



# Imperial Japan's World War Two: 1931-1945

*By Werner Gruhl*

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## **Imperial Japan's World War Two: 1931-1945** By Werner Gruhl

Gruhl's narrative makes clear why Japan's World War II aggression still touches deep emotions with East Asians and Western ex-prisoners of war, and why there is justifiable sensitivity to the way modern Japan has dealt with this legacy. Knowledge of the enormity of Japan's total war is also necessary to assess the United States' and her allies' policies toward Japan, and their reactions to its actions, extending from Manchuria in 1931 to Hiroshima in 1945. Gruhl takes the view that World War II started in 1931 when Japan, crowded and poor in raw materials but with a sense of military invincibility, saw empire as her salvation and invaded China.

Japan's imperial regime had volatile ambitions but limited resources, thus encouraging them to unleash a particularly brutal offensive against the peoples of Asia and surrounding ocean islands. Their 1931 to 1945 invasions and policies further added to Asia's pre-war woes, particularly in China, by badly disrupting marginal economies, leading to famines and epidemics. Altogether, the victims of Japan's World War Two aggression took many forms and were massive in number.

Gruhl offers a survey and synthesis of the historical literature and documentation, statistical data, as well as personal interviews and first-hand accounts to provide a comprehensive overview analysis. The sequence of diplomatic and military events leading to Pearl Harbor, as well as those leading to the U.S. decision to drop the atom bomb, are explored here as well as Japan's war crimes and postwar revisionist/apologist views regarding them. This book will be of intense interest to Asian specialists, and those concerned with human rights issues in a historical context.

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### Review

*“Imperial Japan’s World War Two* is a full and unique statement of Japanese war crimes during fourteen years of conflict. No other single publication includes such a complete listing of atrocities (and, even then, Gruhl has missed a few), nor anything near the author’s compelling statistical analysis of those appalling war crimes. His compilation of human suffering goes beyond any other single source in its gruesome totality. And his succinct refutation of revisionist views on relative guilt and on means of ending the great Pacific/Asiatic conflict is a fitting conclusion to his impressive cataloging of Japan’s atrocious behavior.”

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### About the Author

Werner Gruhl is former chief of NASA’s Cost and Economic Analysis Branch with a lifetime interest in the study of the First and Second World Wars.

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