



# Neonationalist Mythology in Postwar Japan: Pal's Dissenting Judgment at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal (AsiaWorld)

*Nariaki Nakazato*

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Radhabinod Pal was an Indian jurist who achieved international fame as the judge representing India at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal and dissented from the majority opinion, holding that all Japanese “Class A” war criminals were not guilty of any of the charges brought against them. In postwar Japanese politics, right-wing polemicists have repeatedly utilized his dissenting judgment in their political propaganda aimed at refuting the Tokyo trial’s majority judgment and justifying Japan’s aggression, gradually elevating this controversial lawyer from India to a national symbol of historical revisionism. Many questions have been raised about how to appropriately assess Pal’s dissenting judgment and Pal himself. Were the arguments in Pal’s judgment sound? Why did he submit such a bold dissenting opinion? What was the political context? More fundamentally, why and how did the Allies ever nominate such a lawyer as a judge for a tribunal of such great political importance? How should his dissent be situated within the context of modern Asian history and the development of international criminal justice? What social and political circumstances in Japan thrust him into such a prominent position? Many of these questions remain unanswered, while some have been misinterpreted. This book proposes answers to many of them and presents a critique of the persistent revisionist denial of war responsibility in the Japanese postwar right-wing movement.

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