

Adolph Hitler In Memel, Austria, tells a crowd in 1939, 'Germans are not here to harm the people of the world, but to end the suffering Germans have had to endure.' Sound familiar? At great risk to himself, historian Andrei Zubov wrote this warning to Vladimir Putin: stop now and avoid the fate of Nazi Germany.

From Hitler to Putin: Crimea is 'Not the First Time' (Vedomosti, Russia)

"Did the Russian government consider all the risks of this incredible adventure? I am sure it did not. Just as Adolf Hitler didn't in his time. If he had, he wouldn't have ended up in a bunker on April 1945 taking shelter from Russian bombs, and he wouldn't have guzzled down a vial of poison. ... Friends! We have to think about what we're doing and stop. Our politicians are pulling us down a terrible, horrible road. History tells us things won't turn out well. We mustn't get carried away like the Germans did by the promises of Goebbels and Hitler."

Dr. Andrei Zubov - Translated By Rosamund Musgrave- March 26, 2014



Russia - Vedomosti - Original Article (Russian)

Until March 1, Dr. Andrei Zubov was professor of Russian philosophy at the prestigious Moscow State Institute of International Relations, where he had been a teacher since 2001. He was [forced to resign](#) for publishing this column.

Friends. We are on the brink. But not of introducing a new subject into the Russian Federation. We are on the brink of complete destruction of the system of international treaties, economic chaos and political dictatorship. We are on the brink of war with our closest, kindred people of Ukraine, and a sharp decline in relations with Europe and America. We are on the brink of a cold, or possibly hot - war with them.

After all, this happened before. In Austria, starting in March 1938. The Nazis want to round off the Reich at the expense of another German-speaking state. The people aren't especially eager for this - no one is oppressing them, no one is discriminating against them. But the idea of a greater Germany fills the heads of radicals - the local Nazis. To put an end to the dispute over the fate of Austria, her chancellor, [Kurt Schuschnigg](#), [calls a referendum](#) for March 13th. That doesn't suit the Nazis in Berlin and Vienna, however. What happens if the people suddenly vote against [Anschluss](#) [Nazi annexation]? Chancellor Schuschnigg is forced to resign on March 10, and in his place the president appoints local Nazi leader Arthur Seyss-Inquart. In the mean time, German divisions are already entering Austrian cities at the invitation of the new chancellor, which the president later learns from a newspaper. Austrian soldiers capitulate. The people either rapturously greet Hitler's troops, stay at home holed up in exasperation, or hurriedly flee to Switzerland. [Cardinal Innitzer](#) of Austria welcomes and gives his blessing to the Anschluss.

From March 13th, the arrests begin. Chancellor Schuschnigg was arrested the day before. A plebiscite was held on April 10. In Germany 99.08 percent of the population voted in favor of union with Austria, while in Austria (now the [Ostmark Province](#) of the German Empire), the figure was 99.75 percent. On October 1, 1938, the [Czech Sudetenland](#) was also unified with its German brothers, and then overnight on March 22, 1939, the [Lithuanian Oblast of Klaipeda](#) became German-held Memel. In all these lands, German speakers were genuinely in the majority, and throughout, many people really wanted to unite with Hitler's Reich. Overall this reunion was carried out amid much fanfare and shouts of jubilation from frenzied jingoistic crowds - and all with the connivance of the West.



People hold signs in protest of Russia's taking of Crimea, in Maidan Square, Kiev, Mar, 23.

WEB VIDEO: Adolph Hitler in 1933: 'We want only peace, to be left alone, and be treated as equals,' Nov. 10, 1933, 00:03:23 🇺🇸

"We must not try to delude ourselves, and, still more, we must not try to delude small weak nations into thinking that they will be protected by the League [of Nations] against aggression and acting accordingly," said Neville Chamberlain to the British Parliament on February 22, 1938, "when we know that nothing of the kind can be expected."

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Adolf Hitler drew a thoroughly different picture when on March 23, 1939, he spoke from the balcony of Theaterplatz in recently annexed Memel. Two hours after he so theatrically arrived at the port of Memel aboard his newest battleship *Germany*, he said "Germans are not here to harm the people of the world, but to put an end to the suffering Germans have had to endure at the world's hands for the past 20 years. ... The Memel Germans were left to their fates once before by Germany, when it succumbed to dishonor and humiliation. Today, Memel's Germans are reinstated as citizens of the mighty Reich, decisively taking their destiny back into their hands, even if half the world doesn't like it."

And everything seemed so bright. The glory of Hitler rose to its zenith, and the world trembled before mighty Germany. Unifying regions and countries into the Reich without firing a single shot, without a single drop of blood spilled - surely the Fuhrer was a political genius?

Yet six years later Germany was cast down, millions of its sons killed, millions of its daughters dishonored, its cities razed to the ground, its cultural values, accrued over the centuries, turned into dust. From Germany was taken two thirds of its territory, and the rest divided into zones occupied by the victorious powers. And shame, shame, shame rained down on the heads of the Germans. Yet it all began so promisingly!

Friends! History is repeating itself. In Crimea, Russians really do live. But does anyone oppress them there? Are they really second class citizens without the right to speak their own language or practice their Orthodox faith? From whom does the Russian army need to protect them? Who has attacked them? The entry of foreign troops on the territory of another state without its permission - is an act of aggression. The seizure of parliament by people in unmarked uniforms - this is an outrage. For the Crimean Parliament to make any decisions under such circumstances - is a complete farce. First parliament was seized and its leader replaced with a pro-Russian puppet. Then the new prime minister asked Russia for aid, which had already arrived, and had already taken control of the peninsula the day before. This is the 1938 Anschluss - or something very close. Even a referendum was held, a plebiscite under friendly bayonets. Then it was on April 10 and here, March 30.

Did the Russian government consider all the risks of this incredible adventure? I am sure it did not. Just as Adolf Hitler didn't in his time. If he had, he wouldn't

have ended up in a bunker in April 1945 taking shelter from Russian bombs, and he wouldn't have guzzled down a vial of poison.

What if the West doesn't go along like Chamberlain and [French Premier] [Daladier](#) did in 1938, and instead imposes a total embargo on the purchase of Russian energy, and freezes Russian assets in their banks? The Russian economy, in agony, would collapse in three months. Unrest would begin here that would make the Euro-maidan protests look like the Garden of Eden.

And if the Crimean Tatars, who are categorically opposed to Russian rule, and who remember what the government did to them in 1944 and didn't let them return home until 1988 - what if the Crimean Tatars seek the protection of their interests from their ethnic and religious brothers in Turkey? After all, Turkey isn't three seas away - it's just on the other side of the same Black Sea. They held Crimea longer than Russia: for four centuries. The Turks are not Chamberlains or Daladiers. In July 1974 they occupied 40 percent of Cyprus in defense of their tribal brothers, and ignoring all protests, still today support the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is not recognized by a single other country. Perhaps there are some who would like to see a Turkish Republic of Southern Crimea? If some hotheaded Crimean Tatars rise up for battle, Muslim radicals from around the world are likely to gladly join them, especially those from the North Caucasus and the Volgograd region. Do we really want to invite a storm in our Russian house over a washed up Crimean resort? Don't we already have enough acts of terrorism in Russia?

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Finally, if we take a Crimea torn apart by internal strife, we will forever lose the people of Ukraine. Russian Ukrainians will never forgive this act of betrayal. What's that you say? It's all grist for the mill, and it will all come out flour? Don't hold out too much hope of that, my dear Russian chauvinists. At the end of the 19th century, Serbs and Croats considered themselves one people, separated only by a border, religious denomination, and alphabet. They strove for unity - how many books were written about it then - great, intelligent books? Now it's hard to find two peoples as embittered as the Serbs and Croats. How much blood has been spilled between them, and all for the sake of a few spits of land, some towns and valleys that they could have lived together in happily and prosperously. They could have, but they didn't. Greed for a fraternal land made enemies of brothers. And doesn't that happen in everyday life? Is it worth forever losing a kindred people for the sake of a ghostly avarice? Yes - and a split in the Russian [Orthodox] Church almost looks inevitable. The Ukrainian half has broken from Moscow forever.

However, a successful annexation of Crimea by the Kremlin would be even more horrifying. If everything goes smoothly, in the coming days Russia will ask Russian peoples in Kazakhstan, then South Ossetia and Abkhazia, then Northern Kyrgyzstan. After Austria followed the Sudetenland, and after the

Sudetenland followed Memel. Memel was followed by Poland, Poland by France, and France by Russia. It all started out so small ...

Friends! We have to think about what we're doing and stop. Our politicians are pulling us down a terrible, horrible road. History tells us things won't turn out well. We mustn't get carried away like the Germans did by the promises of Goebbels and Hitler. For the sake of peace in our country, for the sake of its genuine revival, for the sake of peace and true friendship throughout the historic spaces of Russia, which is now divided among many states, say **NO** to this mad, and more importantly, completely unnecessary act of aggression.

We lost so many lives in the 20th century that today our only central principle should be the one proclaimed by the great [Solzhenitsyn](#): preserving our people. Preserving our people and not our land. Land is made up of blood and tears. We have no need for more blood or tears!

Professor Andrei Zubov is a doctor of history and editor of The History of Russia in the 20th Century. Until March 1, for 14 years, he was professor of history at Moscow State Institute of International Relations. He was forced to

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