

The Paris Peace
Conference
(1919-1920)
and Its Aftermath

The Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920) and Its Aftermath:

*Settlements, Problems
and Perceptions*

Edited by

Sorin Arhire and Tudor Roşu

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Cover Image: Sturdza Palace (photo taken around 1930) which was the headquarters of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1919-1920. Source: Diplomatic Archives of Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bucharest.

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INTRODUCTION

SORIN ARHIRE AND TUDOR ROȘU

This volume of studies comes into being as a result of the international conference *Treaties of the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920)*, an academic event which brought together 28 participants from 11 countries. This symposium, held in Alba Iulia between 3 and 7 June 2018 by the Alba Iulia National Union Museum and the University of Alba Iulia with the financial support of the Alba County Council, proved to be a great opportunity to analyse the multiple aspects of the Paris Peace Conference almost 100 years after its proceedings.

Unlike the Vienna Peace Congress after the Napoleonic wars, the conference in the French capital did not include the states that had been defeated in the First World War, but only the representatives of the great victorious powers and those of the allied states. In consequence, there were 27 delegations amongst which the most important ones were undoubtedly the American, British and French delegations. The Supreme Council, made up of the heads of government of Great Britain, France and Italy plus the President of the United States of America, was the supreme authority of this conference. There was also the Council of Five, which was simply the Supreme Council plus Japan's head of government, and the Council of Ten, which was actually the Council of Five plus their foreign affairs ministers. There were a total of 58 committees, most of them dealing with territorial issues and no less than 1646 conference meetings.

In spite of the large number of councils, committees and sections, the decisive role in all decisions was held by the representatives of the United States of America, Great Britain and France, through President Woodrow Wilson, Prime Minister David Lloyd George and Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau respectively. Five treaties were signed, one between each of the defeated states, on the one hand, and the other 27 participating states, on the other hand; of all these, the one signed in Versailles on 28 June 1919 was the most important. The defeated states did not attend the drawing-up of the treaties and no Russian delegation was invited as it was erroneously believed that peace in Europe was easier to achieve without Russia's presence at the negotiation table.

The Fourteen Points, drawn up by Woodrow Wilson as early as January 1918, were the basis for the conference, and the collective security principle was the most important document published in early 1918. Later on, point X – whereby the peoples of Austro-Hungary were proposed “the freest opportunity to autonomous development” which implicitly meant the continuation of the existence of the empire after the end of the First World War – evolved into the self-determination principle. Collective security was enforced through the League of Nations, an entirely new organisation set up in Geneva and destined to be an institution where all litigations occurring between states were to be settled peacefully. The application of the second principle led to the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, of the Second Reich and even of the Ottoman Empire, though Turkey was only proclaimed a republic in 1923. Following the dismemberment of these empires, national states emerged in Central and Eastern Europe; some of them were reappearing on the map after long periods of absence, like Poland, some had already existed but were considerably enlarged in terms of territorial area, and here Romania is the best example, and others, such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, were being brought into existence for the first time. The defeated states were punished, the borders also being drawn to their disadvantage, with Germany and Hungary suffering the greatest injustices. Although promised at the beginning of the conference, a “peace without winners and losers” did not materialise. On the contrary, through their provisions the five treaties imposed upon the defeated states conditions that were much too harsh for them to accept. The application of the self-determination principle did not lead to the creation of ethnically homogeneous states, as they had hoped, but rather triggered the existence of almost as many national minorities as before the First World War, with the difference that they were now spread across the territories of several states. “The German issue” had not been solved either; one may even say it had grown more acute as a direct consequence of the proceedings, considering that the Germans were thereafter talking about having been presented with a *Diktat* in Versailles.

The members of the delegations who had come to the Paris Peace Conference honestly thought they had ended all wars, but in reality Europe was just two decades away from a new world war that was to be even more destructive than that of 1914 to 1918. The mistakes made in Paris in 1919 and 1920 were paid for through the outbreak of the Second World War and through the war in former Yugoslavia during the 1990s which, with its mass executions and ethnic cleansing, brought us once again all too close to the horrors committed in Europe in the early 1940s.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ROMANIAN AMERICANS AND THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE: THE TRIANON TREATY (4 JUNE 1920)

CONSTANTIN I. STAN AND MĂDĂLINA OPREA

The Paris Peace Conference began on 18 January 1919. The conference board was headed by its president, the French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, with Vice-Presidents Robert Lansing (the US Secretary of State), David Lloyd George (the British Prime Minister), Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (the Italian Prime Minister), and the former Japanese Prime Minister, Saionji Kinmochi. In a comment on the representation of the participating states, G. Clemenceau highlighted in his memoirs that the new international forum was

[...] an assembly of various characters who one could say represented all continents of the planet, all infused with the ideology of the nations' right to self-government, in an orderly fashion, that of a representational form of government, that, despite all its flaws, will remain nonetheless an outcome superior to that of conquering violence.¹

The core leading body of the Peace Conference was the Council of Ten. It included representatives from France, Britain, Italy, the United States of America and Japan – two from each country. These five major winning powers held the key roles. The principles formulated by President Woodrow Wilson in the Fourteen Points were not applied. Underlining this, Nicolae Iorga writes in his memoirs:

¹ Georges Clemenceau, *Măreția și amărăciunile unei victorii (Grandeurs et misères d'une victoire)*. *Memorii*, n.t. [The Greatness and Bitterness of a Victory: Memoirs] (Bucharest: "Cartea Românească" Publishing House, 1930), 130.

From its very start, the Conference, then the four, was unapproachable. The small ones were spared no offence. They were communicated the decisions several hours before, with no right of appeal whatsoever, and their duty was to sign. Brătianu could barely obtain in time the removal of the clauses from the treaty with Austria. Not once were Vesnić, Trumbić and Beneš attacked on the subject of the Hungarian Bolshevism [...]. We ourselves were relatively favoured. Kindness and decency should have left out such tyrannical actions. Foch himself was unaware of the content of the treaty with Germany. The map of our western borders was shown only in pieces.²

Beyond a series of minor exaggerations by Nicolae Iorga, we catch a glimpse of the ruthless reality, i.e., small states with limited economic and political influence, though themselves winners, did not find themselves on an equal footing with the Entente. The participating countries were divided into large states with significant interests and small states with minor ones. The hope that secretive diplomacy would be repudiated and that there would be no discrimination among the participants would live on among the small and medium states taking part in the Paris Peace Conference.³

The Romanian delegation was headed by Ion I. C. Brătianu, the President of the Council of Ministers, and Nicolae Mișu, the Romanian Plenipotentiary Minister in London. They were accompanied by counsellors and experts: historians, geographers, diplomats, economists, and others. Notably these included Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, Constantin Crișan, Constantin Damian, Caius Brediceanu and Alexandru Lapedatu. Captain Vasile Stoica arrived in Paris on 5 March 1919, having travelled from the USA. He wrote to Nicolae Iorga on the same day, saying:

In America, I have done everything that was humanly possible for the best interests of our cause, especially during the painful days that followed the peace treaty in Bucharest. I was on my own, far from the government and everyone else, with no help, no nothing. I had to create everything from nothing. But I succeeded [...]. Now I am in Paris, where I was summoned by Ion I. C. Brătianu. I am in charge of the liaison between our legation and the American one.⁴

² Nicolae Iorga, *Memorii* [Memoirs], vol. II (Bucharest: Ciornei National Publishing House, n.yr), 272–273.

³ Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, *România și sistemul tratatelor de pace de la Paris (1919–1923)* [Romania and the System of the Paris Peace Treaties] (Jassy: European Institute, 1993), 15–16.

⁴ Correspondence Nicolae Iorga, vol. 282/1919, fol. 244, Romanian Academy Library, Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books.

In a study dated 15 January 1937, Vasile Stoica says that in May 1919,

[When] I was serving as special liaison officer between the late Ion. I. C. Brătianu and the English and American delegations, I emphasised in a long discussion and later in a memo sent to the late Ion I. C. Brătianu, who at the time was Prime Minister and head of our delegation to the Peace Conference, the need for a thorough organisation of propaganda, indicating the manner this could be achieved. The great statesman recognised its usefulness, yet not the need for such an organisation; we agreed that the plan would be further considered when the events would sink in.⁵

Sadly, neither this cabinet nor the ones that followed gave appropriate attention to the Romanian propaganda outside the national borders.

V. Stoica's activity among the Romanian Americans was quite extensive. He mobilised the Romanian National League members, whose president he had been elected for the purpose of creating the Victory Fund. To this end, he – together with E. N. Ioanovici – signed some guidelines concerning this fund, on 3 January 1919. Among other things, they mentioned:

- 1) Each and every section of the National League shall endeavour to collect from Romanians any amounts of money for the Victory Fund. The collected money shall be sent with no delay to the National League headquarters: 917 American Trust Boulevard, Cleveland [...].
- 2) Societies, parishes and clubs or other organisations that have various collected sums or minor funds that need to be added to the Victory Fund can send them either to the local sections of the National League or directly to the National League cashier as mentioned above.
- 3) All those who will contribute to the Victory Fund with a sum of at least five dollars will receive a ticket on their name as proof of their contribution [...].
- 4) The Victory Fund aims to:
 - a) help schools, churches and orphanages that collapsed and that will be much needed after the war;
 - b) help orphans, disabled people and the poor of the war;
 - c) help libraries and settlements intended for the education of ploughmen and workers.
- 5) As shortcomings are great and urgent, the contributions must be collected as quickly as possible. The help to be granted from this fund will be distributed by a committee that Her Majesty Queen Mary of Romania will be kindly asked to supervise and run.

⁵ National Archives of Romania: Department of Central Historical Archives, fund Vasile Stoica, I, file 190/1937, fol. 36 ff. (hereafter cited as NARDCHA).

6) All those speaking Romanian who love the Romanian soil must contribute to this Fund.⁶

The Victory Fund had a special moral attraction. Tens of thousands of Romanian Americans donated significant sums of money from their limited resources, to support their countrymen in need. The money had been earned, as sociologist Andrei Popovici noted so well, “with extremely hard work in the hell of factories, but that at the same time spoke to their hearts.”⁷

There was a dire need for intense work to inform both the Washington authorities and the Romanians living in the United States about the post-1918 Romanian reality. The young officer Vasile Stoica was the one to carry out the most focused activity in this direction. In the process, he faced a series of hardships generated by the malevolent attitude of his countrymen. Dionisie Moldovan, the editor of the *Românul* newspaper in Cleveland, accused Stoica of stealing between \$50,000 and \$100,000. In reality, the money was provided by the government in Paris, and the amount received, as proved by V. Stoica in a detailed report drafted in March 1919, was \$4,306.20, sent to the High French Commissioner’s Office in the American capital.⁸ It is worth mentioning that V. Stoica received no subsidy from the Romanian Legation in Washington. He eventually resigned from his attaché position on 3 July 1918. The Romanian economic attaché in Washington, N. M. Lahovari, said in a statement submitted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 19 September 1922 that Vasile Stoica, “after his resignation, continued his propaganda activity for the cause of the country, independent of the Legation, but in close agreement with it, until 15 February 1919 [...]. Mr Stoica received no money or remuneration from the Legation funds.”⁹

The 27 Orthodox parishes in the US played an important role in this activity. The number of aid societies for cases of illness, disability or death reached 200. They were grouped in three central organisations: the “Union of Aid and Charity Romanian Societies” (approximately 120

⁶ Ibid., file 25, fol. 27; Corneliu Mihai Lungu, ed., *Făuritori ai Marii Uniri. Mărturii documentare* [Makers of the Great Union: Documentary Evidence] (Bucharest: Elion, 2003), 117–118, doc. 35.

⁷ Andrei Popovici, “Românii din America” [The Romanians in America], *Sociologie românească* II, no. 5–6 (May–June, 1937): 14–15.

⁸ NARDCHA, fund V. Stoica, I, file 105/1919, fol. 1; Florin Mirgheșiu, “Vasile Stoica în SUA (1917–1918)” [Vasile Stoica in the USA (1917–1918)], *Limes* III, no. 3–4 (11–12), (2000): 90–91.

⁹ NARDCHA, fund V. Stoica, II, file 9/1922, fol. 62.

organisations), “Liga and Ajutorul Association” comprising 27 societies, and the Catholic League with 11 societies. The overall number of Romanians who were members of these societies was rather low, at 6,300 people.¹⁰

According to some data, approximately 30,000 Romanians and Ruthenians lived in Canada, in addition to the 15,000 Jews who came mostly from the Romanian Kingdom. The informative work among them was scarce, as they had no access to news or other sources of information. Nicolae Surghia, living in the small Canadian town of Assiniboia (Saskatchewan), wrote in a letter sent on 20 February 1919 to Mihail I. Pherekyde, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Interim Prime Minister, that:

I did everything possible to encourage the organisation of the Romanian Red Cross. I planned the creation of a section in the Romanian American League to which and through which some resources were collected to support our beloved country. But it is painful that now we are completely devoid of any news from Romania, as well as Transylvania. Mr Minister, should you read my appeal, could you, please, tell me if Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia are part of Romania?¹¹

On 5 August 1919, the Romanian authorities created a Passport Office in Montreal. However, this was closed down by the police as its opening had not been notified to the public order authorities of the city. The Office was re-opened in October 1919, and on 1 January 1920 it became the Romanian General Consulate in Canada, run by George A. Simard. On the same day, a new Romanian Consulate was created in the town of Hamilton, but its activity would be rather limited.¹²

V. Stoica published a series of pamphlets in English on the topic of Bessarabia, Banat and Dobruja. They contributed to the consolidation of his connections with a series of American politicians, such as Robert Lansing, Newton Baker, William Philipps and Alfred Putney, who were close to President W. Wilson. Stoica had tight connections with certain

¹⁰ Corneliu Mihai Lungu, ed., *Românii din afara granițelor* [Romanians Outside the Borders of the Country] (Bucharest: Evenimentul Românesc Publishing House, 2001), doc. 77, 259.

¹¹ *România la Conferința de Pace de la Paris (1919–1920). Documente diplomatice* [Romania at the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920): Diplomatic Documents], vol. I, *1 decembrie 1918 – 28 iunie 1919* [1 December 1918 – 28 June 1919] (Bucharest: Semne, 2010), doc. 229, 228–229.

¹² Lungu, *Românii*, 268, doc. 77; C. I. Stan, *Societate, organizare și luptă națională la românii americani (1914–1920)* [Society, Organisation and National Struggle in the Romanian Americans] (Bucharest: Paideia, 2014), 290.

American journalists, such as Ira E. Bennet of the high-circulation newspaper *The Washington Post*, and Louis Willey, the editor of the prestigious daily *The New York Times*.¹³ For his part, the young researcher Nicolae Petrescu, who, because of the war, had stayed in the USA, published a series of articles in the New York economic magazines *The Bankers Magazine* and *The Pan American Magazine*. Petrescu analysed the Romanians' situation, and also that of other states in southeastern Europe. Reminiscing about these times, he wrote the following in his memoirs:

The title of the article in the first magazine was *Romania's Economic and Political Future*. The other material, called *The Born Nations of the War* spoke of the recently freed nations: the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Croatians, the Slovenians, the Serbians and the Poles.¹⁴

Petrescu provides details concerning the Romanians in Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia. When back in New York in the summer of 1919, he published another article called *The New Map of Europe*, showing the essential transformations that had taken place on the European continent after the end of the war. He showed that Europe already had a new political map.¹⁵

This activity was absolutely necessary as the Hungarian propaganda in the US was strong and well-organised. The Hungarians living in America were trying hard to win the favour of the American public. They were also thinking of urging the Washington authorities not to sign the peace treaty with Hungary if the proposed clauses were not revised.¹⁶

On 1 December 1919, G. Clemenceau invited the government in Budapest to send their representatives to the Peace Conference. The Hungarian delegation was headed by the Count Albert Apponyi. It included members and politicians such as Counts István Bethlen and Paul Teleki, and Ministers Lajos Walko and Mihály Károlyi. They were joined

¹³ NARDCHA, fund Vasile Stoica, I, file 22/1918–1920, fol. 5; V. Stoica, *În America pentru cauza românească* [In America for the Romanian Cause] (Bucharest: Publishing House of the Newspaper *Universul*, 1926), 63–64.

¹⁴ Nicolae Petrescu, *Memorii* [Memoirs], vol. I, *Plăcerea de a trăi pe alte meleaguri* [The Pleasure of Living in Foreign Lands], ed. Ivan Oprișan (Bucharest: Vestala, 2004), 412.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 415–416; see also Constantin Ardeleanu, “Publicistica savantului Nicolae Petrescu și cauza națională în anii formării României Mari” [The Published Work of Nicolae Petrescu and the National Cause in the Years of the Greater Romania Formation], *Danubius XXVI* (2008): 101.

¹⁶ Stan, *Societate*, 292–293.

by 38 experts and 14 secretaries, and amounted to a total of 62 people.¹⁷ The Hungarian delegates brought to Paris an impressive documentation of 1,664 pages, in three large volumes (661, 585 and 418 pages respectively). A fourth volume included maps and statistic data. N. Iorga said in his memoirs on 12 February 1920 that “Apponyi came with an entire library of documents against us.”¹⁸ At the same time, they sent 38 notes to the Supreme Allied Council in the Paris Peace Conference, accompanied by a rich collection of documents. The Hungarian messengers’ intention was to prove that the borders designated for their country in the draft treaty disregarded the geopolitical and economic unity of the Hungarian State and the so-called “historic rights” that Hungary had over the territories it had controlled for a thousand years.¹⁹

In addition, the government in Budapest was trying to sensitise certain French political and diplomatic circles. On 18 March 1920, with the agreement of Regent Miklós Horthy, Dr Charles Halns paid a visit to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, promising some economic and financial commissions to the French Republic. He also lobbied Maurice Paléologue, former head of the French Embassy in Saint Petersburg, but this, fortunately, amounted to nothing.²⁰

On 4 June 1920, France, Britain, Italy, the USA, Japan, the Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom and nine other states on the one hand, and Hungary on the other, signed the treaty in the Grand Trianon. Ion Cantacuzino and Nicolae Titulescu signed the document as representatives of the Romanian Kingdom. Edvard Beneš and Stefan Usurski sealed the document on behalf of Czechoslovakia, and Ante Trumbić and Nicola Pašić signed the treaty as the delegates of Yugoslavia. Article 7 defined the borders of Hungary and Romania, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. In articles 45–48, Hungary had to give up all the rights and claims of the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy over the Romanian territory. The Trianon Treaty established that Transylvania, Banat, Crișana and Maramureș now belonged to Romania. The new federal Yugoslavia was granted Croatia, which had belonged to Hungary since 1867, and the western part of Banat. Czechoslovakia got Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Ukraine, thus becoming a federal republic. The Province of Burgenland

¹⁷ NARDCHA, The Microfilms Collection, USA, microfilm roll 620, frames 110–119.

¹⁸ Iorga, *Memorii*, vol. II, 335.

¹⁹ NARDCHA, The Microfilms Collection, USA, microfilm roll 633, frame 747; according to Stan, *Societate*, 298.

²⁰ Viorica Moisuc, *Premisele izolării politice a României 1919–1940* [Background of the Political Isolation of Romania] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1991), 86–90.

became part of the young republic of Austria, and was no longer a part of the Hungarian State. Hungary was obliged to pay the winning parties significant war reparations. The borderline would be decided by a special seven-member commission.²¹

The Trianon Treaty was ratified by the Romanian Parliament, first by the Chamber of Deputies, on 17 August 1920, with unanimous votes, and then by the Senate – which also voted unanimously – nine days later, on 26 August 1920.²²

In May 1921, Britain ratified the 4 June 1920 Act. On this occasion, Lord Asquit, the father-in-law of the Romanian Plenipotentiary Minister in London, Prince Anton Bibescu, criticised the treaty in very severe terms, submitting an amendment requesting the organisation of a plebiscite in Transylvania. The journalist I. Istrate from Cluj wrote in the article he published in the *Voința* magazine that “though the amendment was rejected, it is however sad that this issue was raised by a man who, through his family relations, should have been better informed of the truth in Transylvania.”²³ Fortunately, there were voices in the British Isles that saluted the Trianon Treaty. The reputed English historian R. W. Seton Watson noted in an excellent synthesis of the history of Romanians that the aforementioned document “ended the most important era in the history of the Romanian nation.”²⁴

The signing of the Trianon Treaty was received with satisfaction by the Romanian American communities. In the USA, there were still some 20,000 Saxons and Schwabs from the Banat area. They formed 46 mutual aid societies and parishes. The Ruthenians were, however, significantly fewer, at approximately 3,000 people.²⁵

²¹ *1918 la români* [What 1918 Means to the Romanians], vol. VI, *februarie–decembrie 1920* [February–December 1920] (Bucharest: Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, 1986), doc. 890, 278–279; 282–290; Alexandru Vianu et al., eds, *Relații internaționale în acte și documente* [International Relations in Acts and Documents] (Bucharest: Scientific Publishing House, 1974), 37–39.

²² Romulus Seișeanu, *Principiul naționalităților. Originile, evoluția și elementele constitutive ale naționalității* [The Origins, Evolutions and Constituent Elements of Nationality] (Bucharest: Publishing House of the Newspaper *Universul*, 1935), 308 ff.; Dobrinescu, *România*, 93.

²³ I. S. (I. Istrate), “O neglijență criminală. Lipsa propagandei românești în străinătate” [Criminal Negligence: Absence of Romanian Propaganda Abroad], *Voința*, 4 June 1921, 1–2.

²⁴ R. W. Seton Watson (Scotus Viator), *A History of Romanians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), 445.

²⁵ Lungu, *Românii*, 260 ff., doc. 77.

The Romanian American press proved very active. There were three major newspapers. The most important was called *America* and was published in Cleveland, Ohio. In Youngstown, Ohio, there was the weekly *Românul*. A religious magazine called *Sămănătorul* was also published there.

The Sachsens had only one weekly pro-Romanian newspaper, entitled *Siebenbürgische-Amerikanias hos wolksblatt*, which was edited by Georg Schneider.²⁶

America informed its readers in its 5 June 1920 issue, with open satisfaction: "Today, our historical dream has fully come true. There is no shadow of a doubt: the Romanians everywhere, with very few exceptions, are united in soul and body forever." They were thus rid of national oppression as: "The prisons will no longer be crowded by those speaking our fathers' tongue, nor will bayonets be thrust in our nation's sons when they sing 'Wake up, Romanian!' or proudly wear our tricolour flag."²⁷

The Romanian Americans were facing countless problems when it came to their repatriation. Consequently, the government in Bucharest sent a special commission to the US, headed by Commander Vasile Pantazi. It included Vasile Stoica, M. Costinescu, I. Mihăiescu and Victor Cădere. According to a report drafted in June 1920 by the Romanian Legation in Washington, submitted by the Romanian Foreign Affairs Ministry, "V. Stoica inspected the Romanian Consulate in Pittsburgh and the one in Canada. They dealt with the issues of visas and passports for those wishing to return to Romania."²⁸

The Romanian Consulate in New York proved to be the most active, as before 1 January 1920 it had already issued 18,709 passports and 304 documents and document authentications. The Victory Fund had collected \$70,915. Between 1 January and 30 June 1920, the same consulate issued 4,467 passports and authenticated 620 documents. The Victory Fund received \$22,290 during this period.²⁹

The Romanian Consulate in Chicago, inaugurated in August 1919, was also very active. It issued 4,604 passports and processed 1,500 documents. The Romanian Americans in Chicago donated \$20,960 to the Victory Fund.³⁰ There was, however, a series of issues related to the repatriation

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Mircea Mușat and Ion Ardeleanu, *De la statul geto-dac la statul român unitar* [From the Geto-Dacian State to the United Romanian State] (Bucharest: Scientific and Encyclopædic Publishing House, 1983), 692.

²⁸ Lungu, *Românii*, 259–260, doc. 77.

²⁹ Ibid., doc. 77, 262–263.

³⁰ Ibid., 264.

formalities. One particular issue that needed to be solved was the currency exchange rate. This was the reason that a branch of the established Romanian bank, Marmorosch Bank, was opened in New York. A series of bank agencies were opened in the main cities where strong Romanian communities lived, such as Detroit, Cleveland, Youngstown, Chicago, etc. Difficulties also arose from insufficient access to transport. By this time, many Romanians living in the USA already had families, their own homes, and had adapted to the American culture. They were reluctant to give up their comfortable city lives. Additionally, the obstacles of bureaucracy and the many difficult repatriation formalities were hard to overcome. Moreover, we should not forget the feeling of unsafety that was prevalent in Transylvania and Banat. The Spanish flu had wreaked havoc here, taking thousands of human lives. Two Romanian travellers, Ion Ursu and Nicolae Olaru, confessed on 13 July 1919 in a letter sent to Alexandru Vaida-Voevod that they arrived in the port of Marseille with Greek passports, which were obtained more easily than Romanian passports. They complained about the stifling bureaucracy: “We sent two telegrams to his Excellency, the Plenipotentiary Minister, and got no answer whatsoever. You need to know, Minister, that we are over 500 lost Romanians, deceived by the agents.”³¹

According to a Romanian diplomatic document dated 1920, approximately 1,500 people left the US territory on a monthly basis heading for united Romania via Marseille, “as the ship travelling on this route was easier to find.”³²

In the aforementioned context, the Hungarian emigrants to the USA organised a press campaign against the Romanians’ success following the Trianon Treaty. Thus, Károly Huszár, the former Hungarian Prime Minister, published an article in *New York Times* mystifying the historic truth, repeatedly saying that: “Bolshevism was an excuse the Romanians made to invade Hungary. However, they came after Béla Kun fled.” He claims that “the Romanians started an anti-Semitic turmoil” under the pretext that they “had an authorisation to establish the law and order in the Hungarian State.” Huszár does not stop here with his unsubstantiated accusations, further stating that “the Romanians want an authorisation from Paris to make their Prince the heir king of Hungary.” He then complains about the requisitions by the Romanian army, accusing the Bucharest authorities of having confiscated 1,200 engines. K. Huszár ends

³¹ Horia Salcă and Florin Salvan, eds, *Dr. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod. Corespondență (1918–1919)* [Dr Alexandru Vaida-Voevod: Correspondence (1918–1919)] (Brașov: Transilvania Express, 2001), doc. CLI, 505–507.

³² Lungu, *Românii*, 264, doc. 77.

his article by stating that the Hungarian minority in Transylvania and Banat do not have appropriate civil and political rights.³³

On 4 August 1920, V. Stoica, in his capacity of representative of the Romanian government, sent a letter to the *New York Times* editor, dismantling all of Huszár's accusations, step by step. He emphasised that:

[...] the Hungarian Red Army attacked the Romanians on 20 July 1919, after the offensive against the Czechs ended. Bella Kun's entire Red Army was crushed in two days and the Romanians advanced fast towards Budapest. The Red Government resigned on 1 August after an utter defeat on the battlefield, which brought the Romanian forces to the gates of Budapest.³⁴

V. Stoica also said that the Romanian Army did not engage in anti-Semitic conduct. On the contrary, "one of the first measures of General Holban, the Romanian commander, was aimed at stopping the murderous attacks against the Jews in the streets of the Hungarian capital city." He states that the 1,000 engines mentioned did not actually exist. Their number was much lower. They were the property of the Romanian State, having been captured by the Hungarians in the occupied territory.³⁵ Sadly, V. Stoica did not stay in America – where he had made many friends – for very long. On 17 December 1920, Ira E. Bennet wrote the following to the Romanian officer:

I was very joyous to see you on Wednesday. I wish you a happy trip to your country and a fast return to America where you have so many friends. Letting the Americans know the purposes and rights of your country, you were of great help to Romania. They are in your debt for the information concerning your country. If *The Washington Post* was of use by presenting the general public the cause of your country, all the credit goes to you, dear Stoica. This was a patriotic service you did for your country and for it your country should be grateful.³⁶

After the Trianon Treaty was signed, the authorities in Budapest proved extremely active. V. Stoica emphasised this in the above-mentioned study, called *The Issue of Propaganda*, in 1937:

After the Peace Conference, the Hungarians immediately started the attack against the act on 4 June 1920. They have fought this battle to this day, not

³³ *1918 la români*, vol. VI, doc. 897, 410–411.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Stoica, *În America*, 74–75.

only with rare vigour, but also with exceptional method and persistence. After, in the first years, they tried to prove the Hungarian people not guilty of their participation in the Great War alongside the Central Powers, since 1923 they have been trying to show that the Trianon Party is a monstrosity and that a change of the frontiers imposed to Hungary is a requirement for world peace.³⁷

The Romanian Americans could not equal the propaganda offensive organised by the Hungarian emigrants. In the above-mentioned article in *Voința* magazine, the journalist I. Istrate is of the opinion that the Hungarian propaganda in the USA was done through the 30 press agencies in the great American cities. According to Istrate, this was published in 182 major American, French and English newspapers. He also indicates the religious connection between the Unitarian Hungarians and other Unitarians. In America, even President Taft was a Unitarian. Istrate writes that “the Hungarians do not spare any amount of money ... At the same time, we do nothing.” He suggested that the government in Bucharest should undergo a reorganisation of the diplomatic service and offices.

For the first requirement, an energetic man is required to discipline our representatives abroad whose daily activity is a job from half past eleven to five to twelve. This reorganisation is necessary as the Hungarians want nothing else but a revision of the treaties. And this is not impossible. This revision started with the Sèvres treaty.³⁸

Indeed, the authorities in Budapest started an actual offensive against the Paris Peace Treaties, in particular the one signed at Trianon. Conversely, the Romanian leaders considered these acts intangible.

Under the new circumstances, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church noted the decision of the Romanian Americans' assembly in Youngstown between 22 and 24 February 1918, stating: “It is with great pleasure and fatherly goodwill that the Romanian Orthodox Church accepts a canonic connection with the Hungarian-Wallachian Metropolitan Seat.” The condition was that this church maintained its decision made between 22 and 24 February 1918 “whereby it requests to

³⁷ NARDCHA, fund V. Stoica, file 150, fol. 38; Gheorghe Buzatu, “Un diplomat uitat – Vasile Stoica” [A Forgotten Diplomat – Vasile Stoica], *Mousaios* IX (2004): 487, annex.

³⁸ (I. Istrate), *O neglijență*, 2; Gelu Neamțu, *În America pentru Unirea Transilvaniei cu România* [In America for the Union of Transylvania with Romania] (Cluj-Napoca: Dageron Impex SRL, 1997), annex I, 197–198.

join the Hungarian-Wallachian Metropolitan Seat.”³⁹ On the same occasion, the Holy Synod noted the need to send a bishop on a research mission in the USA. This mission was entrusted to Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban. He was supposed to participate in the International Christian Conference in the USA. However, insufficient finances made I. Scriban’s journey to the USA impossible.⁴⁰

However, Crown Prince Carol reached America by travelling from Japan to San Francisco on the “Korea Maru” ship on 12 August 1920. He was welcomed by the chairman of the “Mica Principesă Ileana” Romanian Society in the city. A witness to the events, General Constantin Găvănescul, who was accompanying Carol on his journey around the world, said:

Mr Mureșanu, a Romanian from Ardeal, speaks to the Crown Prince in touching emotional Romanian words. Hearing the language, we all felt moved and remembered our sweet country. It seems as if our language never sounds sweeter when one is far from one’s country. The Prince shakes hands with Mr Mureșanu and the other Romanians and thanks them for their efforts in coming to welcome him.⁴¹

Carol visited the city and left to go to Portland with his party, then went to Saint Paul (Minnesota) and later Chicago. At the railway station in Chicago, the former US Plenipotentiary Minister to Bucharest, Charles Vopicka, was also present. He had only good words for the Romanian nation.⁴²

Carol was given the warmest welcome of all in Cleveland, Ohio, where a strong Romanian community lived. The *America* daily newspaper informed its readers in its 23 August 1920 issue that:

³⁹ Gabriel Viorel Gârlan, ed., *Românii ortodocși din America. Documente* [Orthodox Romanians in America: Documents], vol. I, (Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press, 2010), 97.

⁴⁰ Ibid.; Nicolae Șerbănescu, “Patruzeci de ani de la înscăunarea primului Episcop al Episcopiei Misionare Ortodoxe Române din America 1935–iulie 1975” [Forty Years since the Appointment of the First Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Mission Episcopal Seat in America 1935–July 1975], *Calendarul Almanah Creștin* (1975), 55.

⁴¹ Constantin Găvănescul, *Ocolul Pământului în șapte luni și o zi. Călătoria făcută de Principele Carol, fostul moștenitor al tronului* [Around the Earth in Seven Months and One Day: The Journey of Prince Carol, Former Heir to the Throne], vol. VII, *Pacificul și America* [The Pacific and America], 2nd ed., (Bucharest: Publishing House of High Military Studies Academy, 2003), 56.

⁴² Ibid.

On Saturday, 9:15 a.m. Carol, the Crown Prince, heir to the Throne, arrived in Cleveland, accompanied by a party including Nicolae N. Filodor, Romanian Minister to Greece, General Condiescu, and Djuvara in the diplomatic corps.

His Royal Highness was welcomed at the railway station by Aurel Escha, the Romanian Consul to Cleveland, Ion. N. Sufană, Secretary of the Union, C. R. Pascu, editor of our newspaper, Nicolae Nestor, chairman of the Romanian National League, Nicolae Mihălțan of the Carpatina Society, Dr A. Albu and George M. Ungureanu.⁴³

The publication further reported that Prince Carol visited the newspaper office and the printing house and then went to visit the “Saint John the Baptist” Romanian Catholic Church, where he was received most cordially by Father Vanea. The members of the Romanian colony in Cleveland were happy to welcome the Crown Prince.

Carol urged the Romanians everywhere in the USA to return to Romania and contribute to the country’s reconstruction and progress.⁴⁴

After the Treaty of Trianon was signed, many Romanian Americans wanted to return to Romania. In a memo drafted in Cluj on 4 September 1920 and submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest, Dr Dionisie Moldovan – who lived in Sibiu, where he had a legal practice – underlined the need for a more significant role for the Romanian Kingdom Legation in Washington. It “should be the leading centre of all Romanian business in the USA.” He highlights the need for an increase in the role of our authorities in the matters of the repatriation of Romanian emigrants, saying: “We need a great man in Washington.” He drew attention to the fact that the Hungarians deployed “propaganda against us, the effect of which can be seen and felt.” D. Moldovan also writes of the repatriation of emigrant Romanians who, in his opinion, “are a very important element due to their enterprising spirit and political skills.” He also shows that the Americans are barely aware of the riches of Greater Romania, hence the need for an economic publication. “Meetings, conferences, round tables of first-rank Romanian scientists would also be highly useful.”⁴⁵

The Government in Bucharest offered some – albeit minor – facilities to the people wishing to return to Romania. However, most Romanians and Americans stayed in the United States, contributing to the economic and social progress of the American Federation. The Romanians in North America monitored how the Romanian society evolved. Few of them

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 111–112.

⁴⁵ Lungu, *Români*, doc. 78, 270–273.

participated in the Alba Iulia coronation of King Ferdinand and Queen Marie as sovereigns of Greater Romania. Romanian representatives from the USA were present at the 1929 celebrations organised for the one-decade anniversary of the union of Transylvania with Romania.

CHAPTER TWO

AMERICAN INTERPRETATIONS OF THE NATIONAL-TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENT IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE AT THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE OF 1919–1920: THE WAY TO RESOLVE OLD CONTRADICTIONS?

VLADIMIR ROMANOV

The treaties of the Paris Peace Conference will soon be 100 years old. Nevertheless, they still retain their significance when analysing many features of the socio-political situation in the modern world. One of the problems actively discussed in Paris was the national-territorial settlement. For many regions, including Central and Southeastern Europe, the Parisian decisions on the national question were both vital and extremely dramatic. The effects of these decisions are sometimes even felt today.

Why were the questions of national-territorial settlement the central problems of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919–1920? First of all, decisions on territorial changes are the most important aspect of any post-war settlement. Traditionally, the winners of wars have tried to legally consolidate some of the territories of the losers. History shows that the winners did not usually even consider that the native people living in these territories might have a right to decide their own future. Let us recall the well-known thesis of Thucydides that “the powerful exact what they can, and the weak have to comply.”¹

Secondly, national contradictions were among the key causes of the First World War. Under the influence of the global conflict, the

¹ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Charles Forster Smith, vol. 3, 5.89 (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1959), 152.

multinational empires began to disintegrate. These empires were the real foundation of the old world order. The process of disintegration was especially significant for Central and Southeastern Europe, because the separate territories of the region were located in all four collapsing empires – the Austro-Hungarian, the German, the Russian and the Ottoman. Could it be possible to achieve an optimal territorial distinction in the region under these new conditions? Did the collapse of multi-ethnic empires towards the end of the First World War usher in a new wave of conflicts?²

Thirdly, the Paris agreements on post-war settlement were developed in a special socio-political situation. For the first time in history, world public opinion had become a real factor that influenced the decision-makers. There were fundamental changes within the group of Great Powers, and the relative positions of each of the Powers could have affected the content of the peace treaties. We should consider the original role of the United States in the drafting of a new world order at the final stage of the war and during the Paris Peace Conference. It is well known that the key powers of the Entente during the final stage of war (Great Britain, France, Italy and the United States) had many disagreements on the post-war treaties. Within them we can find not only the traditional “conflict of interests” of the victorious countries, but also a “conflict of foreign policy philosophies” that divided the main actors of the conference. The most obvious example of this conflict was found in the fundamentally different approaches to a peace settlement – and constant clash of ideological positions – of French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, an open supporter of “conservative realism” in diplomacy, and US President Woodrow Wilson, who defended the principles of the so-called “liberal universalism.”³

The understanding of American interpretations of the national-territorial settlement has been discussed ever since, not only in political circles, but also by the academic community. Contemporary interest in Wilson’s doctrine is connected with the 100th anniversary of the Fourteen Points, the most important historical document associated with his name. Speaking before Congress in January 1918, Wilson formulated his views on the basic principles on which a civilized world should live. He noted:

² Julia Eichenberg and John Paul Newman, introduction to *Aftershocks: Violence in Dissolving Empires after the First World War*, *Contemporary European History* 19, no. 3 (2010): 183.

³ Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and His Legacy in American Foreign Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 65–66.

These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no other. And they are also the principles and policies of forward-looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail.⁴

It is significant that the national settlement had always been at the centre of the president's attention. For example, in Wilson's speech to Congress in January 1918, nine points out of 14 were dedicated to this problem.⁵ The US President was the first leader of the Great Powers who proposed a realisation of the principle of "national self-determination" in the post-war world. Of course, it should be noted that many leaders of revolutionary and national liberation movements actively announced this principle at the same time. For example, the Bolsheviks, after coming to power in Russia in October 1917, supported the idea of national self-determination, as did the proclamation of independence by such former provinces of the empire as Finland and Poland.⁶

It is important to say that both in 1918 and, still, today, the universal significance of Wilson's principles was recognised by almost everyone across different political strata (for example, by people working in international law, or in the anti-colonial movement).⁷ However, it was always clear that the doctrine of Wilsonism was closely linked with the USA's desire for global domination.

How did Woodrow Wilson understand the national question?

Before the First World War, the problem of the self-determination of nations remained only a theoretical issue in international relations, because it was believed that this principle was completely at odds with the policy

⁴ Woodrow Wilson, An Address to the Senate, 22 January 1917, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 40, ed. A. S. Link et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966–1994), 539 (hereafter cited as *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*).

⁵ Woodrow Wilson, An Address to a Joint Session of Congress, 8 January 1918, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 45, 536–538.

⁶ Josefina L. Martínez, *The Russian Revolution and National Self-Determination*, accessed 16 March 2018, <http://www.leftvoice.org/The-Russian-Revolution-and-National-Self-determination>.

⁷ Glen Anderson, "A Post-Millennial Inquiry into the United Nations Law of Self Determination: A Right to Unilateral Non-Colonial Secession?," *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* 49, no. 4 (November 2016): 1199–1201; Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford, New York, and Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2007), 21.

of the balance of powers.⁸ The population of most states was then multi-ethnic and, therefore, the realisation of the idea of self-determination threatened the existence of many of them. Because of this, the foreign policy of the Great Powers frequently demonstrated complete disregard for the right of any nation to determine its own destiny.

The problem of national self-determination did not occupy any significant place in Wilson's political and intellectual framework until 1914. In part, he touched upon this issue in connection with his reflections on the functioning of state institutions. Drawing on the American experience, for example, he always included the ideas of freedom and popular sovereignty in a number of basic principles that any democratic society should hold.⁹ He shared the Calvinist doctrine of equal opportunities, and, therefore, believed that all people are naturally ready for self-government. But as a convinced social Darwinist, Wilson repeatedly said that the right to independently control one's own destiny is, in fact, the privilege of people who are sober and have reached their maturity. On this basis, he defined the prospects for the self-determination of the Filipinos and Puerto Ricans, who had been under the American protectorate since the end of the nineteenth century. To these peoples, Wilson noted, of course, self-government should be granted. But he believed it necessary to teach these nations "to obey the law, to love the order and instinctively observe it."¹⁰

It is important to note his interpretation of the term "nation." Even during his academic career, Wilson pointed to the differences that existed in the German and American interpretation of this concept. The Germans, he believed, saw in the nation "a community united by origin and blood." However, the American definition of a nation was "a community united by

⁸ James Robert Mills, "The Challenge of Self-Determination and Emerging Nationalism: The Evolution of the International Community's Normative Responses to State Fragmentation" (PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, 2009), 86; Bence Bari, "From Theory to Practice: The New Europe and National Self-Determination in the First World War (1916–1920)," *Essehist* 8, no. 8 (2016): 85–86.

⁹ Woodrow Wilson, *The State: Elements of Historical and Practical Politics: A Sketch of Institutional History and Administration* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1889), 564–565.

¹⁰ Woodrow Wilson, An Address in Wilmington, "Liberty," 5 February 1897, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 10, 149; Woodrow Wilson, A Political Essay, "Democracy and Efficiency," 1 October 1900, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 12, 18.