

Tokyo Trials Shroud Communist Warmongering (Summary)

Professor Keiichiro Kobori explains how the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (the “Tokyo Trials”) and the Allied Occupation of Japan led to the current distorted thinking by intellectuals, especially by Japanese intellectuals, of Japan’s role in the Pacific War. Japan’s foreign policy was designed to address a fundamental concern—the spread of Communism. Not only was Japan anxious of the military threat posed by the Soviet Union given her close proximity, but Japan was also fearful of the spread of Communism in “chaotic” and “anarchic” China. During the Tokyo Trials, one of the defense attorneys pointed out that “one look at the map,” referring to the extent of Communist advance following the war, especially in Asia, showed that Japan’s pre-war fear was indeed realized.

The main reason for the Tokyo Trials was to punish Japan for waging “aggressive war” and the Allied powers did everything they could to deny Japan an adequate defense. The Allied judges were unwilling to countenance any reference to Communism and such references were stricken from the record. This should not be surprising, given the presence of a Soviet judge. In addition to often violent anti-Japanese campaigns waged by both Chinese Communists and Nationalists, the defense for Japan documented American and British involvement in anti-Japanese agitation. Evidence that supported Japan’s reason for military intervention in China, which documented Allied antagonism towards Japan, was suppressed. Pre-war forecasts of the Communist threat in China by Americans as well as the Japanese Government were also suppressed.

A similar type of censorship occurred outside of the courtroom during the post-war Occupation. Under General Douglas MacArthur, criticisms of the Occupation, including the Tokyo Trials, and of the Allies were prohibited. In a logic befitting of an Alice-in-Wonderland world, since there were no protests of Allied wartime criminal behaviors, no such crimes were committed. In this manner, the findings of the Tokyo Trials became the official story and whole-heartedly embraced by all, especially by Japanese intellectuals, even though they could examine for themselves the evidence that was suppressed by the Tribunal and by the Occupation.

Even after General MacArthur’s statement before a US Senate committee in 1951, that Japan’s purpose “in going to war was largely dictated by security” and his regret in “allowing the Communists to grow in power in China,” Japanese intellectuals called the Pacific War an “aggressive war” and ignored the Communist threat at the time and continue to do so to this day. Such a lack of historical perspective by the Japanese in their dealing with China today can only lead to misery. Professor Kobori indicates that those who continue to display their ignorance in this manner do the Chinese Communists a tremendous service and a tremendous disservice to Japan.