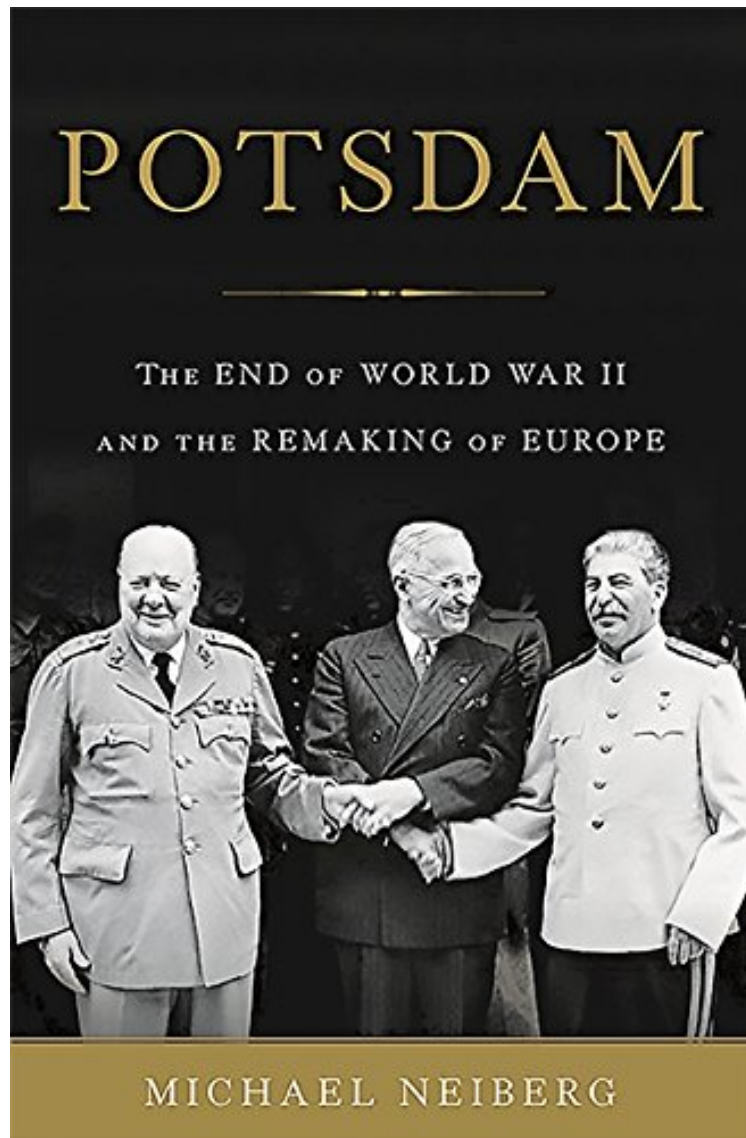


(Library ebook) Potsdam: The End of World War II and the Remaking of Europe

Potsdam: The End of World War II and the Remaking of Europe

Michael Neiberg

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#415788 in Books Michael Neiberg 2015-05-05 2015-05-05 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.50 x 1.13 x 6.381, .0 #File Name: 0465075258336 pages Potsdam The End of World War II and the Remaking of Europe | File size: 48.Mb

Michael Neiberg : Potsdam: The End of World War II and the Remaking of Europe before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Potsdam: The End of World War II and the Remaking of Europe:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Important and enjoyable By Josh This is a fantastic book. If you are at all interested in World War I, World War II, or the Cold War, you'll love this book and gain a new appreciation for the

linkages between the three. First and foremost, this is a readable history of the Potsdam Conference, during which the leaders of Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union discussed how to end World War II and lay the groundwork for a post-war peace. Perhaps more importantly, this book explores -- and ultimately helps answer -- a number of important questions, including: * Did the death of FDR change the trajectory of the war -- and the peace that followed? * Similarly, did the electoral defeat of Winston Churchill in the midst of the Potsdam Conference have a significant impact on the outcome of the Potsdam talks? * How did the testing of the atomic bomb influence the Potsdam talks, and how did the Potsdam talks influence Truman's decision to use the bomb? * To what extent were the Big Three aware that they were laying the groundwork for a new global conflict? Two minor criticisms: 1) Early on, Neiberg introduces a number of key players without providing the context that non-historians would need to understand their significance. On the other hand, I'm glad he didn't drown us with detail about every single person who attended the conference -- that would have been a far worse sin. 2) Neiberg alludes to the possibility that Stalin had his reasons for giving the Allied leaders unfettered access to a ravaged Berlin just prior to the conference. But what were those reasons? This book clearly has important lessons for military and political leaders and draws on an impressive array of research. But don't let the hundred pages of endnotes fool you. This is a quick and thoroughly enjoyable read that is accessible to anyone with an interest in 20th Century history. Neiberg appears to have the gift of David McCullough and Doris Kearns Goodwin -- he brings history alive by helping us see events, as they unfolded, through the eyes of the participants, when the long-term impacts of decisions being made quickly and under immense pressure were both unknown and unknowable. Well done.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Repetitive and Vague

By Jacob D Westlin

While reading this book, I kept asking myself: "When are the details of the actual conference going to begin?" They never did. Firstly, the entire narrative, beginning to end, is paralleled with the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Every third sentence was, "With the ghosts of Versailles in their minds..." or "1919 loomed large in their decision making." Eventually I found myself screaming "I get it already! Move on!" As regards the details of the conference itself, the first half explores the conditions in place before it even began. Fair enough, given the monumental historical events preceding it during the war and the gravity of their undertaking; however, even when the conference "began" in the narrative, there was barely a thought given to an intimate look at the fascinating leaders' interactions. Each chapter discussed an issue of interest to the participants and addressed the Russian, British, and American thinking on the topic -- as though this were a textbook. Much more interesting would have been a chronological timeline of the conference itself, with the dialogue and power dynamics that went along with it. None of this is found in the book, which instead chooses to address issues from a disconnected and vague nationalistic perspective (as opposed to personal interaction). While there were a few new and interesting facts peppered in the narrative, I found it boring and repetitive on the whole.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. End Game

By Christian Schlect

A well-written, concise general history of the final big-three leaders conference of World War II. Its primary focus is the close relationship between the geopolitical issues discussed at Potsdam with those discussed and decided some thirty years prior at the Paris Peace Conference. The fact that two of the three allied victors had changes at the top, while adding to the drama, probably did little to effect the basic results of the conference at Potsdam. The USSR held most of the trump cards, due to its very presence in Europe with both troops and a well-earned thirst for vengeance. I do think this book would have been improved had maps been provided. Issues like the contested boundary lines for Poland would have been made clearer to the non-expert. Also, I would encourage every visitor to Berlin to take the day trip out to Potsdam to visit the site of the conference, the Cecilienhof Palace. It is something to stand in the same room where Stalin, Churchill, and Truman once sat to sort out the ending of the war that arose out of the war to end all wars.

After Germany's defeat in World War II, Europe lay in tatters. Millions of refugees were dispersed across the continent. Food and fuel were scarce. Britain was bankrupt, while Germany had been reduced to rubble. In July of 1945, Harry Truman, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin gathered in a quiet suburb of Berlin to negotiate a lasting peace: a peace that would finally put an end to the conflagration that had started in 1914, a peace under which Europe could be rebuilt. The award-winning historian Michael Neiberg brings the turbulent Potsdam conference to life, vividly capturing the delegates' personalities: Truman, trying to escape from the shadow of Franklin Roosevelt, who had died only months before; Churchill, bombastic and seemingly out of touch; Stalin, cunning and meticulous. For the first week, negotiations progressed relatively smoothly. But when the delegates took a recess for the British elections, Churchill was replaced both as prime minister and as Britain's representative at the conference in an unforeseen upset by Clement Attlee, a man Churchill disparagingly described as a sheep in sheep's clothing. When the conference reconvened, the power dynamic had shifted dramatically, and the delegates struggled to find a new balance. Stalin took advantage of his strong position to demand control of Eastern Europe as recompense for the suffering experienced by the Soviet people and armies. The final resolutions of the Potsdam Conference, notably the division of Germany and the Soviet annexation of Poland, reflected the uneasy geopolitical equilibrium between East and West that would come to dominate the twentieth century. As Neiberg expertly shows, the delegates arrived at Potsdam determined to learn from the mistakes their predecessors made in the Treaty of Versailles. But, riven by

tensions and dramatic debates over how to end the most recent war, they only dimly understood that their discussions of peace were giving birth to a new global conflict."

2016 Harry S. Truman Book Award "Wall Street Journal" An easily digestible page-turner. "Financial Times" [A] crisp, elegantly organized account of Potsdam.... [An] excellent book. "Weekly Standard" [Neiberg is] a skilled storyteller. "America in World War II" [A] well-researched, perceptive history. "Library Journal" An intriguing and readable book about a conference that has been relegated to footnotes for much too long. A must-have account for everyone "Publishers Weekly" [A] thoughtful, mildly controversial account Neiberg's insightful history makes a case that Potsdam worked much better than Versailles had in 1919. "Kirkus" This is a solid account of the conference, concisely summarizing its results and significance without excessive indulgence in entertaining personal anecdotes. Fills a hitherto surprisingly empty niche in the World War II library. Geoffrey Wawro, author of "A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Habsburg Empire" Michael Neiberg has given us a taut, masterful account of Potsdam, revealing that the Big Three operated more from fear of each other, of their peoples, of their rivals, and of fast-moving events on the ground than from any degree of confidence or certainty. The Cold War was born at Potsdam, and Neiberg seats us at the conference table, to feel the tension and acrimony. Jeremi Suri, author of "Liberty's Surest Guardian: American Nation-Building from the Founders to Obama" The Potsdam Conference defined international relations in the second half of the twentieth century, and it continues to influence contemporary events in Europe and East Asia. This book offers a compelling account of the events that led to the conference, the personalities who dominated the conference, and the consequences of their decisions. Neiberg explains why Potsdam was more successful than the Versailles Conference at the end of the First World War, and he analyzes how Potsdam contributed to postwar peace. This is a powerful book with high drama a must-read for anyone interested in global affairs. Norman Stone, author of "World War Two: A Short History" Michael Neiberg's "Potsdam" is a masterpiece of much needed compression on the Potsdam Conference of 1945, and the contrast with peacemaking in 1919 is excellently brought out. Dennis Showalter, Professor History at Colorado College Ghosts and hopes informed the 1945 Potsdam Conference, which began a new era in European and world history. Michael Neiberg's comprehensively researched, smoothly presented analysis demonstrates that the statesmen who met at Potsdam were as much concerned with ending the era of total war that began in 1914 as with addressing the question of how best to go forward in securing peace and stability. "Potsdam" describes the processes and consequences in a perceptive work confirming the author's status as a leading scholar of the twentieth century experience. Jonathan Schneer, author of "Ministers at War: Winston Churchill and His War Cabinet" With the end of war in Europe in May 1945, Truman, Stalin, Churchill, and their advisors met at Potsdam to solve the German problem once and for all. They agreed upon the main task, but on little else. Shrewdly and economically, Michael Neiberg delineates the conflicting motives and interests that separated the leaders of the Big Three. Mr. Neiberg provides deft pen portraits of the principals as well. He has taken an enormously complicated subject and made it comprehensible for the general reader. Andrew Roberts, author of "The Storm of War: A New History of the Second World War" Although the Potsdam Conference isn't as famous as those held at Casablanca, Quebec, or Yalta, Michael Neiberg brilliantly shows how the decisions made at Potsdam color today's world far more than its counterparts. With compelling prose and first-class scholarship, Neiberg superbly captures its spirit of misplaced optimism, as the world teetered on the brink of a totally unnecessary Cold War. Jeremy Black, author of "Rethinking World War Two" A first rate account of a meeting that played a key role in defining the postwar world. Scholarly, thoughtful, and well written. "About the Author Michael Neiberg is a professor of history and the Stimson Chair of the Department of National Security and Strategy at the U.S. Army War College. The author of several award-winning books, Neiberg lives in Carlisle, PA.