

Week 2 - Chapters 2 & 3

Group Discussions

Names: John Holley, Rye Mullins, Noor Golbadi, Suraiya Eva

Most interesting thing this week:

The economically interesting thing that I found was that seventy thousand villages were destroyed in soviet Russia during the war. This caused 128 billion dollars in damages. Not only do wars cost a lot of money to fund, but they are also very destructive and are very pricy to fix. Many countries are never able to recover from the destruction of war. Whether that is due to economic instability, or a loss of a strong government. War is a very expensive thing. Another example of this is when the soviet president ordered his people to get 22 million dollars worth of supplies due to the German invasion.

Question for Discussion: Why did we think it was a good idea to continue the nuclear weapons program after we saw the destruction it is capable of?

Names: Claire Leitner, Nick Rogoff, Sarah Call, Eileen Daniels

A politically interesting thing I found comes from pages 58-59 of Chapter 3 “Truman and the Cold War.” George Kennan’s 8,000 word cable, later called the Long Telegram, had great political importance and established the dominant frame of reference for how the US viewed Soviet actions. Kennan’s analysis argued that the Stalin’s speech revealed the Soviet position to be based on ideology incompatible with peaceful coexistence. He warned that the Soviets were so opposed to capitalism they would put all their efforts into expanding military power and undermining American society through underground communist networks. The cable became required reading for US military and diplomatic personnel, and confirmed the suspicions that the Soviets were not to be trusted in negotiations.

Question for Discussion:

What more modern reports or briefings have had as much impact on foreign policy as Kennan’s the Long Telegram?

Names: Christopher, Carmella, Nathan, Matthew

Most interesting thing this week: One economic issue that I found interesting was the amount of property damage done to Soviet property during the war. The Soviets lost \$128 billion worth of property in their villages across the country, most likely because of the Nazi invasions. Among the loss was quite a lot of art and architecture that was destroyed in cities such as Leningrad. While losing a vast amount of money in the destruction of property and art, the Soviets also had a total of 18 million deaths by the end of WW2. Leningrad alone went from a population of 3 million to 600,000.

Question for Discussion: Should the Americans have dropped the atomic bomb?

Names: Gabby Colsia, Omar Andrade, Dorothy Hoffman, Mariah Anderson

Most interesting thing this week:

Other than Dorothy lived in Russia and WENT TO THE 1980 OLYMPICS!!!

Social and Cultural: Chapter 3 Page 61 That Americans and Russians are entirely separate ideologically. Capitalism and Communism just cannot exist together. To such an extent that Russians "trust" Roosevelt because in their political system, they are used to 1 strong man being in charge so they fail to consider or conceptualize delays in D-Day due to separation of powers in the US.

Question for Discussion:

What makes the American quest for a planet of democracy any different from Russia's desire for a communist Earth?

Names: Priscilla Pena, Barrett Brost, Laith Schroader,
William Polk

Most interesting thing this week:

Harry Truman. Just the man in general.

Harry S. Truman came from humble beginnings in a farm in Missouri. From that small town, he would go on to work as a banker in Kansas City, lead an artillery brigade in World War 1, hold office as a Senator and the Vice-President, and later have one of the most important Presidencies in the 21st century, having to wrestle with the end of World War II, the early days of the Cold War, and a moral conundrum regarding the nuclear bomb. He came from nothing: no money, no privilege, no college education, he is probably the closest thing we've had to an ordinary man becoming the President, making him a physical manifestation of the American Dream. In our current political climate, someone like Harry Truman would be unthinkable.

Question for Discussion:

What are the odds of having another President or Vice-President like Harry Truman in the 21st century?



Names: Cameron Walsh, Finley Osborne, Fatima Sidra

MOST INTERESTING THING THIS WEEK

RED SCARE was basically a period of intense fear in the United States that communism would take over the country. People were terrified of subversion, meaning they thought communists were working secretly inside the government or society to overthrow the U.S. This led to witch hunts, loyalty checks, and blacklists that ruined many lives. Also American financial aid shift from being a helpful friend into a weapon to get political things done was pretty interesting.

Question for Discussion:

I wonder what would have happened if Stalin had been less controlling of the people of the Soviet Union. How would history differ if he had given the Soviets more freedom, and less fear?