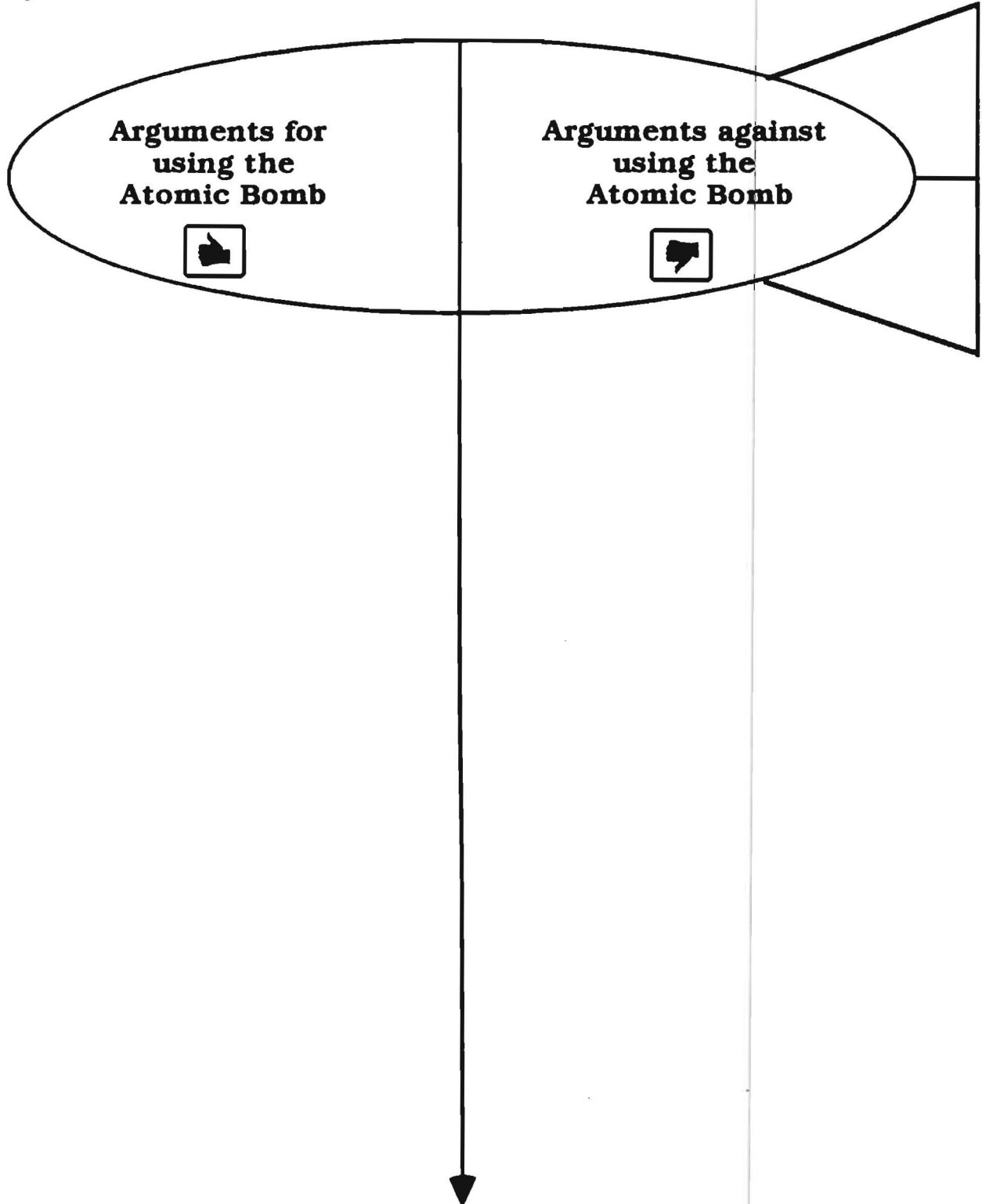


TO BOMB OR NOT TO BOMB... THAT IS THE QUESTION

Read *THE ACCOMPANYING ARTICLES*. As you read, write down the arguments you see for using the Atomic Bomb. What arguments might be used in opposing the use of the bomb.



Name _____

Class _____ Date _____

VIEWS ON USING THE ATOMIC BOMB

President Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb raised a host of moral, military and political questions. In the first passage, Winston Churchill explains why he urged Truman to use the bomb. In the second passage, *The Christian Century*, a prominent Protestant journal, raises questions about how the bomb was used.

The President invited me to confer with him forthwith. He had with him General Marshall and Admiral Leahy. Up to this moment we had shaped our ideas towards an assault upon the homeland of Japan by terrific air bombing and by the invasion of very large armies. We had contemplated the desperate resistance of the Japanese fighting to the death with Samurai devotion, not only in pitched battles, but in every cave and dug-out. I had in my mind the spectacle of Okinawa island, where many thousands of Japanese, rather than surrender, had drawn up in a line and destroyed themselves by hand-grenades after their leaders had solemnly performed the rite of *hara-kiri*. To quell the Japanese resistance man by man and conquer the country yard by yard might well require the loss of a million American lives and half that number of British — or more if we could get them there: for we were resolved to share the agony. Now all this nightmare picture had vanished. In its place was the vision — fair and bright indeed it seemed — of the end of the whole war in one or two violent shocks. I thought immediately myself of how the Japanese people, whose courage I had always admired, might find in the apparition of this almost supernatural weapon an excuse which would save their honour and release them from their obligation of being killed to the last fighting man.

At any rate, there never was a moment's discussion as to whether the atomic bomb should be used or not. To avert a vast, indefinite butchery, to bring the war to an end, to give peace to the world, to lay healing hands upon its tortured peoples by a manifestation of overwhelming power at the cost of a few explosions, seemed, after all our toils and perils, a miracle of deliverance.

British consent in principle to the use of the weapon had been given on July 4, before the test had taken place. The final decision now lay in the main with President Truman, who had the weapon; but I

Something like a moral earthquake has followed the dropping of atomic bombs on two Japanese cities. Its continued tremors throughout the world have diverted attention even from the military victory itself It is our belief that the use made of the atomic bomb has placed our nation in an indefensible moral position.

We do not propose to debate the issue of military necessity, though the facts are clearly on one side of this issue. The atomic bomb was used at a time when Japan's navy was sunk, her air force virtually destroyed, her homeland surrounded, her supplies cut off, and our forces poised for the final stroke. Recognition of her imminent defeat could be read between the lines of every Japanese communique. Neither do we intend to challenge Mr. Churchill's highly speculative assertion that the use of the bomb saved the lives of more than one million American and 250,000 British soldiers.

We believe, however, that these lives could have been saved had our government followed a different course, more honorable and more humane. Our leaders seem not to have weighed the moral considerations involved. No sooner was the bomb ready than it was rushed to the front and dropped on two helpless cities, destroying more lives than the United States had lost in the entire war.

Perhaps it was inevitable that the bomb would ultimately be employed to bring Japan to the point of surrender But there was no military advantage in hurling the bomb upon Japan without warning. The least we might have done was to announce to our foe that we possessed the atomic bomb; that its destructive power was beyond anything known in warfare; and that its terrible effectiveness had been experimentally demonstrated in this country. We could thus have warned Japan of what was in store for her unless she surrendered immediately. If she doubted the good faith of our representations, it would have been a simple matter to select a demonstration target

Name _____

Class _____ Date _____

Chapter 16 ◆ VOICE FROM THE PAST

Section 4

never doubted what it would be, nor have I ever doubted since that he was right. The historic fact remains, and must be judged in the after-time, that the decision whether or not to use the atomic bomb to compel the surrender of Japan was never even an issue. There was unanimous, automatic, unquestioned agreement around our table; nor did I ever hear the slightest suggestion that we should do otherwise.

Winston S. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, pp. 637-639.

in the enemy's own country at a place where the loss of human life would be at a minimum.

If, despite such warning, Japan had still held out, we would have been in a far less questionable position had we then dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At least our record of deliberation and ample warning would have been clear. Instead, with brutal disregard of any principle of humanity, we "demonstrated" the bomb on two great cities, utterly extinguishing them. This course has placed the United States in a bad light throughout the world. What the use of poison gas did to the reputation of Germany in World War I, the use of the atomic bomb has done for the United States in World War II. Our future security is menaced by our own act, and our influence for justice and humanity in international affairs has been sadly crippled.

The Christian Century, August 29, 1945.

READING

MAKING CONNECTIONS: History and Literature

A

Dr. Arata Osada, *Children of the A-Bomb: Testament of the Boys and Girls of Hiroshima*

Dr. Osada was a distinguished Japanese doctor who wanted the world to understand the human tragedy experienced by the people of Hiroshima. In 1951, he asked a number of young people to write their personal stories of what happened to them when the atomic bomb struck (see textbook page 722). The following excerpts vividly describe the ordeal experienced by two young Japanese women.

7th grade girl. In 1st grade in 1945.

[We] were eating breakfast at the time. From no particular place there was a bright flash.

Surprised, I asked, "Mother, what was that!"

And just as she answered, "What could it be!" we heard a tremendous explosion and everything became pitch dark and I couldn't even see the face of my mother who was right beside me.

In that second some heavy object fell and pressed me down painfully.

When I frantically yelled, "Mother, Mother!" there was a voice calling, "Set-chan, Set-chan." Mother's voice came through broken and weak.

I shouted, "Setsuko is here. Setsuko is here!"

And then I heard a voice saying, "Set-chan, try to move your legs."

So I kicked as hard as I could. Just at my chest there was a scraping sound of something being moved. After a little while I was finally able to crawl out of there.

"Mommy, hurry and get up," I said and pulled her hand; but she said, "It hurts, it hurts," and she didn't try to move.

Frightened, I looked carefully and saw that there was a big beam lying across her right arm

and her back. No matter how hard I tried to move it my strength wasn't enough to even budge it. With her left hand which she was able to move Mother had helped me out. I took hold of that heavy beam and tried desperately to move it but it had not the slightest effect.

From all sides I could hear voices calling, "Help, help!"

At the top of my voice I yelled, "HELLLLLP!" but there wasn't a single person to come.

The fire had already come close to me. Everytime the flames licked out, my hair got singed.

Desperately I said, "Mommy, Mommy — hurry!" but nothing could be done.

Mother was saying urgently, "Mother will come after you, Set-chan, so you get away first. Now quickly, quickly."

I was determined not to escape without my mother. But the flames were steadily spreading and my clothes were already on fire and I couldn't stand it any longer. So screaming, "Mommy, Mommy!" I ran wildly into the middle of the flames. No matter how far I went it was a sea of fire all around and there was no way to escape. So beside myself I jumped into our water tank. The sparks were falling everywhere so I put a piece of tin over my head to keep out the fire. The water in the tank was hot like a bath. Beside me there were four or five other people who were all calling someone's name. While I was in the water tank everything became like a dream and sometime or other I became unconscious.

I don't know how many hours passed but when I regained consciousness it seemed to be morning. There was still smoke rising here and there and sizzling noises of things

burning. Right beside me I found a woman still in the water who seemed to be asleep, but she was dead.

I suddenly became frightened and I called in a loud voice to a man who was passing, "Please come and help me."

The man came and lifted me out of the tank and he told me that if I go straight ahead there is a medical relief station there, so I walked there with him.

While I was thinking, "I wonder what has happened to Mother," I looked at my own arms and saw that the

skin was all burned and broken up with wounds.

My chest and my back began to hurt more and more, so when we arrived at the relief station they fixed me up

On a certain day five days after that Grandmother said, "Set-chan's Mother has indeed died after all."

We knew because one of my uncles came back bringing her ashes. Mother had finally died just as I had left her. Holding the urn in my arms I lifted up my voice and wailed. The tears kept on and on. The two cousins and my aunt who had been with her then had all died too.

It was decided that I would be brought up in my grandmother's house. From about then my hair gradually fell out and the burns on my arms got worse.

When I was a fourth grader I got tuberculosis and I spent five months in the Japan Red Cross Hospital. They said this was also the result of the A-bomb. When I left the hospital I was so thin I was just like a skeleton

Mother had finally died just as I had left her. Holding the urn in my arms I lifted up my voice and wailed. The tears kept on and on.

. . . every time I look in a mirror at this face of mine which is not like my face, and think that never again will I be able to see my former face and that I have to live my life forever in this condition, it becomes too sad to bear

Girl, Junior College student.

Ah, that instant! I felt as though I had been struck on the back with something like a big hammer, and thrown into boiling oil. For some time I was unconscious

Through a darkness I could hear the voices of the other students calling for their mother. I could barely sense the fact that the students seemed to be running away from that place. I immediately got up, and . . . just frantically ran in the direction they were all taking The place where I had been working was Tanaka-cho, a little more than 600 yards from the center of the explosion

At the base of the bridge, inside a big cistern that had been dug out there, was a mother weeping and holding above her head a naked baby that was burned bright red all over its body In the cistern the students stood with only their heads above the water and their two hands, which they clasped as

they imploringly cried and screamed, calling their parents. But every single person who passed was wounded, all of them, and there was no one to turn to for help I looked at my two hands and found them covered with blood Shocked, I put my hand into my *mompei* [a type of slacks worn by Japanese girls] pocket to get out my handkerchief, but there was no handkerchief, nor pocket either. And my *mompei* were also

burned off below my hips. I could feel my face gradually swelling up From inside the wreckage of the houses we would hear screaming voices calling "Help!" and then the flames would swallow up everything

Even now the scars of those wounds remain over my whole body. On my head,

my face, my arms, my legs and my chest. As I stroke those blackish-red raised scars on my arms, and every time I look in a mirror at this face of mine which is not like my face, and think that never again will I be able to see my former face and that I have to live my life forever in this condition, it becomes too sad to bear


EFFECTS OF THE BOMB

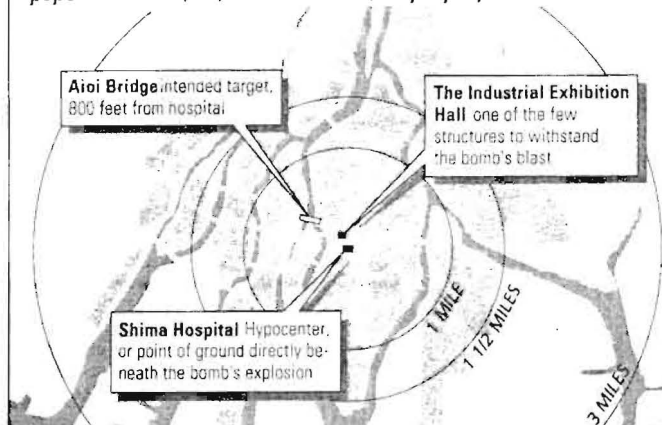


On August 6, 1945, acres of flattened buildings showed the devastation of Hiroshima. Teams of American and Japanese officials soon began to study in detail the effects the bomb had on the city. However, it wasn't until 1960 that the Atomic-Bomb Casualty Commission (A.B.C.C.) could begin to understand the long-term effects on the city and its people.

Survivors, or *hibakusha*, developed a high incidence of leukemia. Many *hibakusha* also believed they were weakened by the "A-bomb disease." In 1960, the *hibakusha* earned lower incomes than newcomers to

THE BOMBING OF HIROSHIMA

 **On August 6, 1945 at 8:15 A.M., an American plane dropped an uranium bomb over the center of Hiroshima, Japan. No warning was sounded, so at the time of the explosion many workers were en route to their jobs and school children were outside. Out of a population of 350,000, an estimated 92,000 people perished.**



Within 1 mile of hypocenter

- Flash burns killed people directly exposed to the heat
- Radiation within 1/2 mile of the hypocenter exceeded six times the dose that would cause death within a month
- Blast cracked walls 12 inches thick

Within 1 1/2 miles of the hypocenter

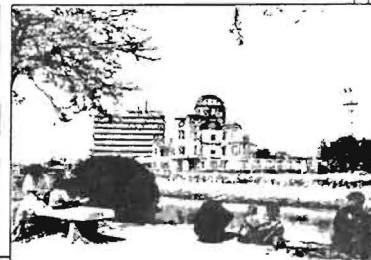
- Raging fires consumed most homes, which were wooden, and gutted concrete buildings
- Temperatures up to 3,000 degrees caused first degree burns and melted glass, metal and even stones

Within 3 miles of hypocenter

- Bomb destroyed 60,000 houses
- 90% of Hiroshima's physicians died, preventing most victims from getting immediate medical attention
- Uncontrolled fires burned throughout the city; only 7 of 33 fire stations and 25% of the firemen survived the blast



The Industrial Exhibition Hall in 1945



The Atomic Dome in Peace Park, 1960

PHYSICIAN'S ASSESSMENT

"They know that we cannot tell them flatly, nor the A.B.C.C., nor I, that they won't get strange illnesses or boils or cancer or cataracts or whatever as the result of radiation. Statistically, we can say the chances are so and so against it, but as individuals they cannot be told that they won't get something. So every time they pick up the paper and read about the A-bomb or see a demonstration, or whatever, they feel hot fear. They live with it, and this is why they are different, and I think always will be."

—Japanese Physician in The New York Times Magazine, 1960

QUESTIONS

1. List the most damaging effects that the atomic bomb had on the city of Hiroshima in 1945.
2. What effects remained after 15 years?
3. Why do you think the *hibakusha* earned less money than newcomers even if doctors discounted the idea of the "A-bomb disease?"

UPI/BETT MANN NEWS/PHOTOS

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SCIENTISTS' VIEWS



After the first successful atomic bomb test, scientists who had worked on the project became more concerned about how the bomb might be used. In July 1945, 150 scientists responded to a questionnaire that asked how they would use atomic weapons in the war against Japan.

SCIENTISTS AND THE BOMB

Scientists estimated that the bomb would have the force of 20,000 tons of TNT, which could destroy any structure. They also believed heat and radiation would kill thousands of people.

What Scientists Would Have Done

Use them in the manner that is most effective in bringing about prompt Japanese surrender.



15%

Give a demonstration at a military target in Japan before full use of the weapons is employed.



46%

Give an experimental demonstration in this country for the Japanese before full use of the weapon is employed.



26%

Withhold military use of the weapons but make public experimental demonstration of their effectiveness.

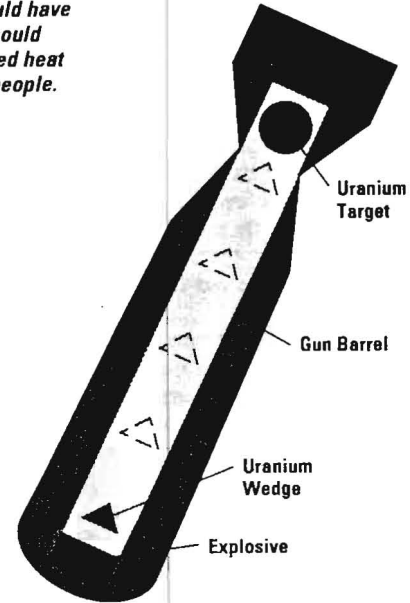


11%

Maintain as secret as possible our new weapons and refrain from using them in this war



2%



A radar echo in the Hiroshima bomb set off an ordinary explosive inside which drove a uranium wedge into the uranium target, setting off the blast.

Leo Szilard and 68 other scientists urged President Truman to delay using the atomic bomb until Japan had been told the terms of surrender and had refused to submit to them.

PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT

"If after the war a situation is allowed to develop in the world which permits rival powers to be in uncontrolled possession of these new means of destruction, the cities of the United States as well the cities of other nations will be in continuous danger of sudden annihilation. All the resources of the United States, moral and material, may have to be mobilized to prevent the advent of such a world situation. Its prevention is at present the solemn responsibility of the United States—singled out by virtue of her lead in the field of atomic power.

"The added material strength which this lead gives to the United States brings with it the obligation of restraint and if we were to violate this obligation our moral position would be weakened in the eyes of the world and in our own eyes."

—Leo Szilard, July 17, 1945

QUESTIONS

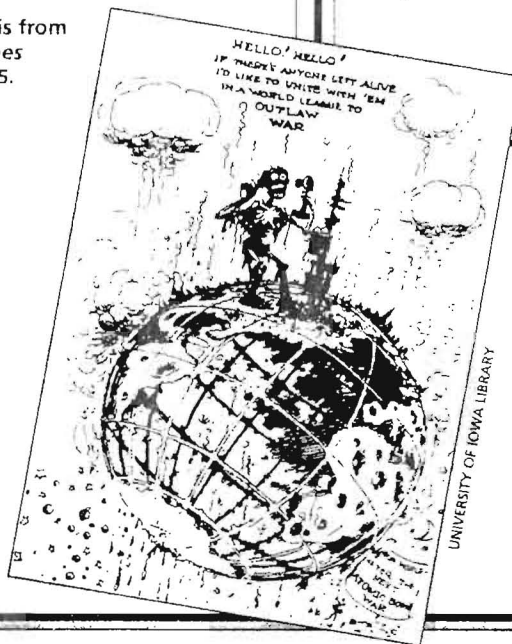
1. Reporting on the scientists' views, Arthur Compton said "87% voted for its military use at least if after other means were tried this was found necessary to bring surrender." Do you think Compton's summary reflects accurately the results of the poll? Explain your answer.
2. What disadvantage did Szilard see to using the bomb?
3. Why do you think that many scientists chose different options than Truman's final decision?

FROM AROUND THE WORLD



A tomic bomb wiped out 60% of Hiroshima," reported headlines of *The New York Times* on August 8, 1945. Front-page articles described five industrial plants that "vanished" in the city that had a population of 343,000 before the war. The bombing drew reactions from around the world, including Japan, where sources called America "Public Enemy No. 1 of social justice."

This cartoon is from the *Des Moines Register*, 1945.



CHURCHILL'S STATEMENT

"The whole burden of execution, including the setting up of the plants and many technical processes connected therewith in the practical sphere, constitutes one of the greatest triumphs of American—or indeed human—genius of which there is record.

"This revelation of the secrets of nature long mercifully withheld from man should arouse the most solemn reflections in the mind and conscience of every human being capable of comprehension. We must indeed pray that these awful agencies will be made to conduce peace among the nations and that, instead of wreaking measureless havoc upon the entire globe, they may become a perennial foundation of world prosperity."

—The New York Times, August 7, 1945

Churchill's statement also contained a description of the cooperation between British and American scientists who raced to develop the atomic bomb before Germany did.

This quote came from an editorial in the *Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican City newspaper. "Leonardo" is Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), the Italian artist and scientist.

REPORT FROM THE VATICAN

"Our thoughts turn to what is told of Leonardo. He planned a submarine, but he feared that man would not apply it to progress, namely to the constructive uses of civilization, but to its ruin. He destroyed the possible instrument of destruction. . . .

"This incredible destructive instrument remains a temptation, if not for horrified contemporaries, then for posterity to whom history—we know it well because we are the posterity of yesterday—teaches very little, and which the forgetfulness of experience dominates so willingly."

—Osservatore Romano, August 7, 1945

QUESTIONS

1. What words and phrases reveal the points of view in the Vatican editorial and Churchill's statement? Why are their points of view different?
2. Do you think Leonardo's solution would prevent the misuse of new technologies today?
3. What does the political cartoon show about reactions in the United States to dropping the bomb?