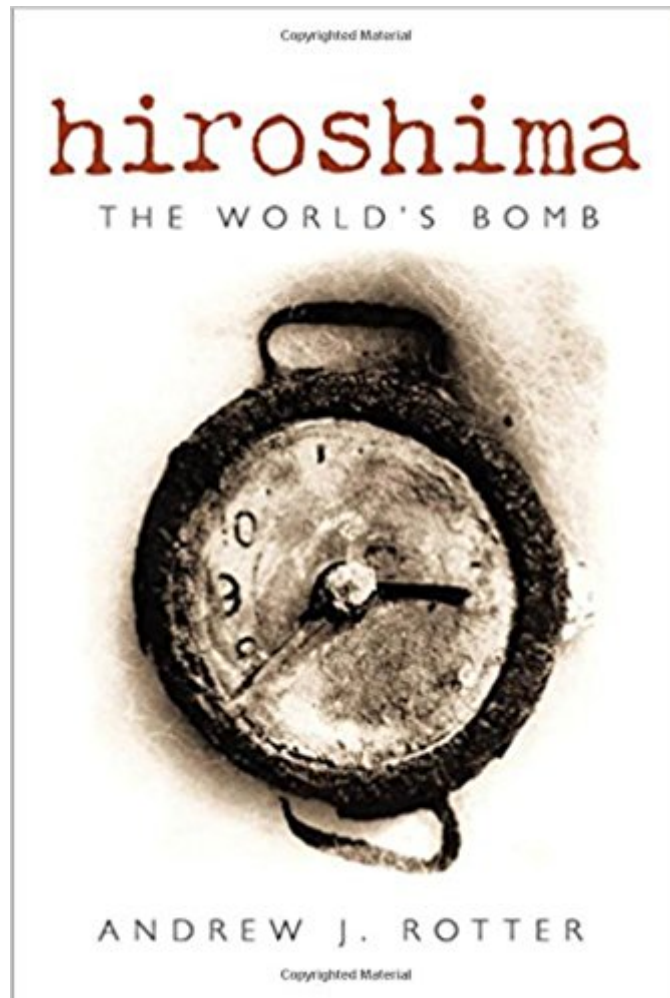




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# Hiroshima: The World's Bomb (Making Of The Modern World)



## Synopsis

The US decision to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima remains one of the most controversial events of the twentieth century. But as this fascinating new history shows, the bomb dropped by an American pilot that hot August morning was in many ways the world's bomb, in both a technological and a moral sense. And it was the world that would have to face its consequences, strategically, diplomatically, and culturally, in the years ahead. In this fast-paced and insightful narrative, Andrew J. Rotter tells the international story behind the development of the atom bomb, ranging from the global crises that led to the Second World War to the largely unavailing attempts to control the spread of nuclear weapons and the evolution of the nuclear arms race after the war had ended. He details the growth in the 1930s and '40s of a world-wide community of scientists dedicated to developing a weapon that could undo the evil in Nazi Germany, and he describes the harnessing of their efforts by the US wartime government. Rotter also sheds light on the political and strategic decisions that led to the bombing itself, the impact of the bomb on Hiroshima and the endgame of the Pacific War, the effects of the bombing and the bomb on society and culture, and the state of all things nuclear in the early 21st-century world.

## Book Information

Series: Making of the Modern World

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (October 25, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199569762

ISBN-13: 978-0199569762

Product Dimensions: 7.7 x 0.8 x 5.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #374,898 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #198 in Books > History > Military > Weapons & Warfare > Nuclear #410 in Books > History > Military > Weapons & Warfare > Conventional #587 in Books > History > Asia > Japan

## Customer Reviews

Rotter, a professor of history at Colgate (The Path to Vietnam), proposes to restructure the debate over the atomic bombing of Japan by putting the subject in a global context. His detailed analysis of Japanese reactions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki draws a commonsense conclusion: the nuclear

strikes combined with Soviet intervention gave Emperor Hirohito the opening he needed to end a war clearly lost. America alone, however, did not decide to build the bomb; leading scientists in other countries worked on embryonic atomic bomb projects. Nor were Americans alone in considering the bomb's use. In Britain, Germany and Japan, false starts, scarce resources and wartime exigencies limited results. Rotter nevertheless concludes that any other power would have dropped a developed bomb with no more hesitation than the U.S. Ironically, the superpowers' mutual efforts to step away from the abyss in later years were accompanied by increasing and successful efforts by others to join the nuclear club: Britain, France, Israel, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea. The atomic bomb is now the world's bomb as political, cultural and religious contexts increasingly deny that genuine noncombatants exist. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists' Doomsday Clock continues to tick. 18 b&w photos. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Given the number of tomes on the atomic bomb, one might be forgiven for asking whether we need another one. In the case of Andrew J. Rotter's *Hiroshima*, the answer is definitely yes.... The author is to be commended not only for having succeeded at that task, but also for providing a valuable teaching volume and a creative reflection of interest to the specialist."--Michael D. Gordin, *The Journal of Military History*"A comprehensive account of the development of nuclear weapons from the early 20th century through the current concerns about terrorist attacks.... Rotter writes beautifully, using telling anecdotes with great skill.... This is the best relatively brief and readable study of this important and still timely topic. Highly recommended."--A.O. Edmonds, *CHOICE*"Present[s] a new perspective and challenging insights...Rotter provides a context that makes the atomic bombing of Japan seem far from inevitable. [H]e has not only created an accessible work for students but also added significantly to the literature about the Gadget and about Fat Man and Little Boy." -- *Technology and Culture*"Readers looking for a single-volume history of the development of the use of the atomic bomb would be well advised to start with Rotter's measured and thoughtful work." -- *The Historian*"Rotter tells this story extremely well--his writing, throughout the book, is superb...[this] could well serve as a useful classroom text." -- *Diplomatic History*

This book has the advantage of the perspectives of data and time to examine the historical events of the developing and dropping of the A-bomb. The events described in this book are in agreement

with the Japanese documentaries about the years near the end of WWII by NHK, the Nippon (Japan) Broadcasting System. The author is the Dana professor of history at Colgate University. It is a well researched and well written book. I found it totally engaging and at times hard to put down. There is no personal or emotional outbursts like so many other writings about this horrible weapon but help rational people to look at the big picture. I wish this approach of clearly stating the facts are more widely adopted by all authors.

Review of the book was spot on, and I respect the seller's honesty in that aspect. The book is exactly as it was described, and as I was hoping it would be.

This book provides an overview of the decision to drop the atomic bomb, the points of view and scientific development that led to the decision, and the post-WWII development of atomic weapons, presented country by country. Given this broad scope, the detail that can be provided is to a degree limited, but nevertheless sufficient, given the goals of the book. The author implies that the bombs were an atrocity in general, but well-explains why the decision makers at the time were more or less compelled to go ahead and drop the bombs. The later-day revisionism, critical of the bombs, is basically avoided; indeed, many of the arguments against the bombs are set aside, based on the facts. A good read on the topic.

This was a long story about the Atomic Bomb and its development and use! My family was involved in Uranium Mining in Western Colorado.

The book is more about the history of the building of the bombs little about the aftermath. worth the effort.

This is one volume in an interesting series from Oxford UP. It is a very, very good book, but be warned: this is not an easy read. It is aimed at the educated reader, and shades over into moral philosophy in wartime. It offers a detailed account of the conception and development of the weapon, and decisions related to targeting. This is more a political and policy history of the weapon than detail on engineering, recruiting personnel and so on. An example of the kind of moral discussion is this. Quite deadly poison gas was available to all sides in the war, but no one used it. Rotter argues that the use of poison gas horrifies the world because it kills from inside a body, and that nuclear weapons are more acceptable. No, his explanation of that is not very clear. The author

is quite certain that it would have been used on the Germans had the bomb been available before the German surrender. He also argues that its use was inevitable because the huge resources devoted to it required a justification. This, Rotter argues, was perhaps more important in the decision to drop it than saving lives by shortening the war or to keep the Soviets out of Japan.

The title of this book is somewhat misleading as it covers far more ground than simply an account of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The book traces the development of the A-bomb (though at a high level, and the reader interested in this subject would be far better off reading "The Making of the Atomic Bomb" by Richard Rhodes). Alongside this the author lays out the parallel development of strategic bombing and the degeneration of morals on all sides as a result of the brutalities of the World War, both of which contributed to the climate in which the decision to use the weapon was made. The actual description of the events at Hiroshima takes up very little space as the author moves on to describe (again at a high level) the subsequent proliferation of nuclear weapons almost to the present day. The book adopts a clear moral stance as regards the bombing, and while hedging somewhat, it is clear the author does not believe the bombings were a necessary part of winning the war against Japan. The decision to use the bomb is presented as almost inevitable with few of those involved expressing any serious moral reservations at the time. Furthermore, the author appears to believe, the bombings were far more a geopolitical statement to the Soviet Union rather than a military step to defeat Japan. Unfortunately the book offers little new on the subject other than the idea that the bomb was the "world's bomb". This idea is based on the multi-national nature of the scientists that developed the theory and practical usage of the nuclear weapon and on the moral climate that made its use feasible. These are thin arguments at best. While the theoretical developments in early 20th century physics were certainly spread across the international scientific community, the Manhattan Project, despite critical contributions from the British and European scientists, was very much an American endeavor. More importantly, the decision to use the weapon was entirely an American one. As to the moral climate of the times, few if any, of the leaders of the Allied or Axis powers would have demurred from using the bomb had it been available to them, and a majority of their populations would have supported that decision. But this does not constitute a basis for calling it the "world's bomb". In all honesty the bomb was clearly an American Bomb with all that entails. As for the history of the bomb and the associated physics this is better described in Rhodes' excellent book, the history of air power and the war in general can be found in specialist works covering those domains, and the arguments for and against the use of the bomb are well known to anyone familiar with 20th century history. If you are unfamiliar with this subject matter then

the book is a good overview. If you are familiar with the subject then this work will likely add little to your knowledge.

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