on American soil in 1917 and 1918, laying the foundations of the Romanian National League. He fought for the realization of Wilsonian ideas, being the one who, after the signing of the Bucharest peace between Romania and the Central Powers, affirmed that Romania has the right to the Romanian provinces, as a result of the "unmoved will of their inhabitants, of the four million Romanians" who wish to be "freed from Hungarian and German rule and united with the Romanian Kingdom"²². The Transylvanian intellectual argued the above through the activity of the Romanian soldiers who deserted from the Austro-Hungarian army and laid the foundations of legions of volunteers who fought alongside the Entente troops. In the United States, Vasile Stoica also collaborated with the representatives of other oppressed peoples from Austria-Hungary, and on September 20, 1918, he was received in audience by the American president, who claimed that he agreed with the "satisfaction of national aspirations", considering that following the end of the war, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy "could no longer stand"²³.

The adoption of Wilsonian principles by most of the Romanian elite in the dualist monarchy during 1918 is proof of its interest in the events in the great capitals of the world and its desire to act in the spirit of the times. In this context, "Ştefan Cicio-Pop in turn together with Vasile Goldiş, Dr.Ioan Suciu, Dr.Aurel Lazăr, synchronized the internal actions with these great international actions that they took into account in all their speeches and in the measures taken in that time internally in Hungary"²⁴. According to the assessments of Ştefan Cicio-Pop, a member of the Hungarian Parliament, in the fall of 1918 the process of breaking up the dualist monarchy was increasingly evident for the Romanians, especially following the steps

taken by the Romanians in the United States and the "statement of President Wilson made in the audience from September 20, 1918 to Vasile Stoica"²⁵.

The way in which the Romanian politicians took over these principles is clearly expressed by Vasile Goldiş, who in September 1918 declared for the Arad newspaper *AradiHirlap*: "the Romanians do not want to rule over other peoples, but they will not tolerate another people ruling over them either"²⁶. Vasile Goldiş opined that the time has passed when a minority that enjoys some privileges can dominate millions of citizens who cannot enjoy their rights. The Arad politician believed that all citizens must have the same rights and that after the war the world must be reorganized so that power rests with the majority.

In the fall of 1918, "the Romanian elite in Transylvania wanted to achieve the separation of Transylvania from Hungary in a legal and democratic way"27, an important role being played by the Wilsonian ideas, based on which different institutions and structures were established, which helped the Romanians to achieve the Great Union. It was the period when the leaders of the Romanians who wanted the total separation of Transylvania from Hungary manifested a spirit of "tolerance and understanding with other ethnicities"28. In this sense they evoked the name of the American president and acted in the spirit of Wilsonian ideas. On October 12, 1918, the Oradea meeting took place, where the situation of Romanians in the dualist monarchy was discussed and it was decided to form a national committee and a commission composed of six members: Aurel Lazăr, Teodor Mihali, Ștefan Cicio-Pop Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, Vasile Goldis, Aurel Vlad. They are the ones who developed the "Declaration of Oradea". The document is based on a careful analysis of Wilsonian principles, stating that "we are a nation and not some nationality"29. The "Declaration of Oradea", considered the declaration of independence of the Romanian nation from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, was the work of the committee of the Romanian National Party, considered the political body of the Romanian nation in Hungary. It is a synthesis of Wilsonian ideas, through which Romanian politicians demand respect for the principle of self-determination, which for Romanians means the natural right for each nation to be able to decide its own and free destiny. It was considered that the time had come for the Romanian nation in Transylvania to be among the free nations, and it was requested that the leaders of the Romanians have the right to participate in the peace congress, in order to "defend the interests of the Romanian nation in Transylvania and Hungary".

The declaration was entrusted to Alexandru Vaida-Voevod to be read in the Hungarian Parliament, on which occasion the Transylvanian politician declared that the end of the war brought "the triumph of the great Wilsonian principle according to which all nations are equal. This is the world's greatest event since the advent of Christianity"³⁰. Vaida-Voevod would also state that in the fall of 1918 the Romanians acted in the spirit of Wilsonian ideas and "interpreted Wilson's self-determination through facts"³¹, which meant that in the peace negotiations that followed the Great Union was recognized and not destroyed by "Hungarian behind-the-scenes intrigues, allies of Hungarian magnates and [of] high priests, with the protection of some aristocratic Catholic and Jewish families, as well as some Freemasons"³². Elaborated by the Romanian political elite from Transylvania based on Wilsonian principles, the

"Declaration of Oradea" had a strong echo in the era, reaching the pages of the American newspaper *The New York Times* on October 19, 1918, where it is mentioned that in the Hungarian Parliament the deputy Vaida "made an impassioned eulogy of the principles enunciated by President Wilson which establish a complete equality between great and small nations." After the reading of the statement in the Hungarian Parliament, negotiations between the leaders of the Romanian National Party and those of the Social Democratic Party began in Budapest. As a result, on October 30, 1918, the Central Romanian National Council was formed, composed of six members of the Romanian National Party and six members of the Romanian Social-Democratic Party.

The activities organized by the Central Romanian National Council were in the spirit of Wilsonian ideas, which made the Great Union possible. In November 1918, Vasile Goldiş, against the background of the events in Europe, analyzed the Wilsonian principles and showed in the press of the time that Romania has claims on the "Romanian linguistic territory in Hungary". He stated that in the case of drawing new borders, the Wilsonian principles must be respected and those who speak one language must form a state, and "Transylvania is getting rid of Hungary". He opined that where Romanians are in the majority, they must have the right to govern themselves. He also stated that the leaders of the Romanians are followers of democratic values, and in the case of the Saxons and Szeklers, who are the majority in some areas of Transylvania, there will be "full autonomy, schools, administration, judges with their mother tongue, the free development of their cultural establishments, no one will interfere in their internal affairs, in the true sense of Wilson's principles"³⁴.

In November 1918, the Arad negotiations were also organized between the representatives of the Central Romanian National Council and those of the Hungarian government. The discussions were also held in the spirit of Wilsonian ideas, the Romanian leaders asking for the administration to be taken over by the Romanians in the territories where they were the majority. It was about 23 counties, to which were added some predominantly Romanian localities from three other counties. The nonacceptance of these demands led Vasile Goldiş to state that the proposals made by the Hungarian delegation "infringe the right of the Romanian nation to decide its own fate"35. Aurel Vlad disputed the demographic data presented by the Hungarian delegation and stated that Wilson's principles must be recognized and put into practice, which were also considered valid in the case of the Hungarian enclaves that were to remain on the territory of the new Romanian state. An important role went to Iuliu Maniu, who demonstrated through his speech that the Hungarian proposals cannot be accepted because they do not recognize the sovereignty of the Romanians, being in contradiction with "the principle of nationalities on the basis of which the Romanians claimed the right to their unitary national state"36. Iuliu Maniu concluded that the will of the Romanian nation is consistent with Wilsonian principles and that the rights of minorities will be respected in the new state, stating: "we do not want to turn from the oppressed into the oppressors"37. Iuliu Maniu criticized the position of the Hungarian political class, which was not willing to really accept the Wilsonian principles. The position of the Romanian leaders, based on Wilsonian ideas, but also

the attitude of the Hungarian delegation, made the Arad negotiations an important step towards the dissolution of the dualist monarchy and the affirmation of national states.

After these negotiations, the leadership of the C.R.N.C. used Wilsonian ideas to achieve the Great Union so that it would be recognized by the great powers and the Hungarian government would not be able to deny it. The leaders of the C.R.N.C. appealed to the Wilsonian principles, because they wanted the separation of Transylvania from Hungary to be achieved "through peaceful means" ³⁸.

In this context, the leadership of the C.R.N.C. published the manifesto Către popoarele lumii (To the peoples of the world), a document signed by Ştefan Cicio-Pop, through which Romanian politicians announce the separation of Transylvania from Hungary. The document states that "the Romanian nation from Hungary and Transylvania, held for centuries in physical and mental slavery by the ruling class of the Hungarian people, now freed from slavery through the brilliant victory of arms (...) declared its will to establish itself in free independent state to be able to validate its forces unlimitedly in the service of culture and human freedom"39. The document was translated into several languages so that the great powers understood that the Hungarian government did not recognize the Romanians' right to self-determination announced by the American president in January 1918. Romanian politicians showed the world that "the Romanian nation from Hungary and Transylvania does not want to rule over other Gentiles", because it is a follower of democratic values and wants to ensure equal rights for all citizens. The manifesto had a great impact in Europe, being commented on in the press of the time. As a result of the publication of the manifesto, the great powers showed their sympathy towards the Romanian cause, which made the international political opinion favorable to the Great Union at the time of the convening of the Alba Iulia Assembly.

The principles enunciated by the American president were also taken over by the leadership of the Church. The Orthodox vicar of Oradea, Roman Ciorogariu, was strongly influenced by Wilsonian principles and presented the leader of the White House as a messianic figure, considering him as "the most enlightened man in the world and the best friend of oppressed peoples". Roman Ciorogariu is the one who in the fall of 1918 sent several circulars to priests, evoking the personality of the American leader. Through the circular of October 23/November 5 addressed to the priests and teachers under his jurisdiction, he informs them that the armistice has been concluded and negotiations will follow which will be based on the principles of "equal justice of all nations enumerated by the great apostle of the freedom of peoples, Wilson"40. The vicar of Oradea presents Wilson as the one who imposed a new order in the world, through which ties can be established between peoples in order to avoid war. In Alba Iulia, another representative of the Orthodox Church, Miron Cristea, bishop of Caransebes, recalled in his speech, held on the Field of Horea in front of the gathered people, the sufferings caused by the war, but also the "savior commandment from the message of the mighty Messiah-Wilson", through which "All the people must have the freedom to be masters of themselves to shape their own future and destiny"41. Another prelate, the bishop of Arad Ioan I. Papp, also a witness of the Great Union, would issue a circular informing his faithful of the

decision taken at Alba Iulia, also evoking the personality of "the enlightened man Wilson".

The text of the convocation of the Great National Assembly from Alba Iulia bears the imprint of Wilsonian ideas. The leadership of C.R.N.C. states that the time has come when Romanians can live "alongside the other nations of the world, free and independent", and the Romanian nation in Hungary has "the right to say its decisive word on its fate and this word will be respected by the whole world" Referring to what was to be decided in Alba Iulia, Vasile Goldiş wrote in the Românul newspaper on November 30, 1918 that "We strictly adhere to the principles established by Wilson and we want in the broadest sense of the word to introduce all democratic rights. In Bucharest will be the Parliament of all, the parliament of all the Romanian provinces".

The personality of the American president was also evoked at Alba Iulia, and his principles were used as "arguments in the speeches delivered at Alba Iulia"⁴³. According to the account of Laurențiu Oanea, a witness to the events, in the opening speech of the National Assembly, Ştefan Cicio-Pop stated: "Wilson came to make new laws for the peoples. From Wilson's voice we heard for the first time the word liberation for the oppressed peoples"⁴⁴. Wilson was also mentioned by Vasile Goldiş, who called the leader of the White House "apostle", being the one who fought for the freedom of nations, as "thus, between equal rights and conditions, that great union of peoples that will be called to represent a higher conception on the scale of civilization and to increase human happiness on earth may be completed"⁴⁵.

Wilsonian ideas can also be found in the "content and letter of the Solemn Declaration of Union with Romania" 46 adopted on December 1, 1918 in Alba-Iulia. The document supports the right of Romanians to unite with Romania, but requests the authorities from Bucharest to respect the rights of neighboring peoples in the new state, noting that each people shall have the right to "instruct, judge, and administer in its own language by individuals of its own bosom" 47. The introduction of universal suffrage and proportional representation in legislative forums is also mentioned. The document represents the birth certificate of Greater Romania and is based on the right of nations to self-determination. The text of the resolution, written in the Wilsonian spirit, is the expression of the will of the majority, but also a proof that the leaders of the Romanians in the dualist monarchy acted in "concordance with the principles recognized and applied by the great powers led by the USA" 48. Through the decisions taken in Alba Iulia, the foundations were laid for a democratic national state in which the rights and freedoms of all citizens were ensured.

The realization of the Great Union based on Wilsonian principles made the figure of the American president represent for the Romanian intelligentsia from the former dualist monarchy "the perfect modern example of the intellectual in the political world"⁴⁹. This can also be seen in the press of that period. In December 1918, on the occasion of the start of the preliminaries of peace, the publicist Ion Clopoţel wrote two articles in the newspaper *Românul* from Arad in which he glorified the personality of the American president, who was called the "herald of freedom and justice" and "prophet of new times"⁵⁰. For the Transylvanian intellectual, Wilson was "the master of the whole world", and his views had to be taken into account by

"representatives of all European nations". Clopotel also shows that the Romanian nation has "full confidence" in the person of the American president, because "Wilson's hard word will be for the fulfillment of the Romanian ideal"⁵¹. Clopotel recalls that he was present at the Great Assembly in Alba Iulia, where more than 100,000 Romanians gathered and shouted "Long live Wilson".

The new states that appeared in 1918 as a result of the collapse of the dualist monarchy are the result of the realization of the principle of self-determination enunciated by the American president. The principle then formed the basis of the peace negotiations, at which point the new borders were drawn, which in part still exist today. Referring to the importance of Wilsonian principles, the American historian Robert O. Paxton stated that to deny the emergence of new states in Central Europe is to deny the principle of national self-determination. By applying Wilsonian principles to the oppressed peoples of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, an was made to "detente and democratize the international attempt atmosphere"52. Unfortunately, in Central Europe, the implementation of the Wilsonian principles also led to the formation of ethnic enclaves, which in the interwar period requested various rights and refused to integrate into the state of which they were a part, contributing to the birth of conflicts.

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