

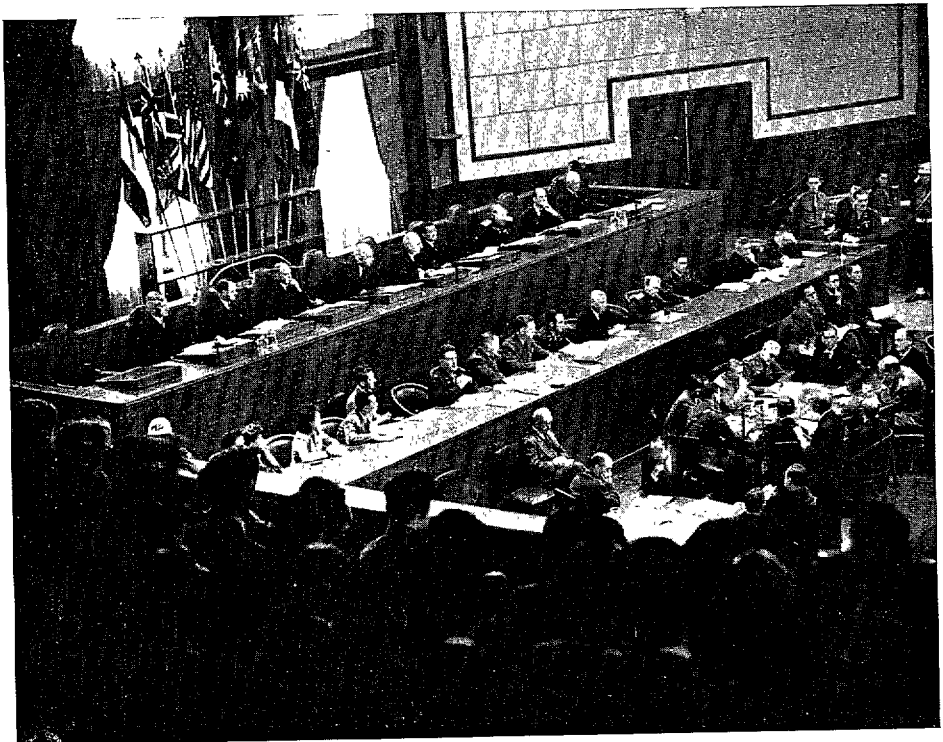
Japanese Scene

The period from 1928 until the end of the war, almost two decades, saw the gradual elimination of party politics from the Japanese scene; it was characterized by sometimes obscure and sometimes violent manoeuvres of civil and military fascist groups.

Some of the most far-reaching decisions were taken in such secrecy that only a handful of Japanese knew of them, until the court proceedings recently brought many of them to light. In this period there were changes in the political structure of Japan, which unlike the Nazi state, was capped by the Emperor system, itself a most controversial matter. Some claimed it was a neutral or passive object in this period of military conspiracy, others such as the President of the Tribunal, and also the French and Chinese judges believed that without the Emperor's consent no vital decisions could have been taken even though he may have had private misgivings. It is for reasons such as this that the Tokyo trial presented infinitely more baffling questions to the court than was the case in Nuremberg.

Trial's Significance

Rather than enter into the labyrinthine legal problems arising from the whole proceedings, issues which were argued at great length by the defence, the remainder of this article will briefly attempt to assess the historical value of some of the evidence that was made public in court and the Tribunal's interpretation of recent Japanese history.



THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST IN SESSION

(U.S. Signal Corps Photo)