# Electric Sheep Slouching Towards Bethlehem

# Electric Sheep Slouching Towards Bethlehem: Speculative Fiction in a Post Modern World

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IRA, he later became a Senator for the Free Irish State, one of the important public figures condemning Catholicism. Yeats was indeed a perfect representative of the best of Europe's civilization when it found itself fighting the Great War, a conflict involving all of Europe and by extension its colonies, and he witnessed the desolate, broken landscape when it was over.

European civilization had been at the forefront of the world for over two millennia, had developed a complex interweaving of religion, science, literature, music, art, politics, and economics—a culture, a civilization with ingrained truths so strong, so firmly in place that the foundations, the basis for them had become sacred and untouchable, and it had worked hard to convince itself it was superior, as God's chosen people. When its tall ships had sailed over the great, mysterious oceans to the dark, unknown worlds of primitive tribes and brought them under its enlightened rule, the concerns were not about the rights of these lesser beings, but about how to save them through Christian missionary work and about who got to plunder and rule which discovered lands.

Certainly, if one were to resist the temptations, the rewards, and the demands to believe, it was possible to see some flaws, possible to realize it was all an artificial construct, perhaps a very clever one, certainly one that had proven valuable in many ways, and not just in promoting and justifying power; but ultimately it was not an absolute, not the unshakable one correct construct.

But why would any of the chosen people choose not to believe? In a world that only promised sickness, death, and all of the hardships of mere survival, the comforts belief brought, the assurances of those in power, supported by the never-ending dialogue of the brilliant minds at the service of them, were easy to accept. Of course, there were those annoying individuals who didn't fall in line; but power brought certain rewards, and those not accepting the official views could easily be condemned and silenced.

The real battles weren't with those powerless disbelievers or that great mass of ignorant peasants, but with the numerous groups of people in power, whether they be the kings and queens of aristocracy or that religious power, the Pope. And the battles were endless. Some were fought on paper, all those ever more complex, confusing interpretations of religious and legal documents, some by forcing those lesser, those ignorant peasants to kill each other on the battlefields, and some with ever more gruesome forms of torture and execution. So this was Europe's problem—not what that "primitive" world outside of Europe might want, but how to resolve the conflicts of the powers within Europe, which, by the end of the

1800s still included who got what pieces of that unsaved, non-Christian wilderness waiting for salvation.

With but a few dissenting or alerting voices, Europe was blind to its own progeny, America. When those backward, frontier colonies of transplanted English protestants decided they were going to stand up to their political powers across the ocean, it was annoying, but not seen as overly important. The English were busy fighting the French and Spanish and others over other colonies. Besides, at first, it seemed an easy victory over the unorganized, primitive Americans. Revolts by conquered colonies were not new, but they had always been easily put down by the more advanced armies of Europe. England didn't even bother to send its best commanders and troops. They were needed elsewhere.

But, as disorganized and ineffective as those Americans were, they just wouldn't go away. And not only that, but the French saw an opportunity to use this against the real rival, the English. And suddenly, almost without realizing it, the English actually had to give up this very useful group of colonies. It was disappointing for them, but even so the English were not overly concerned—King George III laughed it off (and this was before his mental illness). They were too busy fighting (and winning) on other fronts.

And the French aristocracy were too blind to realize they had opened the door to their own demise. As American elementary students still get taught, the American revolution was "the shot heard round the world." The American revolution sparked the French revolution, and the centuries of aristocratic rule began tumbling throughout Europe.

Nevertheless, this shift in political power didn't mean Europe had lost its prominent place. It still saw itself as leading the world in all senses—political, economic, military, social, religious, artistic, and scientific. It still assumed it was the superior civilization, the leader on all fronts. In fact, if one bothered to think about it, this new United States of America consisted of those very same superior people from England (they were, after all, Christians—even if they did tend to misunderstand the way the Bible should be interpreted). Furthermore, if one were to give these rebellious Americans much thought, it was impossible to see them as even close to as civilized and cultured as their parent countries. In fact, they seemed to be living lives similar to those savage Indians they were mingling with!

Indeed, for Europe, in spite of the change of political power from aristocracy to democracy, things went on much the same, and the centuries of battles for colonies continued throughout the 1800s.

Sure, as always, there were those who were sounding the alarm. The world was changing, and by now it was starting to change rapidly. But

even as the change was happening, the powers of Europe failed to grasp what it meant. And in terms of war, it meant that their superior weapons, which, let's face it, were largely the reason they had been able to so easily conquer other people, were becoming obsolete, and the civilized rules of war, once having some logic (as incredibly silly as they might seem today), no longer worked.

But Europeans still saw themselves as fighting battles in large fields (even with the arrival of guns and cannons employing gun powder). At first these weapons were so crude, that, even though they were a step up from swords and arrows, they could only shoot one bullet or cannon ball at a time, and it was a mess reloading them for the next shot, so, perhaps (not really), it still made sense to have men line up in a field and march towards each other through the volleys of bullets. Besides, there was a whole tradition built up about the proper, civilized way to engage in conflict that went all the way back to the now romanticized battles of knights (and further). Sure, some of those primitive cultures who had been conquered, and even those crude Americans, had broken the civilized rules a bit (though not too dramatically, as incredibly stupid battles of the American Civil War attest), but the cultured countries of Europe were not about to stoop that low. They had developed their civilized rules of combat, and they were going to continue to be civilized!

Then it happened. The delicate balance was tripped, and although the incident was almost absurd, almost laughable, it sent rapid ripples of alliances through the continent. Suddenly, before the self-assured political structures could stop themselves, all of Europe was in a war it was not prepared to control. Those old proprieties of battle really didn't work when the sides were using machine guns and other weapons designed to kill hundreds in one quick burst. It just didn't work to send a troupe of men charging into such instant death, and though it was done, soon the sides settled into quickly dug, muddy trenches to see who could out-endure the other.

Then that crude, pioneer colony that had itself quietly transformed with little more than smirking amusement from Europe decided to join in the carnage and stake its own claims to the throne.

When it was over, Europe was a bloodied wasteland. The civilization it had spent centuries creating was in shambles.

This was when William Butler Yeats wrote his signature poem. We can only guess at his thoughts and particular meanings, can only imagine him looking out over a battlefield of dead and dying men, the random unrolled remains of barbed wire and the leftover weapons of a war gone wrong. Certainly a poetic mind such as his would see the invisible truths

within the broken landscape, would sadly realize and perhaps cry out: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, / The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere / The ceremony of innocence is drowned."

Yet, it was not the end. Did he realize that it was just the beginning of the end?

Europe was injured and bleeding. But even in its weakened state, the powers that be were far from dead, and the century old desires for political and economic power that had triggered the first wave were still unsatisfied. Furthermore, if the powers of Europe had not been able to stem the initial rush to destruction that became the Great War, what was left of them was even less equipped to deal with the dangerous forces that war had unleashed that now circled like wolves to ravish the dying carcasses of its weakened political, religious and ethical structures.

Entire buildings were vaporized. Green, lotus-print designs from silk blouses were seared permanently into survivors' backs, like tattoos. The skin of others was burned black, a charcoal crust on what moments before was healthy human skin. Some of them were completely carbonized, left lying in the gutters and on the sidewalks like the last burning logs of an outdoor fire pit; some were randomly discarded like mangled, deformed mannequins; some were half-gutted and turned inside-out, nothing more than the leftover pieces of carcasses that would quickly turn rank and putrid if left to rot among the bent iron and fractured concrete slabs, while the gaunt, skeletal remains of what just seconds ago had been sleek, tall, modern office buildings lurched eerily above them. The skins on the faces of many of those still alive hung loose, as though there was no muscle or bone to hold it up and give it a shape. Human shadows were imprinted on cement building walls and other hard surfaces, the last reminders of healthy, normal people who an instant before had been going about their daily activities—waiting for the city bus, sharing a joke on a crowded downtown street, sipping tea and reading the morning news at a small table outside a street cafe. Metal, tile and stone were fused into grotesque shapes. Red clay roof tiles were melted together and frozen like lava that had flown down on building roofs and then immediately cooled and become solid, or like soft, hot caramel syrup suddenly and unnaturally hardened—as if some macabre sculpturist or satanic magician from the world of Beelzebub, the Lord of the Flies had plied his demented vision and left the world stunned and, at least for a moment, silent.

Human existence would never be the same. An instantaneous, blinding flash of white light had seared everything for miles. Then a shock wave

had spread out from the brilliant center, turning buildings, monuments, parks bridges, cement, concrete, mortar, steel, iron, an entire city into a mass of broken, fragmented shards of glass and deformed metal—a Daliesque wasteland too strange to fully comprehend.

What had been a normal city had been shattered into a surrealistic nightmare, a grotesque scene of zombie-like humans stumbling about tangled, twisted poles, random wires and twisted window frames, crawling through broken pieces of brick and blackened cement, or crying out in pain, unable to move from their soon to be graves. Thousands lie dead, their faces and bodies looking more like ghouls and the graveyard denizens of a horror film than human.[2]

Just before it happened, Shige Hiratsuka was picking up the breakfast dishes. Her husband was reading the morning paper, and their two children were playing on the floor. Thirty-seven years later, she would recall the experience:

> Suddenly, what seemed like a streak of lightning lit the sky, followed by a thunderous noise. The house collapsed around us, and we were trapped.
>
> As my husband and I were trying with all our might to escape, we heard, "Help me! Help me!" Our next door neighbor's wife was calling for help. I called out to her, "As soon as we get free, we will come to help you!"
>
> When we finally escaped from our fallen house, the first thing we saw was the total destruction of the city of Hiroshima. No houses or other buildings were visible. They had all disappeared. Fires were evident here and there. In my shock and fear, my only thought was escape. And, in my fear and rush to escape, I forgot the promise to help our neighbor's wife. My thoughts swirled around finding our children.
>
> Where are our children?
>
> As we called out our children's names, we heard, "Help me, Mother! Help me, Mother!" coming from a distance of about two or three meters away. I rushed in that direction. It was my own six year old daughter, Kazuko. I began calling for my husband who was at that time barely able to move. "Come quickly!" I screamed.
>
> At that time my husband was bleeding from the shoulder and was badly injured.
>
> He was so weak that he was barely able to walk.
>
> Our daughter was screaming out, "Mother, my legs hurt, my legs hurt! My legs are trapped. Help me to get them free!"
>
> I struggled to free her, but no matter how hard I pulled, her legs remained trapped. She was covered from the chest down by debris from the walls of the house and by dirt. It was impossible to free her.

> As I continued to pull on her, the fires were fast approaching. I could see and hear and smell the fires. I was hot and unable to breathe, and could no longer continue my struggle. At that moment, I knew that if I stayed I would die. Dying was not a choice I was willing to make. I could not imagine being burned to death.
>
> I said a prayer for my children.
>
> "Kazu-chan, I am sorry. I am a bad mother. Please forgive me. Kazu-chan, I know you don't want to die, either, but your Mother does not have courage to face the fire. Kazu-chan, forgive me, forgive me!" I said as I turned and walked toward the area that was free of fire. I took my husband's hand to help him escape with me, but as we moved away, our hearts were left behind with our daughter.
>
> As we escaped, we didn't realize that we were stepping and falling over dead bodies. As I stumbled and fell on those bodies, I was not affected by a feeling of creepiness. I just felt a deep sadness. As we continued our escape, we realized that we had made it to the riverside of Yokokawa.[3]

On Monday, 8:15 a.m., August 6, 1945, the world changed forever.

In the single largest act of destruction ever initiated by humans, a bomb with the equivalent force of 20,000 tons of TNT shattered Hiroshima, killing tens of thousands of civilians, people who had become used to the American war planes flying overhead, planes that were purposely not dropping bombs on their city, to the point where the rush to the bomb shelters had become somewhat lackadaisical, and the normal activities continued with little interruption—getting the children up and off to school, opening the many small retail stores for the daily customers, perhaps stopping at a local café for morning coffee or tea, perhaps joining in on the group exercise classes.

In fact, on this morning, an American scout plane had already flown over, and the city had barely re-emerged from the shelters when it happened. The people were used to such planes and had learned they were little more than a momentary nuisance.

The carefully planned mission began at 2:45 a.m. The Enola Gay, A B-29 bomber named after the pilot’s mother, took off from Tinian, a North Pacific island in the Marianas, 1,500 miles south of Japan. Everyone knew this was a special, newsworthy mission—a truly historic happening. Reporters and film crews were there to record it, including a since famous video of pilot Colonel Paul Tibbets waving from the plane window.

The Enola Gay was a Super-fortress, part of the 509th Composite Group. In order to carry such a heavy load as an atomic bomb (over four tons), it had been modified with new propellers, stronger engines, and faster opening bomb bay doors. The key was to get it to take-off speed

before reaching the end of the runway, and the crew held its breath as the plane pulled itself above the threatening water grave if it failed.

Two other planes accompanied it, one with cameras to record the event for posterity, and the other with scientific equipment to measure the effects of the bomb. It was all new, all very much still in the experimental stages. Only one such bomb had been successfully detonated, that in more controlled conditions, not from a plane, and so recently (July 16, less than a month previous) the data of just how it all worked was still being analyzed. No one really knew how the theories were going to translate into the literal world, into a bomb dropped on a city.

The bomb on the plane used a radioactive isotope of uranium (uranium 235). It was the result of $2 billion of research put into the Manhattan Project, headed by Robert Oppenheimer, who later quoted the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."

Three other planes went on ahead to scout the weather conditions on the chance clouds would necessitate changing targets.

After the successful take-off, the Enola Gay climbed smoothly to a low height and flew towards Japan. Four cities had been chosen as possible targets: Hiroshima, Kokura, Nagasaki, and Niigata (Kyoto was the first choice until it was removed from the list by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, who had visited it and did not want its many treasures destroyed). The main criteria for the choices had to do with publicity. The thought was that the city should be one that had been relatively untouched during the war. The Target Committee wanted the first bomb to be "sufficiently spectacular for the importance of the weapon to be internationally recognized when publicity on it was released."[4] Later, it would be emphasized that Hiroshima contained a military base, was, in other words, not a civilian but a military target.

The ten-foot bomb, named "Little Boy," hung on a hook from the ceiling of the plane. Navy Captain William S. Parsons ("Deak"), chief of the Ordnance Division in the Manhattan Project, was the Enola Gay's weaponeer. He had been instrumental in the development of the bomb and was a logical choice to be put in charge of arming it. According to the plan, it was supposed to be armed before take-off, but he took it on himself to leave it unarmed until after the dangerous take-off was successful, and armed it while in-flight. Approximately fifteen minutes into the flight (3:00 a.m.), he began; it took him fifteen minutes. He later commented on his thoughts during the process: "I knew the Japs were in for it, but I felt no particular emotion about it."[5]

The scout plane that flew over the prime target sent a message that the weather was clear. At 8:15 a.m., the Enola Gay's door sprang open and

Little Boy fell toward its date with history. For forty-five seconds, the crew listened for the explosion while pilot Tibbets pulled the plane around and away from the anticipated blast. No one knew just how far or how fast the explosion would spread, but they all knew they were in potential danger.

Then it happened. The bomb exploded 1,900 feet above the city, missing the precise target, the Aioi Bridge, by a mere 800 feet.

Staff Sergeant George Caron, the tail gunner, described what he saw: "The mushroom cloud itself was a spectacular sight, a bubbling mass of purple-gray smoke and you could see it had a red core in it and everything was burning inside. . . . It looked like lava or molasses covering a whole city. . . ."[6]

The cloud is estimated to have reached a height of 40,000 feet.

Co-pilot Captain Robert Lewis stated, "Where we had seen a clear city two minutes before, we could no longer see the city. We could see smoke and fires creeping up the sides of the mountains."[7]

Watching from the *Great Artiste*, one of the accompanying planes, Abe Spitzer, thought he was hallucinating:

> Below us, spread out almost as far as I could see, was a great fire, but it was like no ordinary fire. It contained a dozen colors, all of them blindingly bright, more colors than I imagined existed, and in the center and brightest of all, a gigantic red ball of flame that seemed larger than the sun. Indeed, it seemed that, somehow, the sun had been knocked out of the sky and was on the ground below us and beginning to rise again, only coming straight up toward us—and fast.
>
> At the same time, the ball itself spread outward, too, until it seemed to cover the entire city, and on every side the flame was shrouded, half-hidden by a thick, impenetrable column of grey-white smoke, extending into the foothills beyond the city and bursting outward and rising toward us with unbelievable speed.
>
> The ship rocked again, and it sounded as if a giant gun—some large artillery or cannons—were firing at us and hitting us from every direction.
>
> The purple light was changing to a green-blue now, with just a ting of yellow at the edges, and from below the ball of fire, the upside down sun, seemed to be following the smoke upward, racing to us with immeasurably fast speed—although, we at the same time, though not so quickly—were speeding away from what was left of the city.
>
> Suddenly, we were to the left of the pillar of smoke, and it continued rising, to an estimated height, I later learned, of 50,000 feet. It looked like a kind of massive pole that narrowed toward the top and reached for the stratosphere. The scientists later told us they believed the pole was as much as four or five miles wide at its base and a mile and a half or more wide at the top.

> As I watched, hypnotized by what I saw, the column of smoke changed its color, from a grey-white to brown, then amber, then all three colors at once, mingled into a bright, boiling rainbow. For a second it looked as though its fury might be ending, but almost immediately a kind of mushroom spurted out of the top and traveled up, up to what some say was a distance of 60,000 or 70,000 feet . . . the whole column seethed and spurted, but the mushroom top shot out in every direction, like giant waves during an ocean storm.
>
> Then, quite suddenly, the top broke off the column, as if it had been cut away with a sharp blade, and it shot still further up; how far I don't know; nobody did or does; not even the pictures show that, and none of the apparatus could measure it exactly. Some said it was 80,000 feet, some 85,000 feet, some even more. . . . After that, another mushroom, somewhat smaller, boiled up out of the pillar.[8]

Two-thirds of Hiroshima was destroyed. Within three miles of the explosion, 60,000 of the 90,000 buildings were demolished. Unlike other bombing raids, the goal for this raid had not been a military installation but rather an entire city. The atomic bomb that exploded over Hiroshima killed civilian women and children in addition to soldiers. Hiroshima's population at the time has been estimated at 350,000; approximately 70,000 died immediately from the explosion and another 70,000 died from radiation within five years.

A survivor described the damage to people:

> The appearance of people was . . . well, they all had skin blackened by burns. . . . They had no hair because their hair was burned, and at a glance you couldn't tell whether you were looking at them from in front or in back. . . . They held their arms bent [forward] like this . . . and their skin - not only on their hands, but on their faces and bodies too - hung down. . . . If there had been only one or two such people . . . perhaps I would not have had such a strong impression. But wherever I walked I met these people. . . . Many of them died along the road - I can still picture them in my mind — like walking ghosts."[9]

Sahoko Matsui, who was fifteen, told her story many years later:

> When the atomic bomb was dropped, I got badly burned on my head, my face, all my limbs, and my left chest and back. I suffered terrible pain and high fever. Even 120 days after being exposed to the A-bomb, I couldn't lie down without my parents' help. All my hair was gone; my face was swollen twice its original size; and my lips were covered with scabs like a bunch of strawberries. When I ate something, my lips split open and blood spewed out, turning my lips bright red. Tears ran down my cheeks.

Mom hid all the mirrors and put paper on everything which might show my reflection, saying I would collapse if I saw my ugly face. She was even afraid I might look at myself on the surface of miso soup. I heard this from her later.

The nipple of my left breast fell off, and from that area, green pus and blood kept oozing like magma. My left arm was hooked and the skin stuck together inside the elbow. I could neither extend nor bend my arm. My five fingers bunched up next to one another at the base and made a swollen red keloid. It split open, and pus and blood continued to come out of it. My hand was so ugly that nobody could look on it as human. Pus and blood were coming out of an awfully big wound on my left shoulder and arm, elbow to hand. The wounds on my right arm and both my legs were also open and I could see red flesh there, but I was relieved because I could manage to move them a little bit. Half of my back was also oozing pus and blood, and I suffered terrible pain and high fever day after day. My biggest sorrow was that I couldn't get my healthy body back, no matter how much I suffered and no matter what I endured.

My parents gently watched me around the clock, suffered together, and kept comforting me and cheering me up.

One day Mom showed me a daffodil, saying, “Look at this. Three leaves thinner than chopsticks have come out of a tube though it was trampled and crushed, and one single daffodil is blooming, protected by the leaves.” She put it softly at my bedside. I felt like the daffodil was telling me to live, no matter how hard it was. “I never gave up and I have bloomed though I was trampled down just like you.” Even as a fifteen year old, I was deeply moved and greatly comforted.

“OK, I'll never give up and I will live through. I'll live to bloom someday no matter how small a flower may be.” I firmly decided to do that.

The next April pus and blood were still oozing out of my wounds and I was suffering from terrible dizziness and nausea every day. But I fought them off, cheered up by that single daffodil blooming. I was delighted and grateful to stay alive. Taking life one day at a time, I appreciated the support from those around me, which helped me remain alive.[10]

While the official position taken by President Truman and the United States Government is that the Japanese leaders were given time to surrender but their military leaders refused, this is not what most historians believe, pointing out that the second bomb was dropped within three days, held up that long only because of the delay in obtaining a sufficient amount of plutonium-239.

On August 9, another B-29, this one named Bock’s Car, left Tinian at 3:49 a.m.

The first choice target for this bombing run was Kokura. However, this time the weather prevented it. There was a haze over Kokura, so Bock’s

Car continued on to its second target. At 11:02 a.m., the atomic bomb, "Fat Man," was dropped over Nagasaki, exploding 1,650 feet above the city. This time, however, it wasn't as accurate, and though the bomb itself was a more powerful one, there were fewer deaths, still huge numbers, approximately 70,000 dead by the end of the year, and about 40 percent of the city destroyed.

Fujie Urata Matsumoto survived:

> The pumpkin field in front of the house was blown clean. Nothing was left of the whole thick crop, except that in place of the pumpkins there was a woman's head. I looked at the face to see if I knew her. It was a woman of about forty. She must have been from another part of town—I had never seen her around here. A gold tooth gleamed in the wide-open mouth. A handful of singed hair hung down from the left temple over her cheek, dangling in her mouth. Her eyelids were drawn up, showing black holes where the eyes had been burned out. . . . She had probably looked square into the flash and gotten her eyeballs burned.[11]

Kayano Nagai also survived:

> I saw the atom bomb. I was four then. I remember the cicadas chirping. The atom bomb was the last thing that happened in the war and no more bad things have happened since then, but I don't have my Mummy any more. So even if it isn't bad any more, I'm not happy.[12]

In many ways, this second bomb is harder to justify than the first. By August 7, President Truman was fully briefed on the success of the bombing of Hiroshima, which he labeled a "military base," though he knew that some 100,000 civilians had been killed. Furthermore, he was well aware that the Japanese were hopelessly defeated and seeking terms of surrender. Just two weeks earlier, he had written: "Fini Jap" in his diary when he learned that the Russians would indeed attack them around August 7. He could have held the second bombing back, waited for the terms of the surrender to be agreed upon. Yet he did nothing. The second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, killing some 90,000 more civilians (and only about two hundred Japanese troops), on August 9, definitely not a military site.

This is why even many of those who reluctantly support, or at least are divided in their feelings about the use of the bomb against Hiroshima, consider Nagasaki a war crime—in fact, the worst one-day war crime in human history.

Such historians as Peter Kuznick and Oliver Stone believe the main reason for the rushed bombing of both targets was more of a message to the Soviet Union than a necessary way to end the war against Japan:

> Truman was dining on board the USS *Augusta* on his way back from Potsdam when he learned of Hiroshima. He jumped up and exclaimed, "This is the greatest thing in history."[13] He shortly thereafter said that announcing the news of Hiroshima was the "happiest" announcement he had ever made.
>
> Truman's reported jubilation made some uncomfortable. One Democratic committeeman admonished him by telegram two days later: "no president of the United States could ever be jubilant over any device that could kill innocent human beings. Please make it clear that it is not destruction but the end of destruction that is the cause of jubilation."[14]
>
> Soviet leaders were anything but jubilant. Knowing that the bomb was not needed to defeat a nation already on life support, they concluded that the Soviet Union was the real target. The Americans, they figured, wanted to speed the Japanese surrender in the hope of preempting Soviet gains in Asia. Even more disconcerting, they concluded that the Americans, by using it on Hiroshima when it was clearly not necessary, were signaling that the United States wouldn't hesitate to use it against them too if they threatened U.S. interests.
>
> The Russians got the message. *Sunday Times* correspondent Alexander Werth, who spent 1941 to 1948 in Moscow, observed, "the news [of Hiroshima] had an acutely depressing effect on everybody. It was clearly realized that this was a New Fact in the world's power politics, that the bomb constituted a threat to Russia, and some Russian pessimists I talked to that day dismally remarked that Russia's desperately hard victory over Germany was now 'as good as wasted.'"[15]
>
> It was precisely the gratuitous nature of the bombings that haunted Marshal Zhukov's memories twenty-six years later and made clear to him what their real intention was. He reflected, "It was clear already then that the U.S. Government intended to use the atomic weapon for the purpose of achieving its Imperialist goals from a position of strength in 'the cold war.' This was amply corroborated on August 6 and 8. Without any military need whatsoever, the Americans dropped two atomic bombs on the peaceful and densely populated Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." Other military leaders were also aghast. Gromyko's son Anatoly recalled his father telling him that Hiroshima "set the heads of the Soviet military spinning. The mood in the Kremlin, in the General Staff, was neurotic, the mistrust towards the Allies grew quickly. Opinions floated around to preserve a large land army, to establish controls over extended territories to lessen potential losses from atomic bombings."[16]
>
> Political leaders, including Stalin and Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, were equally alarmed. Physicist Yuli Khariton recalled that "The whole Soviet government interpreted [Hiroshima] as atomic blackmail

against the U.S.S.R., as a threat to unleash a new, even more terrible and devastating war." Nuclear physicists were summoned to the Kremlin for daily reports on their progress. Within days, Stalin had launched a crash program to build a Soviet bomb.[17]

Following Hiroshima, Japanese leaders pressed for a quick response from the Soviets on their willingness to mediate. They received a clear answer, when, in the early hours of August 9, the powerful Red Army smashed through Japan's forces in Manchuria, Korea, Sakhalin, and the Kurils, encountering little resistance.

On the morning of August 9, the four top foreign Ministry officials went to Prime Minister Suzuki's residence to deliver the bad news. "What we feared has finally come," Suzuki responded.[18]

Later that morning, before Japan had time to react to the Soviet invasion, the United States dropped an implosive plutonium bomb, nicknamed Fat Man, on the city of Nagasaki.[19]

Nagasaki was a beautiful city, much like San Francisco, dotted with palms largely built on terraces surrounding a deep harbor. It was Japan's doorway to the western world The Portuguese and Dutch settled there in the 1500s. St. Francis Xavier established the first Catholic churches in the region in 1549, and Urakami, a suburb of Nagasaki, became the country's Catholic center. In 1852, Commander Perry sailed into its harbor, the only one then open to foreigners, in his famous voyage to open up relations.

Shortly after that, English trader Thomas Glover established strong relations with Nagasaki, even marrying Awajiya Tsuru, one of the natives, and having a daughter with her. He was so liked and admired they awarded him the Order of the Rising Sun, and his life served as a model for Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly*, which ironically vies with the atomic bombing for the city's fame.

By WWII, Nagasaki had become a Mitsubishi company town, turning out ships and armaments for Japan's increasingly desperate war effort. It was still the Christian center in the country, with more than 10,000 Catholics among its 250,000 residents. Most of them lived in the outlying Urakami district, the poor part of town, where a magnificent cathedral seating 6000 had been built. However, at 11:02 a.m. on August 9, 1945, Fat Man was detonated more than a mile off target, almost directly over the Cathedral, which was nearly levelled, killing dozens of worshippers waiting for confession.

This was actually fortunate, for though the bomb's blast rolled over the valley, destroying everything in its path, it didn't reach the congested harbor or climb the high ridge to the Nakashima valley. Some 35,000 people perished instantly and another 50,000 or more died afterwards. If the bomb had exploded as planned, directly over the Mitsubishi shipyards,

the death toll in Nagasaki would have made Hiroshima, in at least one important sense, the Second City. Nothing would have escaped, perhaps not even the most untroubled conscience half a world away, for the plutonium bomb hit with the force of 22 kilotons, almost double the uranium bomb's blast in Hiroshima.

"The rights and wrongs of Hiroshima are debatable," Telford Taylor, the chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, observed, "but I have never heard a plausible justification of Nagasaki." Think about it. The chief prosecutor of the horrible war crimes of the Nazis was condemning what he called a war crime committed by "the good guys." Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., who experienced the firebombing of Dresden at close hand, said much the same thing. "The most racist, nastiest act by this country [the United States], after human slavery, was the bombing of Nagasaki." Perhaps, he conceded, Hiroshima might have had some military significance. "But Nagasaki was purely blowing away yellow men, women, and children. I'm glad I'm not a scientist because I'd feel so guilty now."

After the war, Robert Oppenheimer became a chief advisor to the newly created United States Atomic Energy Commission and used that position to lobby for international control of nuclear power to avert nuclear proliferation and an arms race with the Soviet Union. However, after provoking the ire of many politicians with his outspoken opinions during the Second Red Scare, he had his security clearance revoked in a much-publicized hearing in 1954, and was effectively stripped of his direct political influence.

While rumours spread through the years that the men who carried out the original mission against Hiroshima suffered psychologically as a result, in some cases even committed suicide, the truth is far less dramatic. They felt they had done what a good soldier does, felt they had killed because it was necessary and prevented even greater tragedy, and felt that given the same circumstances they would do it again. In a 1975 interview, the pilot, Colonel Paul Warfield Tibbets, Jr. said: "I'm proud that I was able to start with nothing, plan it, and have it work as perfectly as it did . . . . I sleep clearly every night."[20] In a 2002 interview with Studs Terkel, Tibbets said he never had second thoughts about the mission.

> Number one, I got into the air corps to defend the United States to the best of my ability. That's what I believe in and that's what I work for. Number two, I'd had so much experience with airplanes. . . I'd had jobs where there was no particular direction about how you do it and then of course I put this thing together with my own thoughts on how it should be because when I got the directive I was to be self-supporting at all times.

> On the way to the target I was thinking: I can't think of any mistakes I've made. Maybe I did make a mistake: maybe I was too damned assured. At 29 years of age I was so shot in the ass with confidence I didn't think there was anything I couldn't do. Of course, that applied to airplanes and people. So, no, I had no problem with it. I knew we did the right thing because when I knew we'd be doing that I thought, yes, we're going to kill a lot of people, but by God we're going to save a lot of lives. We won't have to invade [Japan].

In the 2005 BBC premier, *Hiroshima: BBC History of World War II*, he recalled the day of the Hiroshima bombing. "I'm not emotional. I didn't have the first goddamned thought, or I would have told you what it was. I did the job and I was so relieved that it was successful, you can't even understand it."[21]

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross immediately upon his return landing from the mission in Guam. His photos started to appear on the front pages of all American and world newspapers. He became a very popular person in the United States; pictures and interviews of his wife and children were printed in the main American newspapers. He was seen as a national hero who ended the war with Japan. There were, however, no parades or testimonial dinners for him or any of the other *Enola Gay* crewmen. For what it's worth, later on, he received an invitation from President Harry S. Truman to visit the White House.[22]

He remained in the Air Force until 1966, achieving the rank of Brigadier General, and continued to work as an aviation executive until his retirement in 1970. He died in 2007 at age 92. He had requested he be cremated and his ashes dropped over the English Channel, saying he wanted to avoid a physical memorial that would become a pilgrimage site for nuclear protesters.

Bombardier Major Thomas Ferebee pushed the button that dropped the bomb, and actually slept in the plane both before and after he did his part. Like Tibbets, he never expressed any regret for his role, saying "it was a job that had to be done."[23] In 1970, he told *Newsweek* magazine, "I'm convinced that the bombing saved many lives by ending the war." Nevertheless, in 1995, for the 50th anniversary of the bombing, he told *The Charlotte Observer*, "'Now we should look back and remember what just one bomb did, or two bombs. Then I think we should realize that this can't happen again.'"

After the war, he remained in the Air Force, serving in the Strategic Air Command.

Navigator, Air Force Captain Theodore "Dutch" van Kirk did not know the destructive force of the nuclear bomb before Hiroshima. He was

24 years old at that time, a veteran of 58 missions in North Africa. Paul Tibbets told him this mission would shorten or end the war, but Van Kirk had heard that line before.

However, Hiroshima made him a believer. He felt the bombing of Hiroshima was worth the price in that it ended the war before the invasion of Japan, which promised to be devastating to both sides.

"I honestly believe the use of the atomic bomb saved lives in the long run. There were a lot of lives saved. Most of the lives saved were Japanese." According to the 1995 *New York Times* interview by Gustav Niebuhr, he said he was often asked, "Given a choice about his role in the Hiroshima bombing, would he do it again?" And his response was:

> Under the same circumstances—and the key words are 'the same circumstances'—yes, I would do it again. We were in a war for five years. We were fighting an enemy that had a reputation for never surrendering, never accepting defeat. It's really hard to talk about morality and war in the same sentence. In a war, there are so many questionable things done. Where was the morality in the bombing of Coventry, or the bombing of Dresden, or the Bataan death march, or the Rape of Nanking, or the bombing of Pearl Harbor? I believe that when you're in a war, a nation must have the courage to do what it must to win the war with a minimum loss of lives.[24]

In 2005, Van Kirk came as close as he ever got to regret: "I pray no man will have to witness that sight again. Such a terrible waste, such a loss of life. We unleashed the first atomic bomb, and I hope there will never be another. I pray that we have learned a lesson for all time. But I'm not sure that we have."

After the war, he got a Master's Degree in chemical engineering and worked for DuPont until his retirement.

Army Air Force radar specialist Jacob Beser was the only man who served on both the Enola Gay in the Hiroshima bombing mission and Bock's Car three days later when its crew bombed Nagasaki. He couldn't look at the detonation of the bombs because he was charged with monitoring for outside signals that could have detonated the bomb early and with monitoring for signals of the proper detonation in addition to keeping an eye on radar for any enemy planes.

In this 1985 interview for the *Washington Post*, he was asked if he would do it again and responded:

> Given the same circumstances in the same kind of context, the answer is yes. However, you have to admit that the circumstances don't exist now. They probably never will again. I have no regrets, no remorse about it. As

> far as our country was concerned, we were three years downstream in a war, going on four. The world had been at war, really, from the '30s in China, continuously, and millions and millions of people had been killed. Add to that the deliberate killing that went on in Europe, [and] it's kind of ludicrous to say well, geez, look at all those people that were instantly murdered. In November of 1945 there was an invasion of Japan planned. Three million men were gonna be thrown against Japan. There were about three million Japanese digging in for the defence of their homeland, and there was a casualty potential of over a million people. That's what was avoided. If you take the highest figures of casualties of both cities, say, 300,000 combined casualties in Hiroshima [and] Nagasaki, versus a million, I'm sorry to say, it's a good trade-off. It's a very cold way to look at it, but it's the only way to look at it. Now looking into tomorrow, that's something else again. I don't have any pat answers for that.

When asked the same question by the *Global Press* in 1988, he responded much the same:

> For years I have been asked two questions. (1) Would you do it again? (2) Do you feel any guilt for having been a part of Hiroshima's destruction? One has to consider the context of the times in which decisions are made. Given the same set of circumstances as existed in 1945, I would not hesitate to take part in another similar mission. No I feel no sorrow or remorse for whatever small role I played. That I should is crazy. I remember Pearl Harbor and all of the Japanese atrocities. I remember the shock to our nation that all of this brought. I don't want to hear any discussion of morality. War, by its very nature, is immoral. Are you any more dead from an atomic bomb than from a conventional bomb?[25]

After the war, he worked as an engineer at Sandia Laboratories where nuclear research continued and at Westinghouse where he worked on classified projects for the military. He retired in 1985, wrote a book, *Hiroshima and Nagasaki Revisited*, 1988, and died of cancer in 1992 at age 71.

Captain William S. Parsons, the weaponeer, senior military technical observer and mission commander, was the most distinguished scientist involved with the entire Manhattan Project on the flight, and he would continue to work on the development of nuclear weapons in the military after the mission, rising to the rank of Rear Admiral. It was Parsons, not Tibbets, who was in charge of the mission. He approved the choice of Hiroshima as the target, and gave the final approval for the bomb to be released. For his part in the mission, Parsons was awarded the Silver Star, and was promoted to the wartime rank of Commodore just four days after

it, August 10, 1945. For his work on the Manhattan Project, he was awarded the Navy Distinguished Service Medal.

He joined the Manhattan Project in 1943 as Associate Director at the research laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico under Oppenheimer, and became responsible for the ordnance aspects of the project, including the design and testing of the non-nuclear components of nuclear weapons. In reorganization in 1944, he lost control over the development of the implosion-type fission weapon, but retained it for the design and development of the gun-type fission weapon, which eventually became Little Boy. He was also responsible for the delivery program, code-named Project Alberta. This was why he was chosen to participate in the mission, for which he received the Silver Star.

After the war, he continued working on the development of nuclear weapons, rising to the rank of Rear Admiral without ever having commanded a ship, and he participated in Operation Crossroads, the nuclear weapon tests at Bikini Atoll in 1946, for which he was awarded the Legion of Merit. In 1947, he became Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project, was in charge of Operation Sandstone, the nuclear weapon tests at Eniwetok Atoll, 1948, and served on the Atomic Energy Commission.

He witnessed seven of the first eight nuclear explosions. There are no quotes available from Parsons as he was still serving in the Navy when he died of a sudden heart attack on December 5, 1953, at the age of 52, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. His deep involvement in both the development and employment of the bombs both before and after Hiroshima indicate he saw nothing wrong with what he was doing.

The Rear Admiral William S. Parsons Award for Scientific and Technical Progress was established by the Navy in his memory. It is awarded "to a Navy or Marine Corps officer, enlisted person, or civilian who has made an outstanding contribution in any field of science that has furthered the development and progress of the Navy or Marine Corps." The *Forrest Sherman*-class destroyer *USS Parsons* was named in his honor. Her keel was laid down by Ingalls Shipbuilding of Pascagoula, Mississippi on June, 17, 1957 and she was launched by his widow, Martha, on August 17, 1958. When it was rechristened as a guided missile destroyer (DDG-33) in 1967, Clare, now a naval officer herself, represented her family. The *Parsons* was decommissioned on November 19, 1982, stricken from the Navy list on December 1, 1984, and disposed of as a target on April 25, 1989. The headquarters of Afloat Training Group, Atlantic, in Norfolk, Virginia, was also named for him. His portrait is

included among a series of paintings related to Operation Crossroads, and his papers are in the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C.

Radar Operator Sergeant Joseph Stiborik remembered the crew sitting in stunned silence on the return flight. The only words he recollected hearing were Lewis saying: "My God, what have we done?" He explained, "I was dumbfounded. Remember, nobody had ever seen what an A-bomb could do before. Here was a whole damn town nearly as big as Dallas, one minute all in good shape and the next minute disappeared and covered with fires and smoke. There was almost no talk I can remember on our trip back to the base. It was just too much to express in words, I guess. We were all in a kind of state of shock. I think the foremost thing in all our minds was that this thing was going to bring an end to the war and we tried to look at it that way." He faded out of public attention after the bombing and died of a heart attack in 1984 at age 69.

Ordinance Expert Morris Jeppson was only 23 years old when he was assigned to accompany the atomic bomb on the Enola Gay, his first and only mission of the war. It was his duty to arm the bomb and make sure it would work, and he had the power to abort the mission if it didn't. After the war, he continued on the nuclear path. He studied physics at Berkeley and worked in the radiation laboratory there. Then he worked on developing hydrogen thermonuclear weapons at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. He went on to invent and market hi-tech machinery for medical and industrial uses.

Until the 509th reunion in 1995, he hadn't given the mission much thought. "Those bomb plugs were just kicking around in a drawer" for years, he said, maintaining that dropping the bomb on Hiroshima was a necessary means to help end the war and highlighting wartime concerns that Germany was also developing nuclear bomb technology. "If that had happened, the world would be an entirely different place (today)."

Radar Operator Private Richard Nelson was the youngest of the Enola Gay crew, just 20 years old. He relayed the news of the atomic bomb to his superiors in code, who forwarded it to President Truman: "Results excellent." After the war, he got a degree in business administration and made a career as a salesman. Fifty years later, he told T*he Riverside Press-Enterprise* on the 50th anniversary of the bombing: "'War is a terrible thing. It takes and it destroys. Anyone feels sorry for people who are killed. We are all human beings. But I don't feel sorry I participated in it. If I had known the results of the mission beforehand, I would have flown it anyway.'" He died of emphysema in 2003 at age 77.

Tail Gunner, Staff Sergeant Robert Caron wrote *Fire of a Thousand Suns* about the mission, describing the bomb's effects. In an interview

with the *Rocky Mountain News* published two weeks before he died, he joined with the others, saying: “No remorse, no bad dreams. We accomplished our mission.” He died of pneumonia in 1995 at age 75.

Flight Engineer, Staff Sergeant Wyatt Duzenbury kept tabs on the Enola Gay's engines and other systems while others tended the bomb and the mission itself, considering it an honor to be chosen for the secret bombing mission that was to shorten the war. After 1945, he stayed with the Air Force. He said, “Personally, I feel that if we hadn't dropped that bomb, and the other crew hadn't dropped its bomb on Nagasaki, it would have cost thousands of US soldiers' lives establishing a beach head for the invasion of Japan.” In 1985 he told the *Lansing State Journal*: “We were told to go, cranked up, dropped it, and came home.” He told the newspaper that he didn't feel guilty about his mission, but did “not feel good about the 100,000 people who died.” He died in 1992 at age 71.

Assistant Flight Engineer, Sergeant Robert H. Shumard assisted flight engineer Wyatt Duzenbury in keeping the Enola Gay running. In a 1960 interview, he said he didn't feel honored to do what they did, but he felt honored to be selected for the mission. And given the circumstances, he would do it again. “Nobody actually wants to cause the destruction we caused. But it was through a necessity rather than a wanton type of destruction. It was something that had to be done. As much as a man has gangrene in his leg, and they have to cut it off. It's something that has to be done. It was a cancer in the world situation that had to be removed, that's all.”

Air Force flier Robert Lewis was a pilot first and foremost. He was upset that commander Paul Tibbets had named his plane the Enola Gay. But he was also dedicated to the mission, and earned Tibbets’ respect despite the animosity between the two. Against orders, he kept a diary of the mission in a notebook during the flight to Hiroshima, later selling it for $37,000. It was resold in 2002 for almost ten times that much. He is often quoted: “As the bomb fell over Hiroshima and exploded, we saw an entire city disappear. I wrote in my log the words: ‘My God, what have we done?’” Some sources say that quote was a revision after the fact used to misrepresent his views. Later in life, he defended the mission. While some of the crew returned to the city to take part in the annual commemoration celebrations, Lewis never did. For him “It was just a job of work. I helped make the world a safer place. Nobody has dared launch an atomic bomb since then. That is how I want to be remembered—the man who helped to do that.” He died of a heart attack in 1983 aged 65.[26]

A more peripheral participant in the Hiroshima bombing, Major Claude “Buck” Eatherly was the only one who broke from the solid,

positive, official story, and he became the voice of the protestors. A native of Van Alstyne, Texas, he joined the Air Corps in 1939, one year shy of graduating from North Texas State University, and piloted the advance scouting, weather plane Straight Flush that reported clear skies over Hiroshima, giving the go-ahead signal to Tibbets to proceed to his primary target.

Following the war, he reenlisted and participated in the 1946 Bikini atomic bomb tests. After the first test, he and his crew were ordered to fly into the radioactive cloud and take samples of the air. By the time they found their way out of the cloud, they had received a heavy dose of radiation, which it has since been suggested could likely be the cause of his subsequent emotional problems and negative views.

He was discharged from the Air Force in 1947 on the grounds that he was suffering from a "neurosis with psychotic manifestations," what he attributed to "guilt" over his role in the destruction of Hiroshima. Whatever the cause, his problems continued. Beginning in 1947, he had the first in a long series of run-ins with the law, mostly for robbery, burglary, and writing bad checks. In 1950, he attempted suicide and was in and out of psychiatric wards for much of the next fifteen years. In 1954, doctors administered shock treatments. In March 1957, the *Dallas Morning News* reported on his impending trial for breaking into two Texas post offices, indicating that he had spent much of the past seven years being treated in mental hospitals for "extreme nervousness." The paper noted that he didn't blame his psychological problems on the war. In the ensuing April trial, however, a psychiatrist testified that he suffered from a guilt complex and felt responsible for 100,000 deaths in Hiroshima. His case gained international notoriety when an article about him appeared in *Newsweek* on April 1, 1957. After an attempted holdup of a Dallas 7-Eleven in April 1959, his attorney stated, "He's got hallucinations that the Japanese are after him. He's anxious to go back in the hospital." While waiting in Dallas County jail before being remanded to the care of Veterans Administration psychiatrists who were to ascertain why his Hiroshima experience had led him to petty criminality, he told a reporter, "I do feel I killed those people. I wish I could die. I tried to commit suicide twice, but it didn't work."

In July, Eatherly wrote directly to the *hibakusha,* the people who survived the nuclear bombing in Hiroshima, decrying all warfare and begging their forgiveness. He received a very warm reply from 30 "girls of Hiroshima," many of whom were part of the original delegation of Hiroshima Maidens, which seemed to help him. In August, he wrote to philosopher Gunther Anders, conveying his newfound sense of purpose:

"My only desire is to lend influence toward peace, to end nuclear buildup, to safeguard the rights of all people regardless of race, color or creed." Nevertheless he continued to complain of recurring nightmares as a result of the bombing and in 1960 claimed, "I haven't had any sleep in fifteen years." He told *Parade Magazine* in the early 1960s: "Every night for 15 years, I have dreamed about it. I see great fires, boiling fires, crimson fires, closing in on me. Buildings fall, children run—living torches with their clothes aflame. 'Why did you do it?' they scream. I wake up paralyzed with fear, screaming, sweating because I have no answer." In August 1960, he wrote from the VA hospital to Senator Ralph Yarborough (D-TX), urging him to act forcefully to eliminate the nuclear threat. Having seen three of the first four atomic bombs exploded and recognizing the enormously heightened destructive capabilities that had subsequently been achieved, a nuclear war, he warned, "would be the end of this people's earth." Therefore, he concluded, "The prevention of war has become necessary if civilized life is to continue, or perhaps if any kind of life is to continue." He was judged insane and confined to the Waco Veterans Hospital by court order in 1961. At the trial, four psychiatrists testified that, though intelligent and likable, he suffered from schizophrenia and had delusions of leading a great disarmament-oriented peace movement that stemmed from guilt over his Hiroshima role. Following release and re-arrest, a judge in Galveston committed him to Rusk State Hospital in 1964.

Whether his exposure to nuclear radiation, his feelings about the enormity of his involvement with the bombing of Hiroshima, or simply his mental make-up, his bizarre behavior and condemning comments about the mission set him up to be the international symbol of the crime of Hiroshima and the danger of nuclear weapons, even more in Europe than in the United States. Books, plays, and poems were written about him on both continents. Renowned British philosopher-mathematician Bertrand Russell argued that his case was "symbolic of the suicidal madness of our time." "The world," Russell charged, "was prepared to honour him for his part in the massacre, but, when he repented, it turned against him, seeing in his act of repentance its own condemnation." Gunther Anders published a book of his correspondence with Eatherly, letters highlighting Eatherly's views on the Hiroshima bombing and the nuclear threat. In 1962, on the 17th anniversary of the bombing, organizers of a New York City march led by A. J. Muste and Norman Thomas announced that they were giving Hiroshima Awards to four persons who had made "outstanding contributions to world peace," including Eatherly.

He died of cancer in 1978, age 57. Despite his having become persona non grata with many veterans, a Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) color guard stood at attention at his funeral and a VFW bugler played taps during his burial at the federal military cemetery in Houston. Fellow VFW Post 490 member Paul Guidry told reporters that he did not know if his friend "ever came to peace with himself. But he was 100 percent for America, and if you print anything, print that he was the most loving human being I have ever known." After the funeral, his brother James said, "I can remember him waking up night after night. He said his brain was on fire. He said he could feel those people burning. He never forgot the thousands of people dying in those flames." Another relative added, "He never got over the bomb."[27]

During the war and immediately after it, calls for complete annihilation, for the extermination of the "Japs" (often referred to in non-human terms) were common. According to the UK embassy in Washington the Americans regarded the Japanese as "a nameless mass of vermin."[28] Caricatures in magazine and newspapers depicting Japanese as less than human, e.g. monkeys, were standard.[29] A 1944 opinion poll that asked what should be done with Japan found that 13% of the U.S. public were in favor of "killing off" *all* Japanese—men, women, and children.[30] And for all of the horror expressed about the Nazi concentrations camps, the United States was okay with having forcibly removed thousands of Japanese citizens from their homes, putting them in concentration camps, and not suddenly forgiving them or feeling any guilt after the war (even families who had members fighting in the United States armed forces). It would be many decades before any admission of guilt or recompense.

Furthermore, while questions about the use of these new, powerful weapons did bother some of the scientists and others who were directly involved, the general public greeted the bombing enthusiastically. A poll in *Fortune* magazine in late 1945 showed a significant minority of Americans (22.7%) wishing that more atomic bombs could have been dropped on Japan.[31] The initial positive response was supported by the imagery presented to the public (mainly the powerful images of the mushroom cloud—an awesome, beautiful sight!) and the censorship of photographs that showed the destruction, corpses of people incinerated by the blast and maimed survivors.[32] It was all carefully orchestrated by the government, both political and military. They knew all along that a good marketing program was important, which was why they turned the actual bombing into such a media event, filming both the take-off and return of the flight in brightly lighted landing strips with high quality cameras, very much like a Hollywood movie premier.

The most horrifying war of all time, the war that America had tried to stay out of and only been forced into by that horrific, unethical, sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, the war that had forced so many young men to die and so many mothers to suffer the loss of their beloved sons, the war to end all wars was finally over!

It was the moment when the new, young, no longer innocent county, the United States of America became the leader of the free world!

No longer would those storied countries of Europe be able to control and lead the world. After centuries of political, religious, and economic power plays, they had collapsed. Now, like it or not, it was this fresh-faced, unsophisticated America across the sea that would be driving the world. Of course, the vacuum created also allowed another country (or group of countries) that had been on the edges to emerge, the newly formed Soviet Union, and the maneuverings of the two new goliaths (what quickly became known as the Cold War) would dominate the world for the rest of the century.

It is certainly understandable that what Tom Brokaw would later call America's "Greatest Generation" would feel more than justified in what it had accomplished. While there will always be those who say no war is justifiable, if any war can be justified, this one can.

Even more so because of Japan's ally, Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, the man who has secured for himself the designation of being the most evil man of all time.

If the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were horrific mass murdering of people who were just common, everyday humans, people not in the military, then the fully conscious, purposeful denigration of innocent people in the Nazi concentration camps was confirmation of evil beyond any imagined in the most degenerate horror stories.

A few excerpts from those who were first on the scene is all we need. Harry J. Herder, Jr., one of the first soldiers to arrive at Buchenwald on April 11, 1945, wrote about it, including his first encounter with the dead:

> The bodies of human beings were stacked like cord wood. All of them dead. All of them stripped. The inspection I made of the pile was not very close, but the corpses seemed to be all male. The bottom layer of the bodies had a north/south orientation, the next layer went east/west, and they continued alternating. The stack was about five feet high, maybe a little more; I could see over the top. They extended down the hill, only a slight hill, for fifty to seventy-five feet. Human bodies neatly stacked, naked, ready for disposal. The arms and legs were neatly arranged, but an occasional limb dangled oddly. The bodies we could see were all face up. There was an aisle, then another stack, and another aisle, and more stacks. The Lord only knows how many there were.