

Scientific article

doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2024-1-98-111

For citation

Naumov, Alexander O., Senin, Alexander V. Anschluss of Austria and the position of the Great Powers: the path to disaster. Based on little-known archival documents. (In Russ). IN: Vestnik Archivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2024, no. 1, pp. 98-111. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2024-1-98-111

Naumov, Alexander O., Senin, Alexander V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russian Federation

Anschluss of Austria and the position of the Great Powers: the path to disaster. Based on little-known archival documents

## Abstract

The annexation of the Austria by Nazi Germany in 1938 is an important element in the crisis of the Versailles system of international relations, which ended with the outbreak of World War II in Europe. The particular historical and political importance of this event consisted in the fact, that it was the first aggressive action of the Third Reich that led to the disappearance of a sovereign state from the map of Europe. However, despite the significance of this tragedy, it seems to be insufficiently studied in scientific literature. It should be pointed out that the First Austrian republic is often regarded in the Russian as well as foreign historiography as a subject of international relations completely dependent on Germany, fully following in the wake of the foreign policy of its large German-speaking neighbor. It should be pointed out that, with regard to the Soviet foreign policy, many foreign and Russian historians draw the conclusion that Austria played an insignificant role in the foreign policy planning of the Soviet Union. The little-known documents derived from the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation, the Russian State Military Archive, Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, as well as the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation suggest otherwise. Special attention is paid to the economic side of the Anschluss, which is rarely touched upon in modern historiography. The methodological basis of the research presented below constitute historical-genetic and historical-systemic methods that are used to trace the evolution of the European system of international relations of that period. In this way, a multidimensional approach to the issues considered in the article allows us to recreate a holistic picture of the events of that time, as well as to restore the true cause-and-effect relationships between them. This circumstance is of particular importance in the context of the increasingly frequent attempts to rewrite the history of the Second World War and belittle the efforts of the Soviet Union to prevent it. The authors conclude that based on the new archival documents, it is possible to draw an unambiguous conclusion that the Anschluss became one of the key moments in European history, which made the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe inevitable. It consolidated the main foreign policy line of Western democracies to appease the aggressors, eliminated the last serious obstacles to the union of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy and demonstrated the impossibility of implementing in practice a collective security strategy based on the proposals of the Soviet Union on a united anti-German front.

Key words: Anschluss, Austria, Germany, USSR, Great Britain, France, Versailles system, World War II, collective security, appeasement of the aggressor.

Download the article: [naumov\\_senin\\_doi](#)

## References

Volos, M. Foreign policy of the USSR in 1935-1939: some considerations // Bulletin of MGIMO-University. 2009. Special issue, pp. 166-176.

Golovashina, O. V. The idea of Anschluss and the project of the Danube Federation in the public opinion of the First Austrian Republic // Vestnik of Tambov University. Series: Humanities. 2009. Vyp. 10 (78), pp. 137-142.

Naumov, A. O. Europe on the Edge of the Abyss. Crisis and collapse of the Versailles system of international relations. Moscow: ARGAMAK-MEDIA publ., 2020, pp. 480 c.

Efimenko, E. A. Austrians vs. Germans: the origins of the definition of Austrian national consciousness // Austrian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2015, № 5-6, pp. 48-52.

Poltavsky, M. A. Austrian people and the Anschluss of 1938 Moscow: Nauka publ., 1971, 200 p.

Schweitzer, V. Soviet Union and the Anschluss of 1938 // Scientific and Analytical Bulletin of IE RAS, 2018, № 2, pp. 225-228.

Schiff, V. Agrarny question in modern Austria. Moscow: Agrarian Problems publ., 1928, 73 p.

Zweig, S. Yesterday's World. Moscow: Raduga publ., 1991. 542 p.

Holzer, G. Verfreunde Nachbarn Osterreich - Deutschland. Ein Verhaltnis. Wien: Kremayr & Scheriau publ., 1995. 208 p.

About the authors

Naumov Alexander O., PhD in History, associate professor, Lomonosov Moscow State University, School of Public Administration, professor, Moscow, Russian Federation, +7-916-967-8505, naumovao@my.msu.ru

Senin Alexander V., Lomonosov Moscow State University, School of Public Administration, post-graduate student, Moscow, Russian Federation, +7-925-314-45-21, la1429@yandex.ru

The article was received in the editorial office on 20.10.2023, recommended for publication on 20.12.2023.

**You can read completely article in the russian historic-archival magazine “The Herald of an Archivist”. Read more about terms of subscription [here](#) .**

**Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки [здесь](#) .**