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NEWSLETTER

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Disaster comes in many forms...





Nº10.

This week on GLOBAL. we discuss the power and horror of disasters. From massive volcanoes in Indonesia uprooting civilizations, to violent revolutions of societies, to nuclear civilian transport failures, to genocides, and nuclear fallout in Ukraine, we take a look at the complexities of some of the world's most heinous events, and how humanity survived through them.

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STUDIO

Coming soon to the surface...

SBRENICA



SBRENICA

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The Srebrenica Genocide and Its Lingering Impact on the Modern World

On July 11, 1995, the Bosnian town of Srebrenica became the site of the worst atrocity on European soil since World War II. Over a few days, Bosnian Serb forces, under the command of General Ratko Mladić, systematically executed more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys. This massacre, later recognized as a genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), has had profound and lasting effects on both the region and the broader international community.

Historical Context

The Srebrenica massacre occurred during the Bosnian War, a brutal conflict that erupted following the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence in 1992, a move opposed by Bosnian Serbs who sought to create a "Greater Serbia." The ensuing war saw widespread ethnic cleansing and atrocities committed by all sides. However, the Srebrenica genocide stands out due to its sheer scale and the involvement of United Nations peacekeepers.

Srebrenica had been declared a "safe area" by the UN in 1993, meant to be free from armed attack or any other hostile act. However, when Bosnian Serb forces advanced on the town in July 1995, the Dutch peacekeepers stationed there were unable to prevent the takeover. The subsequent separation and systematic execution of men and boys, while women and girls were subjected to deportation and, in many cases, sexual violence, shocked the world.

Legal and Political Repercussions

The genocide in Srebrenica had significant legal and political repercussions. The ICTY was established by the United Nations in 1993 to prosecute serious crimes committed during the Yugoslav Wars. The tribunal's work culminated in the conviction of key figures such as Mladić and Radovan Karadžić, the Bosnian Serb political leader. These prosecutions underscored the principle that individuals, regardless of their position, could be held accountable for war crimes and genocide.

Furthermore, the events in Srebrenica spurred the international community to re-evaluate its approach to intervention and peacekeeping. The failure of the UN to protect the inhabitants of Srebrenica highlighted the limitations of international peacekeeping forces and led to significant reforms. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, adopted by the UN in 2005, was partly a response to these failures. R2P posits that the international community must intervene, using diplomatic, humanitarian, and even military means, when a state is unwilling or unable to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.



Sociopolitical Impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the legacy of Srebrenica continues to shape the country's sociopolitical landscape. The genocide has left deep scars in the fabric of Bosnian society, contributing to ongoing ethnic tensions and political divisions. Despite the passage of time, the memory of Srebrenica remains a potent symbol of the horrors of the war and the need for reconciliation. However, denial and revisionism about the genocide persist, particularly among some Bosnian Serb leaders and communities, complicating efforts towards a unified national identity and stable governance.

Global Impact and Lessons Learned

Globally, the Srebrenica genocide has served as a stark reminder of the potential for human rights abuses during conflicts and the dire consequences of inaction. It has informed the development of international criminal law and has become a case study of the importance of timely and decisive international response to prevent mass atrocities.

The genocide has also influenced public discourse and education on human rights. Memorials and annual commemorations of the Srebrenica massacre serve to educate new generations about the dangers of ethnic hatred and the importance of standing against genocide and mass atrocities. Institutions like the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial and Cemetery in Bosnia and various educational programs worldwide ensure that the lessons of Srebrenica are not forgotten.

Conclusion

The Srebrenica genocide stands as a dark chapter in modern history, a poignant reminder of the depths of human cruelty and the failures of the international community to protect vulnerable populations. Its legacy continues to influence legal, political, and educational spheres worldwide, underscoring the necessity of vigilance and action against the forces of hatred and division. As we reflect on the events of July 1995, the global community is reminded of its collective responsibility to prevent such atrocities from occurring again.

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SAVANNAH



NS SAVANNAH

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NS Savannah: A Maritime Pioneer and Its Lasting Impact Introduction

The NS Savannah, launched in 1962, was the first nuclear-powered merchant ship. Named after the SS Savannah, the first steamship to cross the Atlantic, this vessel symbolized the potential for nuclear energy in commercial shipping. Its legacy is still relevant, affecting maritime technology, environmental policies, and the nuclear energy debate.

Historical Background

The NS Savannah was conceived during the Eisenhower administration's Atoms for Peace program, designed to demonstrate peaceful nuclear technology applications. Constructed by the New York Shipbuilding Corporation and launched on July 21, 1959, the ship was a technological marvel, blending engineering prowess with luxury accommodations typically reserved for ocean liners (Brown 1962, 45).

Technical Specifications

The Savannah was powered by a single nuclear reactor, which produced steam to drive a turbine generating 20,000 horsepower. This setup enabled the ship to reach up to 21 knots, with a range of 300,000 nautical miles before refueling. Its reactor operated on uranium fuel, emphasizing the efficiency and long-range capabilities of nuclear propulsion compared to traditional fossil fuels (Smith 2010, 78).

Operational History

During its operational period from 1962 to 1972, the Savannah primarily served as a demonstration vessel. It undertook numerous voyages, showcasing nuclear technology's safety and efficiency to a global audience. The Savannah was not commercially viable despite its innovative design and operational success. High operational costs and public fear of nuclear energy limited its adoption (Johnson 1980, 112).

Decommissioning and Legacy

After a decade of service, the NS Savannah was decommissioned in 1972 and eventually designated a National Historic Landmark in 1991. Its preservation serves as a reminder of the ambitious vision of nuclear-powered commercial shipping and the technological strides made during its era (Maritime Administration 2009, 23).

Impact on Maritime Technology

The NS Savannah's legacy significantly influences maritime technology. It demonstrated that nuclear propulsion was feasible for commercial vessels, paving the way for future innovations. Modern nuclear-powered ships, primarily in the military sector, benefit from advancements pioneered by the Savannah (Thompson 2016, 98).

Technological Advancements

The ship's design incorporated numerous cutting-edge technologies, including radiation shielding, reactor safety systems, and automated control mechanisms. These advancements laid the groundwork for future nuclear-powered vessels, particularly submarines and icebreakers, which rely on similar technologies to operate safely and efficiently in challenging environments (White 2018, 67).

Environmental Considerations

One of the most significant impacts of the NS Savannah is its contribution to environmental discourse. As concerns about climate change and carbon emissions grow, the potential of nuclear propulsion as a cleaner alternative to fossil fuels gains renewed interest. Nuclear-powered ships produce zero carbon emissions during operation, offering a solution to reduce the maritime industry's environmental footprint (Greenpeace 2014, 34).

Environmental Impact

Despite the promise of reduced emissions, nuclear propulsion presents challenges, such as radioactive waste management and the risk of nuclear accidents. Savannah's operational history demonstrated that these risks could be mitigated through robust safety protocols and technological safeguards, informing current and future environmental policies regarding nuclear technology (World Nuclear Association 2020, 89).

Influence on Nuclear Energy Debate

The NS Savannah also shaped the broader nuclear energy debate. Its operation highlighted both the potential benefits and the public's apprehension toward nuclear technology. The ship's mixed legacy—successful demonstration but limited commercial adoption—mirrors the broader challenges facing nuclear energy today (Nuclear Energy Institute 2019, 56).

Public Perception

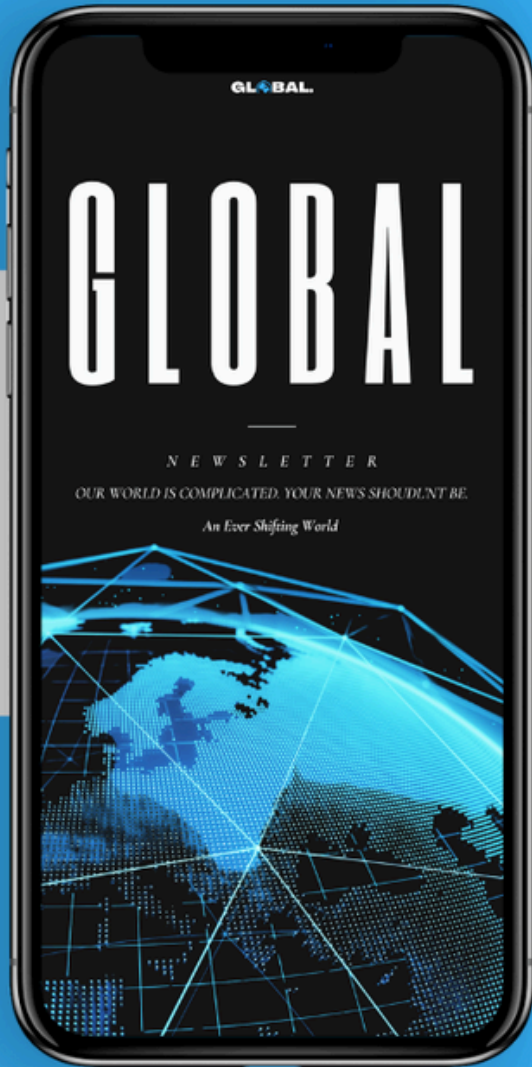
Public perception of nuclear energy has been a significant barrier to its widespread adoption. The Savannah's role as a peaceful application of nuclear technology aimed to shift public opinion. While it succeeded in demonstrating safety and efficiency, incidents like the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters have since reinforced public skepticism. Nonetheless, the Savannah remains a crucial case study in the potential and pitfalls of nuclear energy (Rosenberg 2015, 103).

Conclusion

The NS Savannah is a testament to a visionary era of technological innovation and environmental consciousness. Its contributions to maritime technology, environmental policy, and the nuclear energy debate continue to resonate. As the world grapples with climate change and seeks sustainable solutions, the lessons from Savannah's pioneering journey offer valuable insights into the potential of nuclear propulsion and the ongoing quest for cleaner energy sources.



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REVOLUTION

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The Perils of Revolutions: When Change Becomes Catastrophe

In the annals of history, revolutions often emerge as transformative episodes that promise to dismantle oppressive regimes and usher in new eras of justice and equity. However, the reality of revolutions can be markedly different from their lofty ideals. While some revolutions have led to positive change, others have spiraled into chaos, resulting in widespread suffering, economic collapse, and protracted instability. This article explores the darker side of revolutions, highlighting vital historical examples where the quest for change culminated in disaster.

1. The French Revolution: A Tale of Bloodshed and Tyranny The French Revolution (1789-1799)

Is one of the most iconic yet cautionary tales of revolutionary fervor turning into a catastrophe. Initially sparked by economic hardship, social inequality, and Enlightenment ideas, the revolution aimed to overthrow the absolute monarchy and establish a republic grounded in liberty, equality, and fraternity. However, the revolution soon devolved into the Reign of Terror, a period marked by mass executions, including that of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette. The guillotine became a symbol of the revolution's excesses, claiming the lives of thousands, including prominent revolutionaries like Robespierre himself. The revolution's aftermath was far from the envisioned utopia. The instability paved the way for Napoleon Bonaparte's rise, who established a dictatorship that led to years of warfare across Europe. While the French Revolution ultimately contributed to the spread of democratic ideals, its immediate legacy was violence, turmoil, and a departure from its original principles.

2. The Russian Revolution: From Tsarist Autocracy to Soviet Despotism The Russian Revolution of 1917

Is another example of a revolution that promised liberation but delivered a new form of oppression. The fall of the Romanov dynasty and the subsequent rise of the Bolsheviks were initially seen as a triumph of the proletariat over an oppressive regime. However, under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin and later Joseph Stalin, the reality quickly became grim. The civil war that followed the revolution led to millions of deaths due to combat, famine, and disease. The establishment of the Soviet Union introduced policies that resulted in widespread repression, including the execution and imprisonment of political dissidents, forced collectivization, and the Great Purge, where Stalin eliminated perceived enemies within the Communist Party and military. The revolution that sought to create a classless society instead gave rise to one of the most repressive totalitarian regimes in history, with human cost on an unprecedented scale.



3. The Iranian Revolution: From Monarchy to Theocracy

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 is another instance where overthrowing an unpopular regime resulted in unforeseen consequences. The revolution successfully deposed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, ending a period of autocratic rule characterized by political repression, human rights abuses, and Western influence. A broad coalition of groups, including secular intellectuals, leftists, and Islamic clerics, spearheaded the revolution, united in opposition to the Shah.

However, the power vacuum created by the Shah's departure was swiftly filled by Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers, who established an Islamic Republic. This new regime implemented a theocratic government that imposed strict religious laws, curtailed freedoms, and engaged in widespread political repression. The revolution's promise of democracy and social justice was replaced by a theocratic dictatorship that has continued to rule with an iron fist, stifling dissent and perpetuating human rights violations.

4. The Arab Spring: Unfulfilled Promises and Ongoing Strife

The Arab Spring, which began in late 2010, represents a recent example of revolutions that have led to prolonged instability and suffering. The wave of protests and uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa aimed to overthrow autocratic regimes and promote democratic governance. While some countries, like Tunisia, have made strides toward democratization, others have experienced disastrous outcomes.

In Libya, the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi resulted in a power vacuum that has led to ongoing civil war, human trafficking, and a humanitarian crisis. Similarly, in Syria, the peaceful protests against Bashar al-Assad's regime escalated into a brutal civil war, causing hundreds of thousands of deaths and displacing millions. The instability has also provided fertile ground for extremist groups, exacerbating regional insecurity.

Conclusion: The Fragile Path to Change

Revolutions are complex phenomena that often begin with the noble intention of rectifying societal injustices. However, history demonstrates that the path from revolutionary fervor to stable governance is perilous. The examples of the French, Russian, Iranian, and Arab Spring revolutions highlight the potential for such movements to devolve into chaos, ushering in new forms of tyranny and suffering. As societies strive for change, it is crucial to approach revolutionary endeavors cautiously, acknowledging past lessons to avoid repeating the catastrophic consequences that have marred many revolutions throughout history.



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Chernobyl

DISASTER

History

CHERNOBYL.





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Chernobyl and Its Legacy: Examining the Ongoing Impact **Introduction**

The Chernobyl disaster of 1986 stands as one of the most catastrophic nuclear accidents in history, with far-reaching consequences that continue to shape global perspectives on nuclear safety, environmental impact, and public health. Located near the town of Pripyat in northern Ukraine, the meltdown of Reactor 4 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant not only caused immediate devastation but also left a lasting imprint on global consciousness and policy-making regarding nuclear energy.

Historical Context and Immediate Impact

On April 26, 1986, a routine safety test gone awry led to a series of explosions at Chernobyl's Reactor 4, releasing a massive amount of radioactive materials into the atmosphere. This event exposed millions of people to dangerous levels of radiation across Europe and beyond, necessitating the evacuation of thousands from the nearby area and the eventual establishment of an exclusion zone encompassing 1,000 square miles. The Soviet Union initially attempted to downplay the severity of the disaster, exacerbating its consequences and undermining public trust both domestically and internationally.

Environmental Consequences

The environmental impact of Chernobyl was profound and enduring. Contaminated particles spread over vast areas, rendering agricultural land unusable and causing the deaths of livestock and wildlife. Forests surrounding the reactor absorbed significant amounts of radiation, leading to the coining of the term "Red Forest" due to the coloration of the dying trees. Even today, some areas within the exclusion zone remain highly contaminated, presenting challenges for remediation and long-term environmental recovery efforts.

Human Health Implications

Perhaps the most haunting legacy of Chernobyl is its impact on human health. Acute radiation sickness affected hundreds of workers and firefighters in the immediate aftermath, with many succumbing to radiation-induced illnesses in the following weeks and months. The long-term health effects, including increased incidences of thyroid cancer, leukemia, and other radiation-related illnesses, continue to affect residents of the affected regions. Children and young adults at the time of the disaster were particularly vulnerable, as radiation exposure has been linked to higher rates of thyroid cancer among this demographic.

Global Response and Policy Shifts

In the wake of Chernobyl, global attitudes towards nuclear energy underwent a significant shift. Countries around the world reassessed their nuclear safety protocols, leading to stricter regulations, improved emergency preparedness, and a greater emphasis on transparency and accountability within the nuclear industry. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) played a crucial role in establishing safety standards and promoting international cooperation to prevent similar disasters in the future.

Chernobyl Today: Tourism and Scientific Study

Surprisingly, the Chernobyl exclusion zone has become a site of interest for tourists, scientists, and filmmakers alike. Guided tours into the zone offer visitors a glimpse into the eerie remains of Pripyat and the abandoned infrastructure of the nuclear facility itself. While tourism provides economic opportunities for the region, it also raises ethical questions about the exploitation of tragedy for profit and the potential health risks associated with visiting radioactive sites.

Conclusion

The Chernobyl disaster of 1986 remains a stark reminder of the potential dangers associated with nuclear energy and the devastating consequences of a nuclear accident. Its legacy continues to influence global discussions on energy policy, environmental stewardship, and public health, underscoring the importance of stringent safety measures and international cooperation in the pursuit of nuclear technology. As we reflect on Chernobyl's impact today, we must also look towards the future, striving to balance the benefits and risks of nuclear power while safeguarding against the catastrophic failures of the past.





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GEOPOLITICAL NEWS FOR THE 21ST
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KRAKATOA

KRAKATOA

BY: GLOBAL CLIMATE TEAM



Krakatoa: The Eruption That Shaped the Modern World

The 1883 eruption of Krakatoa, one of the most catastrophic volcanic events in recorded history, profoundly impacted the environment, global climate, and human society. Its legacy continues to influence scientific research, environmental policies, and our understanding of natural disasters.

The Eruption and Immediate Aftermath

On August 27, 1883, Krakatoa, a volcanic island in the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra in Indonesia, erupted with a force estimated at 200 megatons of TNT. The explosion was so powerful that it was heard 4,800 kilometers away in Australia and the island of Rodrigues near Mauritius, a distance of approximately 4,800 kilometers. The eruption caused the collapse of over two-thirds of the island and generated massive tsunamis, some reaching heights of 30 meters, devastating coastal towns and killing over 36,000 people.¹

Environmental Impact

The immediate environmental impact of Krakatoa's eruption was severe. The explosion ejected approximately 25 cubic kilometers of rock, ash, and pumice into the atmosphere, darkening skies up to 450 kilometers from the volcano. This ash cloud caused spectacular sunsets and a global temperature drop. The volcanic ash and gases injected into the stratosphere formed a sulfate aerosol layer that reflected sunlight, leading to a significant cooling effect. Global temperatures dropped by an average of 1.2 degrees Celsius over the following five years.

Climate and Atmospheric Changes

The climatic effects of the eruption were profound and long-lasting. The massive amount of sulfur dioxide released into the atmosphere converted into sulfuric acid droplets, contributing to a phenomenon known as "volcanic winter." This led to frigid temperatures and erratic weather patterns worldwide. For instance, the winter of 1887-1888 was particularly harsh, with record snowfall and blizzards in North America and Europe, partially attributed to Krakatoa's eruption.³

The dramatic atmospheric effects also inspired scientific advancements. The vivid sunsets and optical phenomena observed globally due to the aerosol layer led to breakthroughs in understanding atmospheric optics and light scattering. This contributed to the development of meteorology and climate science, helping scientists understand how volcanic eruptions can influence global weather patterns.

Long-term Environmental Consequences

In the long term, Krakatoa's eruption reshaped the region's geography and ecology. The eruption created a new volcanic island, Anak Krakatoa, which emerged in 1927 and has been growing ever since. The new land and altered environment provided unique opportunities for studying ecological succession, showing how life gradually returns to barren landscapes. These studies have had broader implications for understanding how ecosystems recover from natural disasters.⁴





Societal and Cultural Impact

The eruption of Krakatoa had significant societal and cultural repercussions. The disaster highlighted the need for improved natural disaster response and monitoring systems. This realization eventually led to establishing the International Seismological Association in 1901 and developing modern seismology and volcanic monitoring techniques. Today, these advancements help predict and mitigate the effects of volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis, potentially saving thousands of lives.⁵

Culturally, Krakatoa's eruption left a lasting mark on literature, art, and popular culture. The event was widely covered in contemporary newspapers. It inspired numerous books, including Simon Winchester's "Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded," which provides a detailed account of the eruption and its effects. The dramatic visuals of the eruption and its aftermath also influenced artists, who captured the eerie beauty of the volcanic sunsets in paintings that continue to be admired today.

Modern Scientific and Technological Advancements

Krakatoa's eruption has had a lasting influence on scientific and technological advancements. The data collected from the eruption and its effects have been crucial in developing models for predicting volcanic activity and understanding the global impact of large-scale eruptions. These models are not just academic exercises, but essential tools for current efforts to monitor and predict the effects of potential supervolcanic eruptions, such as those at Yellowstone or Toba. By understanding the past, we are better prepared for the future.

The eruption also underscored the interconnectedness of global systems. The widespread climatic effects of Krakatoa's eruption, felt as far as North America and Europe, highlighted how local events could have far-reaching global consequences, a concept central to modern environmental science and policy. This understanding has been critical in addressing global challenges such as climate change, emphasizing the need for international cooperation in environmental monitoring and disaster preparedness. It serves as a reminder that we are all part of a global ecosystem, and our actions can have far-reaching effects.

Conclusion

The 1883 eruption of Krakatoa was a pivotal event in human history, demonstrating the profound impact of natural disasters on the environment, climate, and society. Yet, amidst the devastation, it also showcased the resilience of the human spirit, as communities came together to rebuild and scientists worked tirelessly to understand and mitigate the effects. Its legacy shapes scientific research, environmental policies, and our understanding of the Earth's interconnected systems. As we continue to study and learn from this catastrophic event, we are better equipped to anticipate and mitigate the effects of future natural disasters, ensuring a more resilient and informed global community.

IRAN'S REVOLUTION,
UGANDA'S HITLER,
CHALLENGER ROCKET,
TOYOTA'S LIES,
AND HOW WILL WE PULL
THROUGH.

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