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HST-415

Week 3 Reaction paper

1. Some questions I have regarding the reading and the lecture are the following:
 - a. The anti-Japanese sentiment in America was also extended towards other people of East Asian descent. How much did historians document these sentiments and hate crimes towards Asian Americans at the time of World War II?
 - b. Did American racism have anything to do with the fact that the bombs were dropped on Japan? Was there any consideration to drop the bombs on Germany or was that never something Truman, Groves, and others considered?
2. The assumptions being made about the purpose of the weapon is to destroy as much as they possibly can in Japan. Just looking at the section, “Status of Targets”, you can see that the main reason they want to bomb Kyoto is because the Americans consider this an area where “many people and industries are now... From the psychological point of view there is an advantage that Kyoto is an intellectual center for Japan and the people there are more apt to appreciate the significance of such a weapon as the gadget”. The focus was to destroy large urban areas and decimate as many people as they could. In section 8, “Use Against ‘Military’ Objectives”, it is stated that there should be a military objective in a larger area so that they could cause as much damage and destruction as possible even if the bomb does not hit its intended target (We see this with Nagasaki). There is some talk about the safety of the pilots who are going to drop the bomb which is so odd considering they care about a few American lives while actively destroying a hundred thousand Japanese lives. The role of scientists here is to “keep themselves continuously informed as to radar developments. If at any time new developments are available which show in combat a marked improvement of accuracy the basic plan may be altered”. The scientists played the role of trying to improve the accuracy of where the bomb would land and what the effects of the bomb would be in a given area. There is also a huge analysis on the height and its role on the destruction it could cause when dropped from specific heights.
3. The Franck Report suggests that by not using the atomic bomb, “danger of destruction by nuclear weapons can be prevented” because by keeping them a secret, other nations will not try to counteract by creating their own nuclear weapons. By keeping it all a secret, the United States could make deals to obtain all of the raw material necessary to create this weapon thereby ensuring other nations could not create any nuclear weapons (or they would do so at a much higher cost). Lowkey, the Franck Report is a little racist: “Russia, and China are the only great nations which could survive a nuclear attack. However, even though these countries value human life less than the peoples of Western Europe and America”. That statement is so wild to me considering Americans are letting each other die from this global pandemic today. I just know these authors are extremely white. This has me so angry. Anyways, another component of their argument is they want to stand in front of the United Nations and show what this bomb can do on a deserted island just to say the United States could have used this weapon but did not, which would prove that somehow the United States is morally superior in some sense. The point of the Franck Report is to discuss how the use and discovery to the world of the atomic bomb would have serious political and economic consequences. The Scientists’ Panel’s suggestion to bring awareness to the atomic bombs created to China, Russia and France is an interesting decision. They want them to know as a way to show that the United States has this power and how the USA is open to suggestions as to how we can cooperate to have better improved international relations. There are scientists who say that the atomic bomb should be used for military use to save as many American lives as possible. The atomic bomb should never have been used. If anything, I agree with the idea that it should be brought to the

United Nations as a demonstration. I think this would have been enough to induce any country to surrender. We did not need to drop it on Hiroshima or Nagasaki. I would sign the Szilard petition because I would not want anyone's death on my conscience. They make a good point in this petition. The United States has a moral responsibility with this weapon that we have created. I agree that the bombs should not have been used unless the terms were refused by Japan for the terms of surrender. In hindsight, destroying hundreds of thousands of Japanese lives for the sake of proving America has power is just morally wrong in my view. I think the argument I find most alien is the fact that there are people who truly believed that countries in the Pacific did not value human life. Like somehow the United States valued human life more. I am truly confused as to what they were attempting to argue because I could not get over the blatant racism. People are so daft. I resonate with the arguments that say we have a moral responsibility and that the use of these weapons/bring light to these weapons will cause more harm than good. And I think we have seen this happen! We see a rise in other countries making these same weapons.

4. Wellerstein presents plenty of evidence that contradicts itself. From the start, we can see that he is showing the hypocrisy in Truman's own words (just like Mitch Use-My-Own-Words-Against-Me McConnell with deciding whether or not they should push a new supreme court justice in the passing of feminist icon, RBG). Truman speaks on how the bomb is the greatest thing in history while also hating the fact that he killed a ton of civilians. He then connects this with the idea that Truman, somehow ignorant in his understanding of what exactly the targets were in Japan, believed he was only hitting military targets that would not result in the death of a bunch of noncombatants. The evidence presented is mainly from other first-hand accounts. The way that the article is written is more of a story than it is as an article that is simply explaining the events that occurred. The argument lies within the idea that Truman did not necessarily call the orders to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but rather, he was able to stop the military from bombing Kyoto. Stimson felt extremely strong on ensuring the safety of Kyoto because he saw that as his personal crusade according to Wellerstein's article. Wellerstein shows extensive evidence of this through Stimson's personal diary and the conversations between Stimson and Groves. The argument is that there is no evidence that Truman knew that Hiroshima was a city. He could have understood them to just be simply military bases. His article is using an argument that is basically saying there is no real evidence that he knew. The first piece of evidence that Truman knew was on August 8, 1945, according to Stimson's diary. I like how he revisits the statement that Truman made that he spoke about in the beginning of the article ("Greatest thing in history") and adding some more context to it throughout the article in which, maybe Truman was really just that ignorant. I mean, Truman was clearly very racist from the language he used to describe the Japanese, I am pretty positive he could not understand that Japan was probably just as civilized as America.