

Poland and Russia

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Résumé ou extrait : Professor Andrzej Nowak, a Russian speaker and leading world expert on Russian history and civilization, reveals in this book, the deeply rooted sources of the Russian state's mentality. Its inherently aggressive, expansionist tendencies. He does this by tracing the history of these lands all the way back to the founding of both the Polish state and the earlier Kyivan Rus. The scholar explains that this earlier Rus (Ruthenia) was definitively not Russia. In addition, it was not until the 15th century that the principality of Moscow began to emerge as a threat to a Polish state. A Poland at that time, part of Europe's largest coherent political entity, the Polish and Lithuanian lands, then joined in personal union under one ruling dynasty, the Jagiellonian. The many years of war that followed, all provoked by Moscow ultimately led to the Kremlin's crushing defeat at Klushino (1610) and the subsequent occupation of Moscow by Polish forces. Yet Poland, later outmaneuvered diplomatically by the tsars, especially Peter, the First Tsar of the Russian Empire, declined. A fall culminating in the Polish partitions

in the second half of the 18th century, orchestrated and executed by the German born Tsarina Catherine II. To justify Russia's many wars against Poland and ultimate conquest, the Kremlin has throughout history used narrative arguments the echo many which can still be heard today. Polish intolerance and russophobia, the necessity to defend suppressed minorities, or the "grass roots" based desire for the unification of all inhabitants of former Rus lands (identified in Kremlin propaganda as Russians) under one enlightened ruler.

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