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“The Russo-Polish War, 1919-1920: A Bibliography of Materials in English,” by John A. Drobnicki¹

One would think, from the scant attention paid to it in textbooks, that the Russo-Polish War has also been neglected in the historical literature. As the reader will see, this is an erroneous assumption, for it has been the subject of numerous monographs, several doctoral dissertations, and scores of articles. Perhaps one of the reasons that this Polish-Soviet War is often overlooked in the classroom, aside from the bias against East Central European history in general, is that it was just one of a series of conflagrations raging almost simultaneously. Since the borders in the area were tenuous, and in some cases non-existent, several countries came into territorial conflict. According to Iwo C. Pogonowski’s *Historical Atlas of Poland*, there were six concurrent wars on the borders of Poland from 1918 to 1922, between Poland and: Ukraine, Germany (over Poznan), Germany (over Silesia), Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union. Add to this the end of the First World War, the Russian Civil War, Allied Intervention in that war, and the Paris Peace Conference, and the reader can see just how confusing and unstable the European political situation was.

Although it is usually glossed over in many Western History college courses, the Russo-Polish War was a pivotal event in twentieth century history, “the most portentous event facing post-Versailles Europe,” according to Yale historian Piotr S. Wandycz. Had Poland been overrun, the Soviet Union could, theoretically, have invaded Germany. Thus not only did Poland deal the Red Army its first defeat, it also greatly expanded the territory of the fledgling republic to its historic, pre-partition borders.

It is hoped that this bibliography, which has been limited to materials in the English language, will facilitate the study of this fascinating period of Polish and European history.

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