



# The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan

*Ian Buruma*

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## **The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan** Ian Buruma

In this now classic book, internationally famed journalist Ian Buruma examines how Germany and Japan have attempted to come to terms with their conduct during World War II—a war that they aggressively began and humiliatingly lost, and in the course of which they committed monstrous war crimes. As he travels through both countries, to Berlin and Tokyo, Hiroshima and Auschwitz, he encounters people who are remarkably honest in confronting the past and others who astonish by their evasions of responsibility, some who wish to forget the past and others who wish to use it as a warning against the resurgence of militarism.

Buruma explores these contrasting responses to the war and the two countries' very different ways of memorializing its atrocities, as well as the ways in which political movements, government policies, literature, and art have been shaped by its shadow. Today, seventy years after the end of the war, he finds that while the Germans have for the most part coped with the darkest period of their history, the Japanese remain haunted by historical controversies that should have been resolved long ago. Sensitive yet unsparing, complex and unsettling, this is a profound study of how people face up to or deny terrible legacies of guilt and shame.

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