

**Title:** The Atomic Bomb: For and Against

**Creator:** Educator in Tennessee



**TENNESSEE STATE  
LIBRARY & ARCHIVES**  
Tennessee Secretary of State



**NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES**

NATIONAL HISTORICAL  
PUBLICATIONS  
& RECORDS COMMISSION

## Standards

**US.56:** Describe the Manhattan Project and explain the rationale for using the atomic bomb to end the war.

## Materials

- Graphic organizer
- Primary sources

## Primary Sources

1. "Son of Eve" political cartoon: <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/303>
2. "Letter to Guy Smith, editor of The Knoxville Journal, from Major General Leslie R. Groves": <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/302>
3. "Photograph of the atom bomb burst at Bikini Atoll- DA-PEM-3-55-8": <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/2426>
4. "Atomic Super-Bomb, Made at Oak Ridge, Strikes Japan" article: <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/432>
5. "No Japan" political cartoon: <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/428>
6. "Tremendous Power Unleashed" article: <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/429>

## Activity Instructions:

- Display or distribute copies of the primary sources for students to analyze (small groups can share the documents, copies of the documents can be posted around the room, etc.)
- Using the primary sources, students should complete the graphic organizer citing reasons why people in 1945 may have supported or opposed the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan to end World War II.

# The Atomic Bomb: For and Against

<p>What are some reasons people might have <i>supported</i> using the atomic bomb to end World War II? <b>(Cite three examples)</b></p>	<p>What are some reasons people might have <i>opposed</i> using the atomic bomb to end World War II? <b>(Cite three examples)</b></p>

## Son of Eve



"Son of Eve" political cartoon:

Located in the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, August 8, 1945, page 6



**WAR DEPARTMENT**

**WASHINGTON**

**August 8, 1945**

Mr. Guy Smith, Editor  
Knoxville Journal  
Knoxville, Tennessee

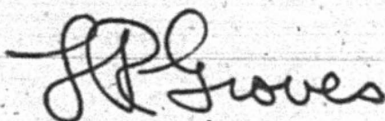
Dear Sir:

It is a genuine pleasure to offer my appreciation, in behalf of the War Department, for the excellent cooperation in the matter of security of Clinton Engineer Works, as practiced by the Knoxville Journal.

The stringent request of the Office of Censorship concerning the Manhattan Engineer District was made in order to prepare our enemies for the War's biggest and most potent surprise -- the atomic bomb. The development, made possible by your compliance with secrecy requirements, I am sure, will prove to be a most important factor in the speedy conclusion of the War.

The manner in which you handled general stories about the project was a great source of satisfaction to the many people involved in making the atomic bomb a reality.

Sincerely yours,



L. R. GROVES,  
Major General, USA

**THANKS JOURNAL**—The above photograph shows a letter from Major Gen. L. R. Groves in which he expresses appreciation to The Knoxville Journal for "excellent cooperation" in complying with censorship and security requirements for development of the atomic bomb at Oak Ridge.

"Letter to Guy Smith, editor of The Knoxville Journal, from Major General Leslie R. Groves":  
Located in the *Knoxville Journal*, August 12, 1945





Note on back of photograph:

IT FLIES THROUGH THE AIR WITH THE GREATEST OF HEAT — The atom bomb burst, in its test of the fleet. Looking for all the world like a giant cauliflower head suspended to an ever-stretching neck, Bikini's billowing cloud of smoke and flame was caught in its various stages of formation by a Navy patrol bomber flying just beyond the range of the deadly explosion. These pictures were taken within several minutes of the detonation and represent the first series of aerial views to be flown to the United States for publication.

“Photograph of the atom bomb burst at Bikini Atoll- DA-PEM-3-55-8”:

Located in the William Ewing Beard Papers, 1477-1950

# Oak Ridge Has Over 425 Buildings ... ATOMIC SUPER-BOMB, MADE ... AT OAK RIDGE, STRIKES JAPAN

By CHILES COLEMAN  
United Press Staff Correspondent

WASHINGTON, Aug. 6.—The United States has unleashed against Japan the terror of an atomic bomb 2000 times more powerful than the biggest blockbusters ever used in warfare.

President Truman revealed this great scientific achievement today and warned the Japanese that they now face "a rain of ruin from the air the like of which has never been seen on this earth."

More and more of these devastating bombs, unloading the vast hidden energy that lies within the atom, will tumble on Japan if they continue to reject the Potsdam surrender ultimatum.

The new atomic bomb was used for the first time yesterday. An American plane dropped one on the Japanese army base at Hiroshima.

Its use marked victory for the Allies in the greatest scientific role in history. We put \$2,000,000,000 and

the work of 125,000 persons into the project. A single bomb has more power than 20,000 tons of TNT. It has more than 2000 times the blast power of the British "grand slam" volcano bomb, the largest ever used previously in the history of warfare.

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson disclosed that an improved bomb would be forthcoming shortly that would increase by several-fold the present effectiveness of the new weapon.

The War Department said it was not yet able to make an accurate report of the damage caused by the first bomb.

"Reconnaissance planes state that an impenetrable cloud of dust and smoke covered the target area," an announcement said. "As soon as accurate details of the results of the bombing become available, they will be released by the secretary of war."

Development of the bomb, a victory of American scientists in a desperate race with Germany, is "the greatest achievement of organized science in history," Mr. Truman said in a statement released at the White House.

The United States, he added, is now prepared "to obliterate more rapidly and completely every productive enterprise the Japanese have above ground in any city."

Japan Warned in Potsdam Ultimatum

He revealed that the July 26 ultimatum issued to Japan Mr. Truman said that Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, who has kept in personal touch with the atomic developments, "will make public further details."

Stimson's statement, the President said, will give "facts" concerning the atomic production centers at Oak Ridge, near Knoxville, Tenn.; at Richland, near Pasco, Wash., and near Santa Fe, N. M.

When the ultimatum was rejected, the atomic bomb was sent into action.

"If they (the Japanese leaders) do not now accept our terms, they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth," he said.

Mr. Truman revealed that "two great plants and many lesser works" employing more than 65,000 workers are pro-

ducing the new atomic bomb. Even more destructive bombs are being developed, he said.

Oak Ridge One of Three Centers

Production centers are located at Oak Ridge, near Knoxville, Tenn.; at Richland, near Pasco, Wash., and near Santa Fe, N. M.

Mr. Truman's statement, released while he still was on route home by cruiser from Potsdam, lifted the secrecy from one of the most closely-guarded enterprises of the war. No mention of atomic power or any possible use of it in warfare has been allowed under the newspaper and radio code of the Office of Censorship.

Mr. Truman did not reveal the effects of the first bomb used against Japan. He said, however, that despite the vast multiplied potency of the bomb, "the physical size of the charge is exceedingly small."

"It is an atomic bomb," he said. "It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe." "The forces from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East."

Uranium Ore Used for Bombs

Stimson revealed that uranium is the essential ore in the production of the bombs. He added that "steps have been taken and will continue to be taken to insure adequate supplies of this mineral."

(Uranium is a "radioactive" chemical element. It belongs to the same family as radium. In radioactive elements the atoms slowly disintegrate by radiating energy, and in course of centuries one element is transferred into another.)

Stimson said "We are convinced that Japan will not be in a position to use an atomic bomb in this war."

"It is abundantly clear that the possession of this weapon by the United States, even in its present form, should prove a tremendous aid in the shortening of the war against Japan," Stimson said.

Stimson praised highly the scientists who had developed this atomic power.

"Behind these concrete achievements lie the tremendous contributions of American science," he declared. "No praise is too great for the unstinting efforts, brilliant achievements and complete devotion to the national interest of the scientists of this country. Nowhere else in the world has science performed so successfully in time of war."

The first atomic bomb presumably was dropped from a B-29 Superfortress. A Tokyo broadcast had said "a few Superforts this morning dropped fire bombs and high explosives on Hiroshima."

The War Department said it could not report accurately (turn to Last Page, Col. 3)

ATOMIC BOMB

"Atomic Super-Bomb, Made at Oak Ridge, Strikes Japan" article:

Located in *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, August 6, 1945, front page.





"No Japan" political cartoon:

Located in *The Commercial Appeal*, August 7, 1945, page 6



# Tremendous Power Unleashed

**P**RESIDENT TRUMAN'S announcement that Allied scientists have discovered and in part harnessed atomic power means that tremendous new powers for good and evil have been unleashed. The employment of these forces in war portends the complete defeat of Japan at a date earlier than had been otherwise anticipated. In truth, judging from the preliminary accounts, it will thus be possible to destroy almost entirely any ability the Japanese might have been able to retain to make war.

It is an excellent thing that the first atomic power bomb was not dropped on a Japanese city until after the Japanese had been given their choice of surrender on severe but just terms and had decided to ignore the Allied demand. It may be hoped that the use of this new and remarkably destructive weapon will change the minds of the Japanese and speed their understanding of the futility of continued resistance.

**D**ETAILED and accurate reports on the results of the first employment of the atomic bomb on a Japanese city are not yet in hand, but a bomb has been dropped on military installations at Hiroshima, and observation was not possible because of the vast cloud of dust and debris that rose and covered the target area and the city itself. It may be regarded as certain, however, that nothing ever employed in warfare even nearly approached this development.

So far the curtain of secrecy that has hidden the discovery and development of the new bomb has been only partly lifted, but what we have been told is of such nature that it is difficult to believe at all, much less really comprehend. We

are told that a small bomb contains more power than 20,000 tons of TNT—that's 40,000,000 pounds—and when 3000 tons of TNT exploded on a ship in the harbor at Halifax, Nova Scotia, back in 1917, 1500 persons were killed, 4000 were injured and 20,000 were made homeless. The imagination falters and fails before the task of imagining the effects of nearly seven times that force.

**I**T IS practically impossible, of course, to forecast the potentialities for peacetime purposes and constructive enterprises that are inherent in the processes that have so far been used only for the furtherance of defeating the powers of ruthlessness and aggression. It stands to reason, however, that manifold and amazing things can be accomplished as soon as the experience and knowledge gained in war can be turned to the goals of peace and prosperity.

The world may count itself inestimably fortunate that this new force was brought to light under the auspices of the Allied Governments representing peoples who do not seek to enslave or destroy the rest of the world. HITLER'S scientists were working at feverish speed along the same lines, and the defeat of the Nazis has erased a dire threat for the time being and for as long as men such as the Nazis are not allowed any sway for their evil talents and desires.

It is inspiring to be able to believe that the brains, courage and energy that resulted in the discovery of this new force for the confounding of the foes of decency and civilization will be devoted as zealously to seeing that it helps rather than hurts mankind after the menace to peace and security is removed.

"Tremendous Power Unleashed" article:

Located in *The Commercial Appeal*, August 7, 1945, page 6