The main aim of this collection of essays is to challenge the general Western historical approach to the results of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919. The peace treaty (or, to be more accurate, a number of peace treaties) was signed between Allied and Central Powers and it established a new political order that was to govern European politics for the next twenty years. Essays published in this volume attempt to present a more complex picture of the post-World War I politics. As the authors argue, European peace after the Great War was governed not only by the Treaty of Versailles, but also by the Treaty of Riga signed in March 1921. In other words, Riga played as important a role in the East as Versailles did in the West. The book is not the first attempt to put the Treaty in a wider context. It is rather surprising that the editor of the volume does not mention *Traktat ryski roku 1921 po 75 latach* (1998), which is an earlier collection of essays edited by Mieczysław Wojciechowski.

*Zapomniany pokój* is the result of a conference in Riga in 2011 that brought together scholars from Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Latvia. What seems the most striking, however, is the fact that none of the authors engages in a discussion with Western historiography. A few references to Norman Davies or Zara Steiner are certainly not enough. If the aim of the collection was "to introduce the reader to the debate on the Treaty of Riga" (p. 12), then it would have been very helpful to reach beyond Central and Eastern European approaches and look at the position of that treaty in a broader European context.

At the same time the book offers a number of different and interesting approaches that go far beyond Polish and Russian perspectives. Essays by Latvian, Ukrainian and Belarusian scholars present paradoxically more forgotten elements of that "forgotten" peace. Ėriks Jēkabsons summarises his research on the Latvian perception of the negotiations that took place in Riga. His work sheds some more light on the uneasy situation of that country, bound to remain neutral, but silently much more sympathetic towards Poland than Soviet Russia. As he rightly notes in the conclusion, there are many unknown documents in the Latvian archives that could be of great use to both Polish and Russian historians (p. 343). The same can be said about Ukrainian and Belarusian archives.

The fate of Ukraine was perhaps the most tragic outcome of the Polish-Soviet War and this subject appears (in one way or another) in almost all essays. The most important ones are, however, works by Władysław Werstiuk and Jan Jacek Bruski. The latter concentrates on the issue of conflict between Soviet Russia and Poland in the years following the Treaty of Riga (1921-1926). In spite of certain points in the treaty that bound both sides to...
avoid supporting dissident movements, both countries made extensive use of national minorities to destabilise the internal situation on the other side of the border. As Bruski convincingly argues, the initiative was all the time on the Soviet side. As we can read in many essays in this collection, for Soviets the peace was considered only a temporary resolution, a way of consolidating power before another attempt to bring revolution to all Europe (in this respect it was compared with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk). It should not be surprising that Bolsheviks got actively involved in stirring anti-Polish sentiments among Ukrainian and Belarusian minorities in Poland. The Polish response was far less organised and the so-called Prometheism (the assumption that national minorities are the weakest element of Soviet Russia and Poland should support them) "has never been the main stream of Polish politics" (p. 311; a similar opinion is expressed by Marek Kornat, p. 398).

Werstiuk, on the other hand, presents us with the Ukrainian point of view in which the Treaty was yet another division (or partition) of Ukrainian territories by stronger powers. He is fully aware of the uneasy position of Poland during and after the war. In spite of deep sympathies expressed by various Polish politicians (particularly Marshall Piłsudski), political realities and the implacable position of Soviets made any discussion regarding the Ukrainian People's Republic very difficult. Furthermore, the Polish delegation sent to Riga was dominated by representatives of right-wing parties that did not particularly like Piłsudski's federalist vision of Central and Eastern Europe. Consequently the case of independent Ukraine was not discussed in Riga, even though particular points of the Treaty referred to Ukrainian and Belarusian rights to self-determination.

If the case of Ukraine was difficult, the problem of Belarus was even more unclear. Uładzimir Snapkouski shows that the main difficulty was the fact that neither Soviets, nor Poles trusted representatives of the Belarusian People's Republic. It took some time to establish a political relationship between Polish and Belarusian leaders, but even then the contacts were not very cordial. In spite of some sympathies expressed by Piłsudski, the problem of Belarusian independence was of secondary, if not third-rate importance.

Among essays prepared by Polish and Russian historians (being the largest part of the volume) we can find various approaches to the Polish-Soviet relations that sometimes, but not always, relate to the Treaty of Riga. It is interesting (in relation to Ukrainian and Belarusian problems) to read that according to Michaił Narinski stipulations of the Treaty of Riga caused "Ukraine and Belarus to lose their Western parts to Poland" (p. 50). Of course such an interpretation follows the approach presented in the Treaty itself, but as other essays prove, it was not the case of Ukraine and Belarus, but Ukrainian and Belarusian Soviet Republics. Interesting observations are made by Jerzy Borzęcki (the author of "The Soviet-Polish Peace of 1921 and the Creation of Interwar Europe"), who considers the federalist structure of the Soviet Union established in early 1920s as the main reason that allowed a peaceful dissolution of that country in 1991. He also notes that in spite of resentment of Ukrainians and Belarusians caused by the partition of their national territories, those who remained within the borders of Poland avoided the tragedies of the Great Famine and Soviet terror raging on the other side of the border. It is arguable to what extent Polish parts of both countries helped in the preservation of national consciousness (and would certainly lead us to a discussion about the impact of the Treaty of Riga on current political affairs), but Borzęcki's essay is certainly one of the most valuable insights into history and politics of that Treaty.
If the key problem of the volume was to prove that the Treaty of Riga played as important a role in Central and Eastern Europe as the Treaty of Versailles in Western Europe, then Zapomniany pokój should be considered a success. At the same time it should be noted that none of the authors really engages with Western historiography and interpretations of the post-1919 peace. Yes, there are several references to the most recent publications on that topic, but they are few and far between (with only one reference to Zara Steiner’s monumental *The Lights that Failed*). As a result, the book does not even try to discuss the problem in a wider, European context, instead offering rather local, Eastern and Central European interpretations. It does not undermine the great value of most of the studies published in this volume, but if we want to change Western approaches to the subject, a more Western-orientated selection of studies is still required.

*Sposób cytowania:*