

Truman and the Atombomb

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

IN READING Ex-President Truman's *Memoirs*, currently appearing in the *New York Times*, I was interested to see how he would deal with the question of the wartime A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Finally he got around to the matter, and he handles it with the most cynical disregard of all humane



considerations. Not a single word of sympathy does he express for the vast masses of non-combatants who were killed and horribly maimed in this worst wholesale massacre in human history.

The main things Truman seems most anxious about are to glorify the act and to claim full "credit" to himself for it. "The final decision," he boasts, "of where and when to use the atomic bomb was up to me. Let there be no mistake about it."

The blasting of the two Japanese cities by A-bombs was wholly unjustified. President Roosevelt was correct in making the bomb, in national self-defense, as rumors were current that German scientists were working upon it; but for Truman to order the bomb dropped under the existing circumstances was entirely uncalled for.

Had there been real danger of world fascist enslavement, however, the use even of the dreadful atombomb would have been justified to prevent it. But obviously there was no longer any such danger at that time. Hitler did not have the bomb and the war in Europe was won

and practically also in Japan. As Truman himself says, Japan had already begun to negotiate to end the hostilities. In this situation it was an act of savagery to drop the bomb, and this is almost certainly the way that history will finally sum up the matter.

JUST because the U.S. first got hold of the bomb was no justification of itself whatever for dropping it upon the Japanese cities. After all, there are supposed to be some limits to the slaughter during wartime, at least among democratic peoples. Under the circumstances, the atombomb fell outside of the scope of such "civilized warfare."

A few years before, during the Spanish civil war, the democratic world protested violently, and justly so, against the Hitler-Mussolini bombing of Guernica, and other unfortified cities; but in the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki a far greater outrage against human life was committed.

Without any doubt, if it had been our own cities that were so ruthlessly and needlessly bombed, we would have violently denounced it as a monstrous war crime. Moreover, who can doubt but that the fact the Japanese are not white was a big factor in the cold-blooded bombing of their cities?

Those who ordered the bombs dropped upon the Japanese cities—particularly Truman and Churchill—had in mind, first of all a political, not a military reason for doing so. They wanted the world to know, by this fearsome demonstration, that this terrible weapon was possessed by the United States and its minor partner, Great Britain.

Significantly, as Truman admits, the Soviet Union was told nothing concrete about the bomb before it was dropped.

MR. TRUMAN himself gives us a tip as to the underlying reason for launching the bomb when he says, "We were now in possession of a weapon that would not only revolutionize war but would alter the course of civilization itself." More concretely, the bomb, hopefully, would change everything to the advantage of Wall Street imperialism, which had already embarked on its program of world conquest upon the basis of a monopoly of the atombomb.

The follow-up to all this was the continued effort to protect the monopoly through the Baruch Plan, the attempt to introduce the use of the bomb into the Korean war, and the various other steps taken, despite the protests of the USSR, People's China and the people's democracies, in the American effort to legitimize this dreadful weapon as a regular instrument of war.

But the peoples of the world want none of the atomic bomb. Not only have they broken the Wall Street "monopoly," but they have effectively protested the use of the bomb in Korea and on a world scale. They let it be known categorically at Geneva that the atombomb cannot and must not be employed in war. In the oncoming period, they will surely prohibit both manufacture and use of this barbarous weapon. They will see to it that never again will any government head be able to perpetrate such a devastating outrage as Mr. Truman inflicted upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki and then boast about it.