

Masaryk and Wilson: Founding Fathers of Czechoslovakia

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vznikem Československa, ke kterému přispěl i americký prezident Woodrow Wilson. Přestože Wilson podporoval Rakousko-Uhersko a zpočátku odmítal sebeurčení malých národů, které byly zužovány dualistickou vládou Rakouska a Maďarska, pozdější události roku 1918 a vliv Roberta Lansinga jej přiměli ke změně názoru. Mezitím v Americe rostl vliv Tomáše Garrigua Masaryka, který přednášel pro veřejnost v amerických městech, a československá otázka se stala terčem zájmu amerických médií. Ačkoliv byl Wilson silně ovlivňován svými poradci v otázkách týkajících se první světové války, byl to právě on, kdo učinil konečné rozhodnutí, které vedlo k založení Československa v říjnu roku 1918.

Klíčová slova: Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Woodrow Wilson, Češi, Slováci, Robert Lansing, Rakousko-Uhersko, Německo, Československá legie, první světová válka, Čtrnáct bodů prezidenta Wilsona, autonomie, nezávislost, Washingtonská deklarace, Andrásyho nóta, Pařížská mírová konference, vznik Československa

ABSTRACT

This Bachelor's thesis deals with the establishment of Czechoslovakia, which was contributed to by the American president Woodrow Wilson. Despite the fact that initially Wilson supported Austria-Hungary and refused the self-determination of small nations oppressed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, following events of 1918 and Robert Lansing's influence, Wilson changed his mind. Meanwhile, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk's influence increased, and he presented his ideas in American cities, making the Czechoslovak question the spotlight of the American press. Although Wilson was strongly influenced by his advisers when it came to questions related to the First World War, it was just him who made the final decision contributing to the establishment of Czechoslovakia in October 1918.

Keywords: Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Woodrow Wilson, Czechs, Slovaks, Robert Lansing, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Czechoslovak Legion, First World War, Wilson's Fourteen Points, autonomy, independence, Washington Declaration, Andrassy Note, Paris Peace Conference, establishment of Czechoslovakia

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I hereby declare that the print version of my bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
1 WOODROW WILSON'S LEGACY IN PRAGUE.....	10
2 TOMÁŠ GARRIGUE MASARYK.....	12
2.1 CRITICISM OF MASARYK	12
2.2 CZECH REPRESENTATIVE IN THE REICHSRAT.....	12
3 WOODROW WILSON.....	14
3.1 WOODROW WILSON IN WAR AND PEACE	14
4 FORMATION OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK RESISTANCE ABROAD AND THE CZECHOSLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL	15
5 MASARYK'S VISITS TO THE UNITED STATES.....	17
6 WILSON'S FAMILIARITY WITH THE CZECHOSLOVAK QUESTION	19
6.1 SUPPORTERS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK NATION.....	19
7 MASARYK AND WILSON'S VIEWPOINTS ON WORLD WAR I	21
7.1 WILSON'S ATTITUDE TO THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE.....	21
7.2 AMERICAN EFFORTS TO MEDIATE A PEACE.....	21
7.3 WILSON'S DECISION TO DECLARE WAR ON AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.....	22
7.4 RUSSIA AND CZECHOSLOVAK SOLDIERS.....	23
8 AMERICAN CZECHOSLOVAKS	25
8.1 BEFORE WORLD WAR I.....	25
8.2 CZECH COMPATRIOTS IN CLEVELAND.....	25
8.3 THE CLEVELAND AGREEMENT	25
8.4 AMERICAN CZECHOSLOVAKS AS MASARYK'S SUPPORTERS.....	26
9 THE PITTSBURGH AGREEMENT OF 1918.....	27
10 THE UNITED STATES AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL	29
11 THE CZECHOSLOVAK DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE	32
12 THE WASHINGTON DECLARATION AND ITS REQUIREMENTS	35
13 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND ITS CONNECTION WITH CARPATHIAN RUTHENIA IN 1919.....	36
14 EVENTS OF NOVEMBER 1918	38
14.1 THE END OF THE WAR.....	38
14.2 THE SITUATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND MASARYK'S ELECTION	38
14.3 MASARYK'S LAST VISIT TO THE WHITE HOUSE	39
14.4 MASARYK LEFT FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA.....	39
15 THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE OF 1919 AND THE FORMING OF CZECHOSLOVAK TERRITORY.....	40
16 MASARYK AND WILSON'S RELATIONSHIP	42
CONCLUSION	43
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	44

INTRODUCTION

Two men had two different opinions about a new world order after the First World War. To persuade Woodrow Wilson to change his attitude was Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk's aim of his last journey to the United States. Although Wilson seemed to be an advocate of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the United States influenced Masaryk's efforts to gain Czechoslovak independence more than Czechs and Slovaks expected.

Czechs had their history, territory, and culture until 1620, when the Czech lands were incorporated into the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Masaryk intended to achieve Czech freedom. Firstly, he had advanced Czech national interests, but when Czechs made common cause with Slovaks, Masaryk endeavoured to negotiate independent conditions for these two nations as one unit. Masaryk supported by Czech and Slovak compatriots in the United States presented his ideas related to the empire, and on June 19, 1918, he established a personal relationship with Wilson for the first time. All the events which took place during the First World War in America had to comply with all the nationalistic actions in Europe. Czechoslovak efforts bore fruit on October 28, 1918, when an independent Czechoslovakia was established.

This thesis documents the Czechoslovak intention under the tutelage of Masaryk to change Wilson's attitude towards Austria-Hungary and win American recognition, because U.S. influence during the Great War had increased. It also describes Masaryk's revolutionary steps and ideas based on which he struggled for the independence of Czechs and Slovaks, and the diplomacy-based interactions between Masaryk and Wilson. Although Wilson as the president of the United States always had last say, he took advice from his inner circle, mainly Robert Lansing, who understood the necessity of small nations in Europe and supported the Czechoslovak question. Without these people, who made efforts to change Wilson's opinions, there would not have been an independent Czechoslovakia because Wilson presented autonomy within the empire that would satisfy neither Masaryk and his Czechoslovak compatriots nor Lansing.

1 WOODROW WILSON'S LEGACY IN PRAGUE

Homage is on one side and criticism on the other. Americans and Czechs perceive President Woodrow Wilson differently. While he was influential in the establishment of Czechoslovakia, and is thus much admired in the Czech Republic, his legacy is also currently under attack in the United States, due to his racist beliefs.¹ As a result of his support for Czechs and Slovaks, there is a bronze statue of Wilson near the main railway station in Prague, which was also named after him in 1919 in order to honour his contributions, most notably his “Fourteen Points,” which helped ensure the formation of Czechoslovakia at the end of World War I. Specifically, it was point ten which referred to all smaller nations that were previously under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Wilson is represented with his palms down, so as to give his blessing to Czechoslovakia.²

The railway station has had many names. Before 1919, it was named after Emperor Franz Joseph. During the Nazi and Soviet eras, it was called simply Prague Main Station. But when the Iron Curtain fell, the station was renamed after Wilson.³ The original bronze statue of Wilson, erected in 1928 on a marble base inscribed with his quote that “the world must be made safe for democracy,”⁴ was melted down by the Nazis during World War II but was recast and re-erected in 2011. And it is not only Wilson who left a legacy in Prague. There is Masaryk's own statue in Washington D.C., erected there in order to make the relationship among these nations stronger or everlasting and show new generations how these countries were able to cooperate.⁵

Wilson's legacy was emphasized in the capital of Slovakia too. Bratislava, which became part of Czechoslovakia as well, was renamed after Wilson as Wilson City in order to celebrate him and his contributions. Nevertheless, sizeable changes occurred with

¹David Wright, “Princeton Keeps Woodrow Wilson's Name on the School Despite Protests,” CNN, April 4, 2016, accessed December 9, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/04/politics/princeton-university-woodrow-wilson-name-debate/index.html>; Larry Wolff, “Woodrow Wilson's Name Has Come and Gone Before,” Washington Post, December 3, 2015, accessed December 9, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/12/03/woodrow-wilsons-name-has-come-and-gone-before/?utm_term=.39ef0f79cf23; Patricia Sullivan, “Prague Honors Woodrow Wilson,” Washington Post, October 4, 2011, accessed November 26, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/prague-to-honor-woodrow-wilson-with-new-statue-at-main-train-station/2011/09/29/gIQAeghoLL_story.html?utm_term=.72d6d7da7f19.

²Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2002), 495-496; Sullivan, “Prague Honors Woodrow Wilson.”

³Wolff, “Woodrow Wilson's Name Has Come and Gone Before.”

⁴Sullivan, “Prague Honors Woodrow Wilson.”

⁵Pavla Horáková, “Woodrow Wilson Statue Returns to Prague after 70 Years,” Radio Prague, October 5, 2011, accessed December 19, 2017, <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curaffrs/woodrow-wilson-statue-returns-to-prague-after-70-years>; Sullivan, “Prague Honors Woodrow Wilson.”

various regimes, and thanks to one of these, the appellation Wilson City existed only a short while. While Bratislava was renamed, Czechs have maintained the highest regard for Wilson. Despite the fact that there is no longer a Czechoslovakia, Czechs are protecting Woodrow Wilson's legacy.⁶ Masaryk's speech in 1918 also confirmed it: "Your name, Mr. President, as you have no doubt read, is openly cheered in the streets of Prague — our nation will forever be grateful to you and to the people of the United States."⁷

⁶Sullivan, "Prague Honors Woodrow Wilson;" Wolff, "Woodrow Wilson's Name Has Come and Gone Before."

⁷George Kovtun, *Masaryk and America: Testimony of a Relationship* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), 59; Wolff, "Woodrow Wilson's Name Has Come and Gone Before."

2 TOMÁŠ GARRIGUE MASARYK

He was and in some circles still is referred to as the “daddy” of the nation. Despite the fact that Masaryk did not come from a rich family, he was able to study in both Vienna and Leipzig. Later, he taught at universities in Vienna and Prague - his sphere of interest being philosophy. Masaryk’s financial situation prompted him to work as a tutor in rich families, even after receiving his PhD. Elected on November 14, 1918 as the first Czechoslovak president, he governed until 1935 when he resigned for health reasons.⁸

2.1 Criticism of Masaryk

Masaryk was not always admired by Czechs. For instance, Czech hostility towards German-speakers led to the so-called “Battle of the Manuscripts” in 1886. Dated back to the ninth and thirteenth centuries, the manuscripts were supposed to show that not only German or Latin literature existed in that period of time but also Czech writings, which provided evidence for a nascent Czech nationalism. Masaryk cast doubt on their genuineness and fell into disfavour among many Czechs, who wanted to believe in their authenticity. . In addition, at the turn of the century, he unsuccessfully defended a young Jewish man, Leopold Hilsner, who was accused of the ritual murder of a young Catholic woman. In times of increased anti-Semitism throughout Europe, Masaryk’s defence was perceived as sacrilegious.⁹

2.2 Czech Representative in the Reichsrat

Masaryk was initially persuaded that the reformation of Austria-Hungary would be enough, and that the empire did not have to be broken up. In the Viennese Parliament between 1891-1893 and 1907-1914, he argued passionately for equalization among Czechs and Germans, increased education, and universal suffrage. Based on Viennese politicians’ speeches that neither the independence nor other changes would be accepted by Austria-Hungary, and concerned over the potential persecution of Czechs after an Austrian-Hungarian victory in WWI, Masaryk as a supporter of liberalism started to reassess his reformative attitude. Moreover, Czech soldiers reluctant to fight with the Allies, and the

⁸Jiří Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf: Příběh konce velké války* (Prague: Odeon, 1991), 30; Antonín Vaněk, *TGM – poselství* (Prague: Agentura Tip Š, 1992), 45-48.

⁹Karel Čapek, *Talks with T. G. Masaryk*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (North Haven, CT: Catbird Press, 1995), 251; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 32; Stanley B. Winters, ed., *T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937): Thinker and Politician* (London: MacMillan, 1989), 155-156.

Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, also influenced Masaryk. These circumstances led Masaryk to change his mind about empire in 1914.¹⁰

¹⁰Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 32-49; Marie L. Neudorfl, "Masaryk's Understanding of Democracy before 1914," *Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, no. 708 (1989): 12-13, accessed November 25, 2017, <https://carlbeckpapers.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/cbp/article/view/39>.

3 WOODROW WILSON

Born in 1856 in Virginia, Woodrow Wilson went on to attend Princeton University and then Johns Hopkins University, where he earned his PhD in political science. He served as the president of Princeton and then as the governor of New Jersey, before being elected the 28th president of the United States in 1912. He was the first president to hold a PhD and the first southern-born president since 1869. Wilson preferred teaching men, because he did not think women could be leaders.¹¹ In fact, Wilson made no secret of his desire “to exclude women from public affairs”¹² as well as “African Americans from voting and other basic rights.”¹³

3.1 Woodrow Wilson in War and Peace

Wilson gained favour by adhering to the Monroe Doctrine, thereby remaining neutral and keeping the United States out of World War I. Wilson did not want to intervene in the war even after the *Lusitania*, an ocean liner with American civilians on board, was sunk by a German submarine in 1915.¹⁴ Also adhering to the Monroe Doctrine, he oversaw U.S. military intervention in the Caribbean, in places like Haiti and the Dominican Republic. However, the relationship between Mexico and the United States deteriorated, and Mexican negotiations with Germany ultimately led Wilson to abandon the Monroe Doctrine and declare war on Germany on April 4, 1917. World War I ended in a U.S. victory on November 18, 1918. Wilson was then one of main leaders of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, which resolved issues such as the formation of new independent states, the establishment of national borders, the punishments for the losers and rewards for the winners, and Wilson’s introduction of the League of Nations. Although he had initiated the whole concept, the U.S. government did not ratify it, a fact which hurt his health and tarnished his legacy.¹⁵

¹¹Lloyd E. Ambrosius, “Wilson, Woodrow,” American National Biography, February 2000, accessed January 10, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.article.0600726>.

¹²Ambrosius, “Wilson, Woodrow.”

¹³Ambrosius, “Wilson, Woodrow.”

¹⁴Ambrosius, “Wilson, Woodrow.”

¹⁵Ambrosius, “Wilson, Woodrow.”

4 FORMATION OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK RESISTANCE

ABROAD AND THE CZECHOSLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL

When Masaryk first formulated the Czechoslovak idea, he was aware of the necessity of support. Therefore, Masaryk decided to establish a secret organization, the Maffie, which would keep him informed while he was abroad. After this, his journey around the world could begin. His first foreign visit was to Switzerland, where Masaryk started to unite people so that the Czechoslovak issue would be known to the outside world. Czechs admired Masaryk for his determination to cleave Bohemia from Austria-Hungary.¹⁶

The war was on when Masaryk together with his countryman Edvard Beneš and Slovak Milan Rastislav Štefánik founded the National Council in Paris in 1916, which had been preceded by Czech Committee Abroad in 1915. The aim was to spread the idea of Czechoslovak independence to other Allied countries and assure them that all the Czech parties and people who lived in foreign countries supported this idea, thereby making Allied support more likely. The Czechoslovak National Council had become the governing body of foreign resistance, and it played an important part in future Allied decision-making. Masaryk was disappointed by the British and French lack of knowledge of the Czech nation and its repression. However, he was determined to appeal to the Allied leaders for mutual assistance.¹⁷ Otherwise, in the case of a German victory, Austria would be “a mere tool in the hands of Germany.”¹⁸ In addition, Germany would become more powerful, and the repression of small nations inside the empire would continue. Aware of the necessity of Czechoslovak armies fighting abroad, which fell within his authority, Masaryk spoke to Beneš and Štefánik in order to emphasize soldiers’ effect during and after the war. Masaryk was sure that Czechoslovak soldiers could assist not only on the battlefields of Italy, Russia and France, but he saw their potential in the case that the Central Powers would win the war.¹⁹

The connection with these two men was advantageous to Masaryk. Beneš had supported Masaryk at home but also abroad when he lived in exile. Štefánik, who was

¹⁶Václav Nájemník, “Odboj sílí: Vznik Národní rady československé,” *Český rozhlas*, March 4, 2016, accessed February 28, 2018, http://www.rozhlas.cz/pred100lety/odboj/_zprava/odboj-sili-vznik-narodni-rady-ceskoslovenske--1590194; Tomas Tatinec, “Statecraft and Leadership in Europe: The Case of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk,” *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 3 (2014): 67-68, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.theartsjournal.org/index.php/site/article/view/521>.

¹⁷Tatinec, *Statecraft and Leadership*, 68.

¹⁸Tatinec, *Statecraft and Leadership*, 68.

¹⁹Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf, 72-73*; Tatinec, *Statecraft and Leadership*, 68.

well-connected, did important work in relation to independence. He arranged an appointment with a French leader, Briand, who in turn promised Masaryk French assistance. With confidence in these men and their negotiating skills as well as political orientation, Masaryk could leave Paris and continue travelling to other countries in order to persuade their leaders to understand the necessity of Austria-Hungarian division into small independent nations.²⁰

Masaryk's bigger success in foreign policy came in January 1917. Although all the Allied parties had paid attention to the war at the beginning of Masaryk's worldwide tour and no one had pursued Masaryk's memoranda including the Czechoslovak issue of its recognition, French leader Briand had not forgotten his promise. On the contrary, the Czechoslovak nation and its struggle for independence were mentioned in the Allied war program that Wilson had requested.²¹

²⁰Nájemník, "Odboj síli;" Tatinec, *Statecraft and Leadership*, 68.

²¹Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 77; Tatinec, *Statecraft and Leadership*, 68.

5 MASARYK'S VISITS TO THE UNITED STATES

His longest visit to the United States was also his last. Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk visited the United States four times. His first visit was to Brooklyn, for his marriage to an American woman, Charlotte Garrigue, whom he met in Leipzig in 1877.²² In 1902, he visited a second time, to give a series of lectures, mostly at the University of Chicago, during which he discussed his ideals related to Austria, the repression of Czechoslovaks and Czechoslovakian historical affairs, and his opinions on the threat that immigration posed to the United States. In these lectures, Masaryk prepared Americans for the possibility of political changes in Europe. Journalists certainly paid more attention to him from then on.²³

Seeking inspiration, Masaryk returned to the United States for a third time in 1907. According to Jiří Kovtun, this visit was seminal for the future Czechoslovakia. Masaryk himself had admiration for U.S. culture and ideals, especially with regard to freedom. It was on this visit that he noticed that many Czech and Slovak Americans favoured the independence of their homelands, even more so than those back at home, who were directly influenced by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Masaryk ascribed the desire to the fact that American immigrants were more liberal than those whose thoughts and ideals were influenced by Austrian power.²⁴

To win Woodrow Wilson's recognition for an independent Czechoslovakia was the main aim of his fourth and final journey to the United States, which took place in 1918. Wilson had become more respected and powerful worldwide,²⁵ and Masaryk realized that his wish for a new small Central European nation could come true with Wilson's help. Even so, he still paid more attention to relations with France and the United Kingdom, because they were the key allies after Russia's capitulation in 1917.²⁶ When Masaryk came to the United States after several years spent in various countries, he introduced his findings and revolutionary ideas to the Czechs and Slovaks then living there. Masaryk declared that the reason why they lived in the United States was not just because it offered better living conditions and higher standards of living but mainly because of democracy

²²Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 51-55.

²³Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 2-5; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 55-61.

²⁴Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 51-66.

²⁵Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 72.

²⁶Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 15.

and freedom.²⁷ Masaryk emphasized simultaneously the power of Czechoslovak soldiers, who were resistant to fight against the Allies, and their achievements in World War I. He thought about their distaste for the Austro-Hungarian Empire and he knew that in order to create an independent democratic state, he should be more consistent. Persuaded that Wilson as the leader of the United States would have the final say in the independence of Czechoslovakia, Masaryk declared during his speech after his arrival to the United States that “America has a choice; it can opt for nine free nations or for one degenerated dynasty.”²⁸

²⁷Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 31-32.

²⁸Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 19-31, 23.

6 WILSON'S FAMILIARITY WITH THE CZECHOSLOVAK QUESTION

Wilson demonstrated his knowledge of European affairs. He paid attention to the Dual Monarchy and showed understanding for all its requirements. Bohemia and its historical and social background were not unfamiliar to him, and Wilson was aware of repression against Czechs as well as their disagreements with Germans. However, he thought about the Austro-Hungarian Empire quite differently than Masaryk and his supporters aimed for. When Wilson introduced his "Fourteen Points" that adjusted the world order in January 1918, he still did not want to divide the Austro-Hungarian Empire into completely independent small nations.²⁹

Although point ten, which stated that "the peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development" was really crucial for Czechoslovak affairs,³⁰ it meant initially no independence but only autonomy; so basically, a federation of nations.³¹ The fact that Wilson did not want to intervene in Austro-Hungarian internal issues already appeared in 1917 when he claimed that "it is no affair of ours what they do with their own life either industrially or politically."³²

6.1 Supporters of the Czechoslovak Nation

Charles R. Crane played a significant role in 1915. Masaryk needed mainly financial help in order to gain the independence for which he struggled. Crane, close to Wilson, became the first American supporter of Masaryk and the one who introduced Masaryk to the president. On the other hand, there were also those Americans who did not want to follow Masaryk's vision. For example, Norman Hapgood did not support the division of Austria-Hungary and he expressed his opinion to Wilson himself.³³

Czech and Slovak Americans also played an important part in Masaryk's mission. They themselves wrote several letters in which they appealed to Wilson for an independent

²⁹Betty Miller Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia, and the Rise of Czechoslovakia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 16; Guido Kisch, "Woodrow Wilson and the Independence of Small Nations in Central Europe," *Journal of Modern History* 19, no. 3 (1947): 236-237, accessed January 12, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1876400>; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 80-84.

³⁰MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 496.

³¹Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 84.

³²Kisch, "Woodrow Wilson and the Independence of Small Nations in Central Europe," 236.

³³Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 12-16.

Czechoslovakia. However, it was not easy to accomplish Masaryk's revolutionary ideals in a country that maintained neutrality based on the Monroe Doctrine, which included no intervention in European affairs.³⁴

³⁴Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 11-27; William E. Lingelbach, "The Monroe Doctrine and American Participation in European Affairs," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 96 (1921): 33-40, accessed December 9, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1014863>.

7 MASARYK AND WILSON'S VIEWPOINTS ON WORLD WAR I

7.1 Wilson's Attitude to the Austro-Hungarian Empire

Before the war, the relationship between Austria-Hungary and the United States was based on formal diplomacy. Wilson confirmed the diplomatic relation also through a letter of condolence after the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian heir apparent in 1914. When Franz Joseph died in 1916, his successor to the throne was Charles, who seemed to be more liberal than Franz Joseph. He highly considered a separate peace in order to save the empire against its disintegration and prevent Austria-Hungary from an economic decline and an intensification of the war. Masaryk immediately made an observation about this situation that Germany would pay attention to Austro-Hungarian foreign policy and stop the government from negotiating a separate peace with the Entente because Masaryk knew that the separate peace would ruin their struggle for Czechoslovak independence.³⁵

7.2 American Efforts to Mediate a Peace

When Wilson appealed to the Allies as well as the Central Powers for sharing publicly their war objectives on December 20, 1916, the Allied aims (including Czech and Slovak questions) were received by Wilson in January 1917, but the Central Powers refused to do it. This approach annoyed the Entente, so their leaderships rejected peace talks. On February 1, 1917, Germany started unrestricted submarine warfare and sank American ships. This prompted Wilson to change his mind about U.S. neutrality. A message was sent to the United States from Vienna after the declaration of submarine warfare. The Austro-Hungarian leadership claimed responsibility for this submarine war. As the reason for this situation was determined,³⁶ "the Entente . . . had declined to enter peace negotiations on Wilson's formula of no 'victors and no vanquished.'"³⁷ However, the message contained also a note that Austria-Hungary was prepared to negotiate this separate peace secretly. Wilson believed that he would be able to mediate the separate peace, but he had to promise that Austria-Hungary would remain without changes in connection with all the nationalities inside the empire.³⁸

³⁵Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 17, 20, 22.

³⁶Robert B. Pynsent, ed., *T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937): Thinker and Critic* (London: MacMillan, 1989), 189; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 32-38.

³⁷Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 38.

³⁸Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 38-39.

On April 2, 1917, Wilson spoke out against German attacks in order to appeal to congressmen for an American declaration of war. Finally, on April 6, the American Congress granted his request, and the United States entered the war. Wilson still maintained relations with the empire. He said he was defending American citizens against Germany because it was responsible for the submarine war.³⁹

7.3 Wilson's Decision to Declare War on Austria-Hungary

The worsening situation on the Western frontline compelled British Prime Minister David Lloyd George to convince Wilson to defeat Germany through its weakest point – Austria-Hungary. Based on this Allied impulse, Wilson established an inquiry led by his adviser, Col. House, in order to gain information about war aims, which would be the main sources in relation to American peace negotiations. Lansing paid attention to a memorandum issued in May, 1917, the subject of which was the Czechs and Slovaks. The allied strategy for avoiding a German Europe included “guarantees of the independence of small nations, upheld by some form of international sanction” and “the existence of democratic governments in those nations.”⁴⁰ Lansing was reminded of the Czech devoted struggle for their independence, so it would be essential to support them because its consequence would cause a frustration of “Germany’s ‘dream of *Dang nach Osten*.’”⁴¹ On December 1917, Wilson finally approved the American declaration of war on Austria-Hungary. Convinced by a worsened situation on the Italian battlefield, an urgent request for American help, but also the unsuccessful separate peace with the empire, Wilson decided to take steps in order to claim victory. It was necessary to fight against the empire, which was under German command and influence. As for small nations within the empire, he still kept his word and announced his disapproval of its division at this period of time.⁴²

When word of the declaration of war was received by Masaryk, he quickly established diplomatic relations with Wilson for the first time. Masaryk was not content with Wilson's attitudes towards Austria-Hungary, and he reminded him that dividing it was one of the

³⁹Becky Preiss Odom, “President Wilson’s War Declaration,” Ohio History Connection, March 30, 2017, accessed April 19, 2018, <https://www.ohiohistory.org/learn/collections/history/history-blog/2017/march-2017/president-wilson-world-war-i-declaration>; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 45-46.

⁴⁰Lloyd C. Gardner, *Safe for Democracy: The Anglo-American Response to Revolution, 1913-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 119; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 57-60, 119.

⁴¹Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 59.

⁴²Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 61, 64-67.

main goals of the war. He added his opinions about the empire, and the situation in Europe and Russia, so as to convince Wilson of his knowledge of war affairs.⁴³

7.4 Russia and Czechoslovak Soldiers

Masaryk left for Russia mainly to assist Czech and Slovak prisoners of war in Russia. He agreed on Czechoslovak aid to the Allies on the Western Front because the Eastern Front no longer existed. Upon securing their release, the only possible way to move them from Russia to France involved a transcontinental journey to Vladivostok, where a British naval ship would be waiting to transport them to France. Masaryk departed from Russia for America in March 1918 and believed that the Czechoslovak troops would follow him. Czechoslovak soldiers were banned from interfering in Russian affairs, but they actually did the exact opposite. This situation resulted from incomplete and contradictory information. Even though Masaryk had negotiated neutrality with the Bolsheviks, they together with Austro-Hungarian war prisoners under German influence attacked the Czechoslovaks.⁴⁴

Masaryk and Wilson met each other in person for the first time in the White House on June 19, 1918, primarily to discuss the Russian question. While the French and British governments required the opening of an Eastern Front, Wilson rejected such a move. Masaryk as a person well-versed in the Russian situation was recommended by Crane to Wilson based on Masaryk's speech in Tokyo. In order to avoid making mistakes in this particular case, Wilson waited for Masaryk's opinions. He still was not persuaded what to do, and wondered whether the Allies or Japan should intervene in Russia in order to fight against the Central Powers with the aid of Czechoslovak soldiers or not. Both Masaryk and Wilson knew that the process of involving Japan in the war would be complicated. Moreover, Wilson paid attention to point six of his Fourteen Points, which said that Russia had to solve its matters on its own. Czechoslovak soldiers were mentioned during this meeting as well. Wilson expressed no objections to Masaryk's observations. The Czechoslovak Legion then in Russia faced a long and treacherous military advance, so Masaryk asked for American help.⁴⁵

⁴³Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 55-56.

⁴⁴Čapek, *Talks with T. G. Masaryk*, 216, 223-224, 228-229; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 252, 272.

⁴⁵Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 152-192; Pynsent, *T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937)*, 193-194.

The future of Czechoslovak soldiers was mainly in Wilson's hands because other important representatives constantly waited for his decisions. French and British dissatisfaction increased, and Masaryk, who requested help as far back as in July, was not satisfied. Meanwhile, the Czechoslovak Legion awaited orders from Masaryk. Although Wilson was under Allied pressure, he held his ground. As a consequence of his decision, Czechoslovak soldiers were armed and supplied, and would be assisted by American and Japanese soldiers. A letter of thanks sent by Masaryk to Wilson on August 5, 1918 emphasized the American influence, and Masaryk immediately received an appreciative response. Nevertheless, Masaryk expected larger American participation. The actions of Czechoslovak soldiers raised public awareness of Czechs and Slovaks. Even though the presence of the Legion in Russia had triggered arguments among France, the United Kingdom and the United States, the Czechoslovak National Council achieved American recognition later that year. Although Wilson based the recognition on Czechoslovak soldiers' mettle, it included all the worldwide actions rather than just the Legion and its activities in Siberia.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 58-59; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 192, 238-239, 269-271, 274, 282, 291.

8 AMERICAN CZECHOSLOVAKS

8.1 Before World War I

Whereas Czechs started mass immigrations to the United States in 1848, the first wave of Slovaks arrived in 1873, discontented with economic conditions and Austro-Hungarian policies. Although for example the Czech and Slovak education systems were considered to be at a high level in that period of time, there was not much space for improvements due to censorship by the empire. Uncertain of their future within Austria-Hungary many Czechs and Slovaks headed for American states such as Wisconsin, Nebraska, Illinois, Texas, Iowa, Connecticut, New Jersey or Ohio.⁴⁷

8.2 Czech compatriots in Cleveland

Cleveland was the city with a large number of Czech compatriots. Only Vienna, Chicago and of course Prague were placed before Cleveland.⁴⁸ Lived in the USA, Czech men from Cleveland were still devoted to their homeland, and they joined the Czechoslovak army formed in France. Moreover, Czechoslovak families living in the city provided financial support to Czechoslovak soldiers in Russia and helped to build the city. They founded several churches, National Halls, and published many newspapers, which played an important role within the Great War. They wrote articles which supported the Czechoslovak struggle for independence and paid attention to secret information received by secret agents living in Austria-Hungary.⁴⁹

8.3 The Cleveland Agreement

Established in 1889, the Bohemian National Hall became the most famous one. Czechoslovaks living in Cleveland had desired to have a place which would be connected with cultural life. So they built the place, where all the annual national celebrations took place. One of the very first agreements related to independent Czechoslovakia also appeared inside this institution in 1915. The dedication to the Czechoslovak nation and the lust for freedom made a contribution to the common agreement between Czechs and

⁴⁷Eleanor Edwards Ledbetter, *The Czechs of Cleveland*, (Cleveland: Americanization committee, 1919), 7-8; Eleanor Edwards Ledbetter, *The Slovaks of Cleveland*, (Cleveland: Americanization committee, 1918), 8-10.

⁴⁸Ledbetter, *The Czechs of Cleveland*, 7.

⁴⁹Ledbetter, *The Czechs of Cleveland*, 8, 12-14, 19-26, 36.

Slovaks called the Cleveland Agreement. All the participants agreed on one clear aim in October 1915⁵⁰ – “the idea of creating what would come to be Czechoslovakia.”⁵¹

8.4 American Czechoslovaks as Masaryk’s Supporters

For Masaryk, American Czechoslovaks were one of the biggest supports. Back in 1915, Masaryk requested using all their strength to spread the idea of Czechoslovakia and disprove defences of Germans living in the United States, and their determination was obvious in America during this period. More than one million compatriots provided not only the financial help to the movement but they also communicated with the American government. They founded many Czech and Slovak organizations. Three main of them were the Bohemian National Alliance, the Slovak League of America and National Alliance of Bohemian Catholics – which had initially worked separately, but later in 1918 joined forces with each other and created the Czechoslovak National Council of America. Members of these organizations did not put pressure on Wilson in the way that he had to declare independent Czechoslovakia, but they made efforts to convince him based on relevant arguments. They defended Czechoslovak interests through many publications and letters. Moreover, they criticized Central Powers’ actions inside Europe and appealed not only to the U.S. government but also to the general public. For example, Ludvík Fisher wrote a letter that brought the Czechoslovak army to Wilson’s attention. On July 4, 1918, these representatives wrote a thankful letter expressing their devotion to America which had received all the Czechoslovak immigrants.⁵² “We came here from the land of suffering and oppression. It is on this account that we hailed America like a rising sun after the dark night of humiliation. She received us, (...) – the big sun of a freer, happier life than that we had lived in our oppressed native land.”⁵³ This declaration was a right way how to impress American natives.⁵⁴

⁵⁰Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *Světová revoluce: Za války a ve válce 1914-1918*, (Prague: Ústav T. G. Masaryka, 2005), 176; Danielle Rose, “Bohemian National Hall,” *Cleveland Historical*, April 18, 2017, accessed March 21, 2018, <https://clevelandhistorical.org/items/show/739>.

⁵¹Rose, “Bohemian National Hall.”

⁵²Thomas Čapek, *The Čechs (Bohemians) in America: A Study of Their National, Cultural, Political, Social, Economic and Religious Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), 265-272; Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 12-27; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 94-96.

⁵³Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 24.

⁵⁴Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 24.

9 THE PITTSBURGH AGREEMENT OF 1918

Czechoslovak representatives in the United States were prepared to formulate and sign a document named for a place where it was signed – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When Masaryk had visited the biggest “Czechoslovak cities” during his countrywide journey in order to announce the necessity of small independent nations inside the empire, he came to Pittsburgh at the end of May 1918.⁵⁵ The Pittsburgh Agreement did not proclaim the “declaration of nationhood,”⁵⁶ but it formulated attributes how the Czechoslovak nation would accomplish its democratic ideals. Moreover, the agreement should connect leadership, Czech and Slovak compatriots.⁵⁷

“Twenty-nine men”⁵⁸ from both Czech and Slovak organizations signed the Pittsburgh Agreement on May 31, 1918, including Masaryk, of course, and there appeared names such as Karel Pergler, Masaryk’s secretary in the United States who presented the Czechoslovak question to Congress, or Ludvík Fisher, who had initiated the Cleveland agreement. It contained six points which each referred to future arrangements of Czechoslovakia. For example, the point number 3 showed that Slovak opinions had the same value as Czech ones when they wanted to secure Slovak language⁵⁹ as their national symbol – “[t]he Slovak language will be the official language in schools and public life in general (in Slovakia).”⁶⁰ Statements which referred namely to the Slovak nation were significant for them because they were apprehensive about the future Czech high ground. Masaryk immediately responded to Slovak representatives that Slovaks within Czechoslovakia would have their own administration to assure Slovaks of equality.⁶¹

The Pittsburgh Agreement became a conflict of interests later after the establishment of Czechoslovakia. With the approval of Slovak citizens, there was ratified the Czechoslovak constitution declaring the unity between these two nations which resulted in a default on requirements of the Pittsburgh Agreement. However, the Pittsburgh

⁵⁵Ben Hamrick, “The Birth of a Nation,” Local Pittsburgh, February 15, 2017, accessed March 22, 2018, <http://local-pittsburgh.com/culture/the-birth-of-a-nation/>; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 140-146.

⁵⁶Hamrick, “The Birth of a Nation.”

⁵⁷David Grinnell, “L and A Treasures: The Pittsburgh Agreement; Czecho-Slovak Agreement,” *Western Pennsylvania History* 90 (2007): 8; Hamrick, “The Birth of a Nation.”

⁵⁸Grinnell, “L and A Treasures,” 8.

⁵⁹Masaryk, *Světová revoluce*, 574-575, 601; Grinnell, “L and A Treasures,” 8.

⁶⁰Grinnell, “L and A Treasures,” 8.

⁶¹Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 146.

Agreement should work as the “draft” to negotiate all the necessary requirements they had endeavoured to achieve.⁶²

⁶²Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 146-147.

10 THE UNITED STATES AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL

While the world faced the Russian question and Britain as well as France still did not want to accept the American decision related to this issue and made efforts to convince Wilson of changing the moderate plan in Russia, the question of the Czechoslovak National Council took place simultaneously. After French and British recognition, the United States started to act. One of the most important roles belonged to Robert Lansing during all the arrangements. First of all, he became the first man, who supported the Czechoslovak independence as the aim of the war. On May 29, 1918 Robert Lansing issued an official declaration that Czechs, Slovaks and the South Slavs would have been supported by the American leadership because of failed negotiations with Austria-Hungary whose representatives had agreed on cooperation with Germany. This close connection would lead to the German hegemony in the case that Germany would win the war. Wilson received Lansing's memorandum related to this situation and approved American support on May 31, 1918. Lansing intensively worked on two options that were introduced to Wilson in August 1918. In that period of time, the American press also pointed to the British recognition and encouraged Masaryk as the leader of the independent state which would contribute to the collapse of Austria-Hungary. In addition to that, the New York Times paid attention to Czech and Slovak territories which became the part of the empire in 1620.⁶³

Two proclamations were received by Wilson in the second half of August. Wilson had waited for supports of American citizens, and he had been not ready to act until the Czechoslovak independence was highly supported by them. In the period of celebrating Czechoslovak soldiers and after the West European recognition of Czechoslovak affairs, Wilson's accession to it was quite expected.⁶⁴ The first possible way how to recognize the Czechoslovak National Council was formulated that "(...) the Allies could recognize the belligerency of the 'Czecho-Slovak revolutionists' in view of their military organization operating in Siberia and eastern Russia against Austrian loyalists and their German

⁶³Petr Prokš, *Diplomacie a "Velká válka" 1914-1918/1919: kapitoly o dějinách diplomacie za první světové války v Evropě a na mírové konferenci v Paříži* (Prague: Historický ústav, 2014), 216-218; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 267-268, 273-274, 276-279.

⁶⁴Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 278-279; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 284.

allies.”⁶⁵ The Czechoslovak National Council would be declared “as a de facto revolutionary government.”⁶⁶ That Austria-Hungary had lost its independence because of co-operation with Germany in the World War I was the topic of the second memorandum received by Wilson. Based on this statement, all nations which had wanted to be out of the Austro-Hungarian control had the opportunity to free themselves from the empire. The US government would be ready to get in touch with those leaders who represented resistance to Austria-Hungary. It was within Wilson’s authority to make a decision, and he decided to accept the first version.⁶⁷

Although Czechoslovakia had not given official boundaries, the United States acceded to its recognition. The American leadership made an exception when they decided to approach this action because it was for the first time when the US recognized such a nation. The formal version of the recognition was introduced to Masaryk on September 3, 1918. The whole declaration emphasized the determination of Czechoslovak soldiers and their allied selflessness. That was also Masaryk’s intention to use all the armies as the main power of the movement and show to the world that Czechoslovak people were able to support the allied actions and fight against the empire. Through the recognition, Wilson announced that the US government was ready to co-operate⁶⁸ with “de facto belligerent government.”⁶⁹ Masaryk satisfied with the result and Wilson’s complimentary words, thanked him for this decision in writing four days later. Masaryk was full of praise for Wilson. He perceived the American recognition as something different from British and French ones; however, he did not underestimate them. According to him, while France and Britain had paid attention to the independence of Czechoslovak nation and had declared the National Council as the future government, the US was concerned the National Council and the army first. Based on this recognition, the National Council was considered as real not only future-oriented. Highlighted the US appreciation for Masaryk’s work abroad,

⁶⁵Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 284.

⁶⁶Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 284.

⁶⁷Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 279-281; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 284-285.

⁶⁸Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 290-291; Pynsent, *T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937)*, 194; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 285-287.

⁶⁹Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 286.

Wilson replied to Masaryk's letter on September 10, 1918. He did not omit to remark how he and Lansing were satisfied with the work done.⁷⁰

One day later after their correspondence, Masaryk visited the White House. Besides a vote of thanks during their face-to-face encounter, Wilson and Masaryk's subject of conversation was also the situation in Russia. Expressed his apology for slow supply to the soldiers in Siberia, Wilson continued with his worries about the Allied sphere of interest in this area. They said goodbye to each other and Masaryk left the White House with the greatest appreciation.⁷¹

⁷⁰Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 59-60; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 291; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 286-287.

⁷¹Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 60-61; Pynsent, *T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937)*, 194; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 287.

11 THE CZECHOSLOVAK DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

October 1918 was in the spirit of preparations for the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence. While Masaryk was involved in the process of preparation for the Czechoslovak Declaration and the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary after the American recognition, Wilson dealt with the state of war and faced an unenviable situation. Masaryk knew that it was necessary to present the whole Czechoslovak program and plans to Americans in order to prevent an accepting German and Austro-Hungarian peace agreements which had appeared recently and had been offered by the Central Powers. Masaryk drew inspiration from the American Declaration of Independence signed in 1776. He used the American Declaration because he was aware of the target audience to whom it should be introduced. Masaryk prepared this document almost on his own. The most important assistants were Czech Jaroslav Císař, who translated the declaration into English, Bennett, a journalist, who supported the end of Austria-Hungary, then Louis D. Brandeis, a judge, and the Minister of the Interior F. K. Lane.⁷²

Before all the arrangements during October 1918, the American audience was acquainted with Masaryk's thoughts on the empire. Moreover, Masaryk appealed to Americans that Austria-Hungary and its actions contravened the principles which the United States had endeavoured to acquire several centuries ago as well. In connection with the American revolutionary movement, Masaryk highlighted its similarity with the Czechoslovak question because Americans had been able to break free of ascendancy and Czechoslovaks made steps to follow the United States.⁷³

It was clear that Wilson had to make his final decision on the Austro-Hungarian question. Although the States had recognized the Czechoslovak National Council back in September, the American leadership still did not announce its approach to Austria-Hungary neither publicly nor to Masaryk. Masaryk thought about Wilson's restraint because Wilson did not pay attention to peace requirements which were sent from Vienna. This made Masaryk uncertain because he did not know how Wilson would react when Austria-Hungary would decide to create the federation of nations in order to save the whole empire from the decline. Thus Masaryk started to take steps more quickly. Through the American Declaration, Masaryk intended to address Wilson to facilitate his difficult situation. There

⁷²Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 274, 363-364, 369; Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 50.

⁷³Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 363-365.

was no time to hesitate. Masaryk knew that he could rely on Beneš, who evaluated the situation in the same way. Therefore, Masaryk divided the essential parts of the declaration between him and Beneš. As for Masaryk himself, he decided to compose the document whereas Beneš had to change the Czechoslovak National Council into the interim government.⁷⁴

When the Central Powers had sent the second suggestion for making peace to Wilson, Masaryk immediately responded to Lansing and House. Despite the fact that the Central Powers promised to accept Wilson's Fourteen Points, Masaryk did not believe it and added indirectly that it was necessary to adjust the Fourteen Points. Furthermore, Masaryk expressed that the autonomy under the auspices of Wilson's Points was not sufficient for the Czechoslovak independence and Masaryk himself, and he formulated his disagreement through his letter which was primarily aimed at Austria-Hungary. According to him, Germany should follow Wilson's newest approach because it included principles of equality, thereby Masaryk would achieve his goals. Moreover, Masaryk was persuaded that based on this German declaration, the German leadership only wanted to prevent the Allies from destroying the empire and then they would continue with the waging of war.⁷⁵

Beneš started to make particular steps on October 14, 1918. After Beneš assured himself of French support, he prepared a document which informed the French leadership about a provisional government formed from the Czechoslovak National Council. The French government acceded to the establishment of the Czechoslovak government on October 15, 1918 when they proclaimed it de jure. Meantime, Masaryk still waited for his crucial moment. He did not want to be perceived that he exerted pressure on Wilson. Moreover, the American press still took a stand against Austria-Hungary and predicted the fall of the empire in order to support Czechoslovaks and their aspirations.⁷⁶

Two days after Beneš's announcement, Emperor Charles released⁷⁷ his "manifesto proclaiming that Austria would become a federal state in which each 'race' would be free to establish its own body politic within its own territory."⁷⁸ However, the manifesto did not involve Hungary. So basically if Wilson accepted the federation, Slovaks would not have

⁷⁴Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 365-369.

⁷⁵Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 374-377.

⁷⁶Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 377-382; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 314-315.

⁷⁷Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 314.

⁷⁸Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 314.

any benefits from it because Slovakia as the unit of the Hungarian part would have no opportunity to become independent.⁷⁹

The sands of time were running out. Issued the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence to the world, Masaryk contrasted it with the manifesto by Emperor Charles. Masaryk showed his admiration for the United States when he had decided to derive ideas from the American document. In addition to that, he appreciated the US as the state where the origin of modern democracy could be found. Referred to the liberty of the United States in Wilson's hands,⁸⁰ Masaryk highlighted significant "principles of Lincoln, and of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen."⁸¹ Besides this emphasizing of American acts, Masaryk mentioned Comenius and the Hussite Wars in order to point out Bohemian history as well. The official version was announced on October 18, 1918, in Washington and became known as the Washington Declaration.⁸²

Wilson reacted to the Czechoslovak Declaration positively. Admitted all the changes that had happened since then he had announced the Fourteen Points, Wilson was not able to accept the armistice with Austria-Hungary. Moreover, Wilson added more detailed information. It was not possible to follow the Central Powers' peace efforts mainly because the US government had declared the Czechoslovak National Council as the provisional government and the American leadership was hereby obligated to support Czechoslovak craving for its independent democratic state. Otherwise, it would be in contradiction to their recognition of September 1918. The most important point of Wilson's reply were Czechoslovak military forces and their belligerency, although they had not been absent in the first Wilson's draft, Lansing put more significant emphasis on soldiers in the final version. The US leadership referred to this change as the most relevant, which had made it change its minds. Not only the war was approaching its end, but also this signaled the end of Austria-Hungary after this answer.⁸³

⁷⁹Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 384.

⁸⁰Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 50-51; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 315.

⁸¹Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 51.

⁸²Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 50-51.

⁸³Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 395-397; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 316-317.

12 THE WASHINGTON DECLARATION AND ITS REQUIREMENTS

This document provided detailed information about the situation within the Empire. Everything that had been presented during Masaryk's visits in the US was noted down in the declaration. Masaryk laced into the Habsburgs. On the other hand, there was not only the verbal attack on Austria-Hungary but they also made a remark about the costs of war. According to this document, they refused to pay the costs of war because they should be recompensed by countries which put up this fight. Therefore Czechoslovakia took its hands off all the Austro-Hungarian debts. Nevertheless, the leadership claimed responsibility for the public debt which had originated from the Czechoslovak and Austro-Hungarian coexistence before the war. Based on the Czechoslovak Declaration, the Czechoslovak leadership wanted to show how the new state will be developed. Besides the appreciation of the American system, Masaryk emphasized the Czechoslovak transformation into a republic which will respect the attribute of civil liberties⁸⁴ such as "freedom of conscience, religion and science, literature and art, speech, the press and the right of assembly and petition."⁸⁵

Masaryk and his assistants specified the Czechoslovak democracy. Masaryk as the supporter of universal suffrage, which he wanted to achieve from the beginning of his political career, did not omit women and men's equality including political and cultural status. Moreover, all the minorities living in the state territory would also have equal protected rights.⁸⁶ A statement "[m]ilitary is overcome – democracy is victorious,"⁸⁷ finished the wording of the Declaration. Ready to dismember the empire, the document was countersigned – besides Masaryk – by two other prominent men who struggled for the independence outside Austria-Hungary – Beneš, and Štefánek.⁸⁸

⁸⁴Czechoslovakia, *Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation: By Its Provisional Government* (New York: Marchbanks Press, 1918), 3-6.

⁸⁵Czechoslovakia, *Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation*, 6.

⁸⁶Czechoslovakia, *Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation*, 7.

⁸⁷Czechoslovakia, *Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation*, 7.

⁸⁸Czechoslovakia, *Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation*, 8.

13 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND ITS CONNECTION WITH CARPATHIAN RUTHENIA IN 1919

In the meantime, the Austro-Hungarian government had to face several disagreements manifested by Czechs within the empire before October 28. Their dissatisfaction amplified when Czechs discovered that corn which they had in reserve was exported by the Austrian government while the whole empire was affected by an economic crisis. Persuaded that it was the attack on Bohemian nations, Czechs protested against it and Charles's manifesto was rejected by the National Committee as well. Moreover, Emperor Charles had arranged a meeting with Czech Václav Klobučák in order to persuade him; however, Klobučák was resistant to Austrian requirements and all the kind words.⁸⁹

The Austro-Hungarian government did not want to abandon the idea of the federation in order to save the empire from the division. Nevertheless, their last attempt to save the empire was the exact opposite of it. The Ministry of External Affairs prepared a note, which should answer Wilson's rejection of Austro-Hungarian peace talks. The note was released in the morning of October 28, and named after its author Andrassy as the Andrassy Note. Instead of being beneficial for Austria-Hungary, the Note caused the complete disintegration which precipitated the end of the Hapsburg Monarchy. Andrassy on the empire's behalf claimed the acceptance of Wilson's Fourteen Points and highlighted especially Czechoslovaks. Based on this statement, Austria-Hungary demanded the armistice from the US. The government was still confident that this approval would lead to Wilson's positive reply and the empire would be protected against its break-up. However, when the message came to the US, it was criticized harshly by Masaryk and the American press. According to the Washington Post, the cooperation between Hungary, Austria and Germany was called as the biggest disaster in the history.⁹⁰

The Czechoslovak leadership in Prague answered very quickly. A bloodless revolution was under the patronage of the patronage of the National Committee and its politicians – Alois Rašín, Antonín Švehla, Jiří Stříbrný and František Soukup. The leadership had announced that it would take control of Bohemia and late in the afternoon, the final decision appeared. The National Committee passed a law which was the first one in relation to independent Czechoslovakia. Aware of the American and Czechoslovak

⁸⁹Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 398-402.

⁹⁰Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 413, 426-432; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 317-318.

interconnection, Czechoslovaks cheered Wilson and Masaryk, who was still in the US, as Czechoslovak liberators during the revolution in Prague.⁹¹

A message came from Vienna on October 29, 1918. The Austro-Hungarian government did not want to surrender the part of the empire and Czechoslovak soldiers were banned from leaving the Austro-Hungarian army. However, they joined a new Czechoslovak independent army at Masaryk's command from the United States. All the soldiers born in Bohemia and Slovakia who were still in Austro-Hungarian and German armies should leave them in order to defend Czechoslovak interests at home.⁹²

It was Slovak turn on October 30. Despite the fact, that Masaryk and other political officials had lobbied for Czechoslovak not only Czech independence, the Slovak leaders decided to join the new state officially later this month. Inspired by Wilson's response to Austria-Hungary published on October 18, they created the Slovak National Council and signed a document called the Martin Declaration thanks to which they could satisfy Slovak aspirations to self-determination. Moreover, Slovaks did not omit the all the similarities between Czechs and Slovaks and referred to the common history, similar languages and customs – based on these attributes Czechs and Slovaks were predetermined to co-operate as one unit. Although Czechoslovakia was established in Prague on October 28, these two nations, which had been repressed by Austria by one side and Hungary on the other, could officially start a new common period after the Martin Declaration.⁹³

⁹¹Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 427-429; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 317-318.

⁹²Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 429, 433.

⁹³Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 430; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 318.

14 EVENTS OF NOVEMBER 1918

14.1 The End of the War

In November 1918, the end of the Great War was approaching. Although Austria-Hungary tried to take action mentioned above to keep the empire in its original state before the Great War began in 1914, Germany had to cope with the end almost on its own. Conditions of German armies compelled the leadership to declare a ceasefire and accept all the Allied requirements which had been sent by Lansing. From November 4, the Central Powers and the Allies aimed for the armistice. Besides other events which happened from the beginning of November, the peace treaty was signed on November 11, 1918.⁹⁴

14.2 The Situation in Czechoslovakia and Masaryk's Election

It was also time for Masaryk's nationalistic speech on November 4. Masaryk highlighted Czechoslovak armies in Russia, France, and Italy and expressed his satisfaction with the whole revolutionary movement abroad. According to Masaryk, the devotion and bravery of Czechoslovak soldiers would improve the position of Czechoslovak representatives during upcoming peace talks. Beneš who was still in France did not hesitate as well. In a short letter, he informed Masaryk that the official government would be elected in a short time.⁹⁵

While Masaryk was still in the US and finished his long worldwide journey, the National Assembly was in session because of an election. After the establishment, it was time to create the constitution of democratic Czechoslovakia. On November 13, 1918, the Czechoslovak leadership formed a constitution which contained political separation of powers. When the powers in the state were negotiated and redistributed, the representatives had to vote for the first Czechoslovak president during the meeting on November 14. Masaryk was elected as the first Czechoslovak president for a term of two years. There was nobody who would not give consent to Masaryk's election.⁹⁶ This day "each year marks the beginnings of parliamentary democracy in the independent Czechoslovak Republic."⁹⁷

⁹⁴Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 434-435.

⁹⁵Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 435.

⁹⁶Tomáš Trávník, "The First Meeting of the Revolutionary National Assembly and the Election of T. G. Masaryk as President of the Republic," Government Information Centre, November 11, 2011, accessed March 25, 2018, <https://icv.vlada.cz/en/udalosti/vyznamne-dny/the-first-meeting-of-the-revolutionary-national-assembly-and-the-election-of-t-g--masaryk-as-president-of-the-republic-143474/tmplid-676/>.

⁹⁷Trávník, "The First Meeting of the Revolutionary National Assembly and the Election of T. G. Masaryk as President of the Republic."

14.3 Masaryk's Last Visit to the White House

Masaryk, already elected as the president met Wilson for the last time on November 15. They discussed Russia, Poland, Germany and the upcoming Paris Peace Conference. Wilson wanted to know Masaryk's opinion about his position during the conference. Masaryk suggested that he should definitely go there. However, Masaryk pointed out, that Wilson should not to go into particulars because he was not familiar with all the European affairs. As Masaryk noticed, Wilson always had the last say as the president of the powerful States; however, he requested advice on these issues. So any hesitation would weaken Wilson's leading world-famous position and influence.⁹⁸

14.4 Masaryk Left for Czechoslovakia

It was four years and three days when Masaryk left his native country in order to accomplish his goal and mission in life. After saying goodbye to close American Czechoslovaks in New York and American supporters in Washington, Masaryk recapitulated all the actions which were under the patronage of the Czechoslovak National Council, the American Government and devoted Czechoslovaks. Then Masaryk set out for a journey on November 20, 1918 which brought him to the shores of Europe nine days later. Through London and Paris, Masaryk finally came to his home country on December 21, 1918.⁹⁹

⁹⁸Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 62-63; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 458-459.

⁹⁹Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 459-463, 466-467.

15 THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE OF 1919 AND THE FORMING OF CZECHOSLOVAK TERRITORY

From the beginning of 1919 to 1920 Paris organized the biggest political event. After the end of the war, the peace conference, which both Masaryk and Wilson had discussed during their last meeting, took place. Various diplomats, statements and representatives from many world countries came together in order to solve the situation originated from the Great War. Winners on one side and losers on another – outcomes of the conference included not only treaties between them but also a demarcation of borderlines or a discussion about Wilson's idea of the League of Nations.¹⁰⁰

Independent Czechoslovakia participated in negotiations at winners' side. Karel Kramář, the Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia at that time, and Edvard Beneš, who became the Minister of Foreign Affairs after the dedicated cooperation with Masaryk abroad, defended interests of Czechoslovakia. In comparison with other Slavic nations which strove for the independence during the conference, Czechoslovakia was already established thus the Czechoslovak case was not a big challenge for Kramář and mainly Beneš, who claimed credit for the representation of Czechoslovak affairs the most.¹⁰¹

All the allied states recognized Czechoslovakia without a given state territory. So it was the right time to discuss it during the Paris Peace Conference. There were also nationalist ideas that Czechoslovakia should include parts of Germany and Austria¹⁰² and "several morsels of Poland, as well as a slice of Hungary stretching along the Danube."¹⁰³ Officially, Beneš also demanded Carpathian Ruthenia. According to Beneš, "[i]t would be unkind"¹⁰⁴ if Czechoslovak representatives would "leave them under Hungarian rule when Czechoslovakia was prepared to take them under its wing"¹⁰⁵ based on an agreement between Masaryk and the Ruthenian leader in the US. Masaryk's increasing popularity in America among the Slavs contributed to a Ruthenian interest. Their history of the empire was similar to Slovak one – both of these two nations were oppressed by Hungary. Ruthenian nationalist attitudes changed based on the situation in Russia because they had

¹⁰⁰Margaret MacMillan, introduction to *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2002), xxv-xxix.

¹⁰¹MacMillan, *Paris*, 229-231.

¹⁰²MacMillan, *Paris*, 234.

¹⁰³MacMillan, *Paris*, 234.

¹⁰⁴MacMillan, *Paris*, 234.

¹⁰⁵MacMillan, *Paris*, 234.

been initially Russia-oriented. During a meeting with a Ruthenian leader in October 1918, Wilson had claimed that it would not be beneficial and effective for Ruthenians to declare the independence of such a small nation. Thus the leader came to a main office of the Mid-European Union. According to Masaryk's own words, the Ruthenian leadership had obtained three possible choices to which country they could affiliate – Poland, Czechoslovakia or Hungary, and Ruthenians immediately started to negotiate a coexistence with Masaryk.¹⁰⁶

It had not been Masaryk's intention to expand Czechoslovakia, but when the proposal appeared, he imagined how beneficial this union would be. Specifically, convinced that democracy would win in Ukraine and Russia, Masaryk considered Carpathian Ruthenia as a good connection with these two countries. On May 14, 1919, the Ruthenian leadership declared the affiliation to Czechoslovakia.¹⁰⁷

Not every negotiation of future territory went smoothly. Czechoslovak representatives in Paris wanted to negotiate a corridor in order to connect Czechoslovakia to allied Yugoslavia. Otherwise, Germany, Austria and Hungary would encircle Czechoslovakia. This idea was immediately rejected¹⁰⁸ and described as “audacious and indefensible.”¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the relationship between Poles and Czechoslovaks was weakened by boundary dispute. The sphere of interest of both of these nations was Teschen known for its coal mining and railway line. In 1920, they split the difference and Teschen was divided into halves – one for Czechoslovaks and one for Poles. Moreover, peacemakers were concerned for German minority living in the Sudetenland inside Czechoslovakia but Czechoslovak representatives obtained this area thanks to several promises related to self-determination of minorities which were really accomplished by Czechoslovakia.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶Čapek, *Talks with T. G. Masaryk*, 233; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 410-412.

¹⁰⁷Čapek, *Talks with T. G. Masaryk*, 233; Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 413.

¹⁰⁸MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 235.

¹⁰⁹MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 235.

¹¹⁰MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 236-240.

16 MASARYK AND WILSON'S RELATIONSHIP

Masaryk described their relationship as “purely matter of fact.”¹¹¹ Made a clean break with the United States, Masaryk still kept in touch with Wilson until Wilson's death. During their meetings, they always debated particular solutions or steps related to the war, new world order or Czechoslovakia. Both Masaryk and Wilson had respect for each other and appreciated their opinions. How Masaryk described, he had known Wilson's political approaches but all the more he had referred to Wilson's words in his public announcements.¹¹² “Two main tasks which both Wilson and Masaryk had on their minds in 1918 were winning the war and laying the foundations for a lasting peace.”¹¹³

Both Masaryk and Wilson appreciated each other and encouraged themselves as well as the development of Czechoslovakia. Their correspondence made their relationships deeper. The first letter after their last meeting was sent on the beginning of January 1919 on the initiative of Masaryk. Despite the fact that they had debated political and war affairs, Wilson showed that he was indifferent to Masaryk's family background. When Masaryk's American wife Charlotte died, Wilson did not hesitate and sent a letter of condolence. On May 19, 1923, Wilson wrote:¹¹⁴ “I very often think of you and always, you may be sure, with the deepest and most genuine interest in your own personal welfare (...).”¹¹⁵

At the end of the year 1923, the last letters were delivered in Czechoslovakia and the United States. Wilson was highly pleased with a message that some places in Prague were called after him to highlight his contribution to the establishment. Masaryk's words came true when he had said that Czechoslovaks would gratitude to Wilson for his last say in the Czechoslovak question. While November 15, 1918 was the last time for their face-to-face encounter, December 29, 1923 was a day when the really last response was received by Masaryk, because Woodrow Wilson died on February 3, 1924.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹Pynsent, *T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937)*, 196.

¹¹²Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 55; Masaryk, *Světová revoluce*, 253-256.

¹¹³Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 55.

¹¹⁴Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 63-65.

¹¹⁵Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 65.

¹¹⁶Kovtun, *Masaryk and America*, 65-66.

CONCLUSION

On October 28, 1918, Masaryk achieved the greatest success of his life. His challenging task was completed. During his liberation journey he gained popularity among the allied countries one by one and together with his colleagues, Czechoslovak compatriots and devoted soldiers, took particular steps to influence public affairs and mainly Woodrow Wilson. 1918 was significant for Masaryk's movement. Although Wilson in his war program promoted Czechoslovak autonomy rather than independence, events of 1918 made a lot of difference to the Czechoslovak question. Without Masaryk and his supporters, there would be only a federation of nations within Austria-Hungary, because that was Wilson's intention at the beginning of 1918. However, increasing support of the Czechoslovak question by the American press and Czechoslovak compatriots, the recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council by France and the United Kingdom and the allied desire to suppress the German ascendancy made the American leadership act. The American recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council was under the patronage of Robert Lansing, who prepared memoranda for Wilson. Although Wilson always made the final decision, he needed advisers who provided him with important advice and information about European affairs, whether it was Masaryk, Lansing or Col. House. It was essential that Lansing took the Czechoslovaks' side. He was the first American representative who understood that Austria-Hungary should be dismembered in order to end the Great War and maintain peace. Masaryk himself met these people who had a certain influence on Wilson in the United States to mediate Masaryk's opinions to Woodrow Wilson.¹¹⁷ Although Wilson seemed to hold his ground in connection with the Austro-Hungarian federation of nations, he and Masaryk are regarded as founding fathers of Czechoslovakia.

¹¹⁷Kovtun, *Masarykův triumf*, 273, 366-367; Masaryk, *Světová revoluce*, 255; Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 283.

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