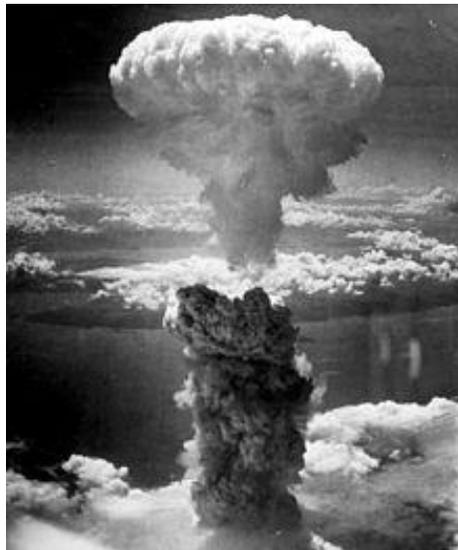


Chapter Seven

Nagasaki, 1945



by
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Beneath the domed behemoth, some 263,000 men, women and children lacked the time to contemplate the relevancy of war. Estimates range as high as 80,000 who perished in the seconds, days and weeks that followed, most were non-combatants; only 150 Japanese soldiers died instantly in the blast. It is unlikely that anyone occupied the tennis court directly beneath Fat Boy, the atomic bomb, when it exploded at 1,650+feet, generating winds just shy of the speed of sound at sea level. It would not have mattered.

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One death from a single weapon aimed with the intention to inflict harm is not good. Eighty-thousand from a single weapon ... It's been said that the two atomic bombs dropped on Japan in August 1945 influenced the end of the war. Maybe so. Given the loss of life extracted from September 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland to August 1945 when the United States unleashed hell on earth, that would have been a good thing.

Have you any idea how many people died during WWII? Let me eliminate the guesswork ...

The world's population in 1939 was approximately 2.3 billion. The countries presented in this table represented half the human population in the world at that time; these countries lost 64 million people, 6% of their population. Earth's total population experienced 80 million casualties, equivalent to nearly 4% of the planet's population.

<u>country</u>	<u>population</u>	<u>military</u>	<u>civilian</u> ¹	<u>civilian</u> ²	<u>total</u>	<u>% pop</u>
China	517,568,000	3,500,000	8,000,000	7,500,000	19,000,000	4%
USSR	188,793,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	6,500,000	26,500,000	14%
USA	131,028,000	407,300	12,100	-	419,400	0%
Japan	71,380,000	2,200,000	750,000	-	2,950,000	4%
Germany	69,300,000	5,000,000	2,500,000	-	7,500,000	11%
UK	47,760,000	383,700	67,200	-	450,900	1%
Italy	44,394,000	319,200	153,200	-	472,400	1%
France	42,000,000	210,000	390,000	-	600,000	1%
Poland	35,000,000	240,000	5,700,000	-	5,940,000	17%
total	1,147,223,000	22,260,200	27,572,500	14,000,000	63,832,700	6%

Civilian¹ = civilian deaths due to military activity and crimes against humanity
Civilian² = civilian deaths due to war related famine and disease

Study those numbers and draw your own conclusions ...

I pay attention to birds. I enjoy watching them, but even if I were a blind man, I would love them and be grateful for their special music. I recognize many by the tunes they sing. I don't know what time birds wake up, nor do I know if they sing immediately upon rising from their slumber. It would not surprise me if they do. What a wonderful way to greet the day and thank the Creator for life. I know from attentive experience that birds begin to sing a full hour before sunrise, when the first hint of day appears in the east. That is a good habit, too, to awake and rise before the sun breaks the horizon.

How many birdsongs were cut short when that bomb exploded? How many living creatures fled to heaven as their ashes rose in that giant cloud above a tennis court where children once played.

Sadly, The Internet has lured children indoors, and the silence of young boys and girls manipulating colorfully buttoned control consoles replaces laughter from now empty play yards and parks, yet the birds still sing. Have their songs changed? I think

not. They remain happy tunes sung to banish despair and lift the spirits of those who take the time to listen.

Seven months and 12 days after the ashes created by Fat Boy returned to earth, the Strategic Air Command became a part of the United States Air Force. Its original motto was “War is our profession; peace is our product.” A dozen years later, it was shortened to “Peace is our profession.”

I’ve seen a MITO, a “minimum interval takeoff” as a flock of nuclear weapon carrying B-52’s scrambles from earth with their deadly payloads. They leave contrails in the sky, but no images of smiling children. Their engines roar like angry lions. They do not sing.

Albert Einstein was a smart man. In 1947 he wrote, “Since the completion of the first atomic bomb nothing has been accomplished to make the world more safe from war, while much has been done to increase the destructiveness of war.”

Strong words from a man who was, in part, responsible for the development of the atomic bomb. “To kill in war time,” he wrote to the editor of *Kazio* magazine in 1952, “it seems to me, is in no ways better than common murder.”

It is an hour before sunrise as I sit and contemplate Nagasaki. The first bird has spoken. He is a cardinal announcing the day to me alone while my neighbors sleep and those few who are awake pay no attention to his sweet music. Leonard Cohen’s mandolin accompanies his gravelly voice to remind me that ‘the birds sing at the break of day, that the holy dove will be caught again, bought and sold, and bought again ...’