



Hiroshima: The World's Bomb (Making of the Modern World)

By Andrew J. Rotter

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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.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

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)

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Review

"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*

About the Author

Andrew J. Rotter is Charles A. Dana Professor of History at Colgate University. He has written extensively on US-Asian relations during the twentieth century, including *The Path to Vietnam*.

Users Review

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