

# Political Dynamics in the Execution of Suspected Collaborators during the Korean War

KIM Ji Hyung

## Abstract

*Immediately after the recapture of Seoul on September 28, 1950, the Rhee Syngman administration arrested and killed those who were suspected of having collaborated with North Korean forces during the North Korean occupation of South Korea in 1950. The government invoked special rules to conduct a nationwide sweep against the collaborators, which, in turn, exacerbated the internal conflicts between refugees and non-refugees. The Joint Investigation Committee (JIC) was established to arrest and investigate, with no clear legal basis, those who were suspected of having collaborated with the North. Collaborators were also considered unpatriotic and treacherous, and thus were deprived of property rights. Overall, the Rhee administration's draconian punishment against collaborators sought their exclusion from society. At the same time, the Second National Assembly, which was strongly against the position of the Rhee administration, came into conflict with the government. The National Assembly later revised the special rules and abolished the JIC. In the end, however, the arrest and execution of suspected collaborators carried out by the Rhee Syngman administration constituted a turning point toward anti-communism after the Korean War.*

**Keywords:** collaborator, Korean War, Rhee Syngman, Second National Assembly, Joint Investigation Committee (JIC), anticommunism

---

KIM Ji Hyung is a full-time lecturer at the Department of History Education, Seowon University. He obtained his Ph.D. in Korean History from Hanyang University in 2006. His publications include *Detanteu-wa nambuk gwangye* (The Détente and the Relationship between North and South Korea) (2008). E-mail: [cankjh@seowon.ac.kr](mailto:cankjh@seowon.ac.kr).

## Introduction

The epithet “collaborators during the Korean War” refers to those who had collaborated with the North Korean forces during the North Korean occupation of South Korea in 1950. They were considered assistants to the North Korean invaders, traitors, and the “fifth column.” Following the recapture of Seoul, they were viewed as enemies at the gate. Seething hate against them was far greater than the hate directed toward the North Korean invaders.

According to official records, the number of collaborators during the Korean War reached around 550,000 (PSO 1958, 267; CCHKP 1973, 547; SPO 1976, 287). They were classified into several different groups. One such group was comprised of those who had collaborated with North Korean communists, including communist elements from left-wing parties, within South Korea. Those involved in the National Guidance League (Gungmin Bodo Yeonmaeng; hereinafter referred to as NGL) were also considered as collaborators. North Korean soldiers, Chinese soldiers, communist-sympathizers, and the members of the Worker’s Party of South Korea (Namnodang) were included in this group as well. In this study, the scope of collaborators is limited to those who collaborated with North Korean communists. That is, collaborators will refer to those who had directly collaborated with North Korean communists prior to the recapture of Seoul by the Rhee Syngman government on September 28, 1950.

A full-scale research on the identities of collaborators during the Korean War period has yet to be conducted. However, there are several studies on collaborators to which attention should be paid (W. Park 1990; Seo 1999; I. Han 2000), and related research has increased with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission releasing its findings from the regional survey and investigation.<sup>1</sup> Thus far, most of the research

---

1. From 2007 to 2009, individual reports on the massacre of collaborators carried out in Goyang, Paju, Yangpyeong, Namyangju, Ganghwado, Gimpo, Uljin, Asan, Onyang, etc., were published. Recent study includes the paper written by Lee (2010).

on collaborators has focused on civilian massacres during the Korean War. For this reason, the focus of previous studies have concentrated on the NGL, preventive custody and executions, the massacre of prisoners and suspected collaborators by the military police and the U.S. military. However, the concept and category of Korean War collaborators, as well as the criteria for the punishment imposed on them, still remain ambiguous. Moreover, there is insufficient discussion on the punishing of collaborators and its effects on Korean society.

The primary goal of this study is to determine the facts in relation to the forms of punishment used against collaborators immediately following the recapture of Seoul. The focus herein is the punishment that was applied to collaborators, including arrests, investigations, trials, and executions, as well as the various phenomena derived therefrom. How political dynamism influenced punishment and what values were formed against such a backdrop will also be addressed. To this end, this paper will seek to identify the conflict between the Rhee government and the Second National Assembly, that is, the consequences and significance of political conflicts over punishment of collaborators.

By punishing collaborators during the Korean War, the Rhee government sought to establish an anticommunist nation. As a result, it created a new social value of punishing *communist collaborators*, which marked a shift from punishing *pro-Japanese collaborators*. This was a national conversion from nation to ideologies. The change in the defining of who constituted collaborators can be regarded as the first step in establishing the anticommunist South Korea after the Korean War. In other words, punishing collaborators—the extracting of the *unpatriotic people* from the *people*—acted as a national experience that converted South Korea into an extreme rightist, anticommunist country.

This paper mainly referred to Korean newspapers as well as sources collected in the *Jaryo daehan minguksa* (Sourcebook on the History of Korea) published by the National Institute of Korean History (NIKH) in 2005-2008. The materials from the U.S. Department of State were also used. In addition, the investigation records from the

Supreme Public Prosecutors and the Stenographic Records of the National Assembly were examined. Furthermore, various study records were reviewed, including literature by Yu Byeong-jin, who took charge of the trials on collaborators during and after the Korean War.

## **The Recapture of Seoul and the Punishment of Collaborators**

### *Scope of Collaborators*

The unique policy carried out by North Korea during the Korean War was the reason why there were many collaborators within the areas temporarily occupied by North Korea. The North primarily focused on the restoration of its communist parties, social organizations, and the People's Committee within the occupied region. It also carried out social reforms, including land reform, as well as strong wartime policies, such as support activities for volunteer soldiers. Scores of residents were mobilized to implement these policies. Indeed, these policies indicate that North Korea tried to instigate the spread of a communist revolution that had come to a standstill across the country (Kwon 1989, 95; M. Park 2002, chs. 4-5).

Moreover, South Korea's internal factors served as another important reason for the high number of collaborators. The inappropriate refugee policy of the Rhee administration at the beginning of the Korean War was one such internal factor.<sup>2</sup> Due to the government-ordered destruction of the Indogyo bridge (footbridge over the Hangang river), internal conflicts subsequently arose between those who had crossed the river to flee (or who had fled to the south of the river) and those who had remained in Seoul because they did not or could not flee to

---

2. However, it would be an exaggeration to say that the government actually forced the collaboration (Kim Dong-Choon 2000a, 60). The government's inaction to help the people to take refuge shows the incompetence and irresponsibility of the Rhee administration. However, never was it intended that people should become collaborators. It is probably safe to say that the government played a part in creating the environment for collaboration (Yu 1957/2008, 229).

the south. Those who had fled to the south were viewed as anticommunists and free from any suspicion of pro-North Korean ideology, while those who had remained in Seoul were suspected of collaborating with the North Korean People's Army (NKPA). Kim Tae-sun, the then director of the Public Security Office, pointed out in November 1950 that "some people are putting the wire on those who didn't cross the Hangang river to flee to the south" (*Dong-A Ilbo*, November 14, 1950). Those suspected of being potential NKPA collaborators were forced to defend themselves; and they tried to identify themselves as anticommunists and some even claimed a vehement stance against North Korea. The two groups, however, were not positioned as direct rivals. Rather, their relationship bound the society together based on anticommunism. The dichotomous relationship between those who had crossed the river and those who had remained in Seoul served as the glue that held the society together as it moved toward a staunch anticommunist ideology.

Following the recapture of Seoul, collaborators from almost every sector of society were punished. Foremost, the sweeping purge of public officer collaborators was executed in the form of "self-cleansing." The Seoul city government categorized potential collaborators into three groups: those who were involved in the autonomous community, those who temporarily collaborated with official organizations, and those who collaborated until the last moment. Of the 382 crimes committed by public officers during the period from June to December 1951, 75 cases were in violations of the crimes outlined in the Special Order, which had been enacted to execute collaborators (*Chosun Ilbo*, December 21, 1951). As a result, a considerable number of public officers who worked with the regional government agencies were dismissed on the charges of collaboration (IMHC 1999, 178-179).

Meanwhile, heated debates ensued in the National Assembly over the punishment against its own members who had collaborated with the North Korean forces. The bill to establish a special committee to punish such members was on the agenda of the 36th plenary session of the National Assembly held on October 11, 1950. The National Assembly later decided to limit its screening to "those who had turned

themselves into the enemy.” Discussions were held over some members, including Jang Geon-sang and Lyuh Woon-hong, in the 41st plenary session held in private on March 7, 1951, but disciplinary action was not taken against them.

There were also a considerable number of collaborators among public school teachers. Yi Hae-ik, Governor of Gyeonggi-do province, revealed on November 11, 1950 that only 341 out of 451 elementary schools and 28 out of 57 middle schools in the province had been reopened. And the main reason why many schools remained unopened was because a number of teachers were arrested for collaborating with North Korean communists (*Dong-A Ilbo*, November 13, 1950).

Even some respected artists and literary figures were suspected of being collaborators. A hearing for Noh Cheon Myung (a famous female poet) and Cho Kyung-hee, in particular, attracted attention. Among those who had turned themselves in were renowned intellectuals and cultural figures, including Baek Cheol and Yang Joo-dong. Yi Seong-su, who worked as an anchor at the Central Broadcasting Company, and Baek Nan-a, who was a famous singer, were also arrested on the charges of collaboration. The reason why many leading cultural figures became collaborators was closely related to the cultural policies that were carried out by North Korea. The punishment against cultural figures triggered much controversy. While some argued in favor of the punishment, one newspaper harshly criticized it by arguing that “every cultural figure cannot be a democratic activist.”<sup>3</sup> Given the impact these cultural figures had on society, the Rhee administration was caught between a rock and a hard place regarding punishment. Eventually, the government embraced them and put them in the vanguard of the anticommunist campaign.<sup>4</sup>

3. Jo In-hyeon, “Literary Figures Involved in Collaboration” I-II, *Seoul Shinmun*, November 11-12, 1950.

4. One example is the book *Jeokhwa samsak guinjip* 赤禍三朔九人集 (The 90-day Experience of an Enemy-Controlled World). It was compiled by Oh Je-do and published by the NGL in April 1951. The book is full of regrets and guilty consciences of the cultural figures involved in collaboration. The authors of the book include Yang Joo-dong, Baek Cheol, Choe Jeong-hui, Song Ji-yeong, Jang Deok-jo, Bak Gye-ju, Son So-hui, Kim Yong-ho, and Oh Je-do.

Some entrepreneurs were also systemically involved in collaborating with North Korean communists. Thirty-six business owners who had provided assistance to the NKPA were arrested. And finally, thorough investigations were conducted to uncover collaborators among the refugees held in the Geoje Prisoner of War Camp. As a result of these investigations, the Oyeol (meaning “fifth column”) group working under the guise of being refugees was arrested. Additionally, a series of investigations were initiated to uncover collaborators in the Second Front, where the partisans (communist guerrillas) frequently appeared.

The types and cases of collaborators varied, and the government efforts to sweep away the collaborators infiltrated almost every sector of society. Moreover, the scope of who was considered collaborators gradually expanded. The initial focus was on uncovering those who had conducted any act benefiting North Korea within the areas occupied by the NKPA during the war period, but the scope of the collaborators expanded to include those who were considered leftists, even before the Korean war. Those identified as leftists were arrested as collaborators.<sup>5</sup> According to Oh Je-do, a prosecutor at the Joint Investigation Committee (hereinafter, JIC), the Oyeol group included not only “vicious collaborators who worked under the guise of military personnel, police officers, and other officials, but also those who collected and provided information for the communists, upset the public sentiment or blindly criticized the government’s policies” (*Minju Sinbo*, January 25, 1951). Given that the punishment against those who harbored collaborators was as severe as that against the *collaborators* themselves (*Seoul Shinmun*, October 3, 1950),<sup>6</sup> we can see that the scope of collaborators became very broad.

---

5. The prosecutor’s office data regarding collaboration during the Korean War comes partly from *Jwaik sageon sillok* (Annals of Left-Wing Cases) (1972-1974), vols. 9-11.

6. See a decree (dated September 28) by Lee Ki-boong (then mayor of Seoul).

### *Legal Basis and Standards of Punishment*

The calls for punitive measures against collaborators began when the recapture of Seoul was expected. Minister of Home Affairs Cho Byeong-ok announced on September 23, 1950, immediately after the Incheon Landing Operation, that the government would take stern actions against collaborators based on a strict screening and investigative process (*Busan Ilbo*, September 25, 1950). The National Assembly, for its part, began rushing to enact a law relating to the punishment of collaborators. However, the first substantive action regarding the punishment of collaborators came from Rhee Syngman. President Rhee invoked the Special Order to Punish Crimes in Cases of an Emergency (*bisang sataeha-ui beomjoe-e gwanhan teukbyeol jochiryeong*; hereafter “Special Order”) as Emergency Measure No. 1 (*daetongnyeong gingeup myeongnyeong je 1-ho*). The official date of enactment of the Special Order has long been the subject of controversy. According to government records, it was announced in Daejeon on June 28.<sup>7</sup> However, a scholar has argued that it was enacted in the interim National Assembly building, located in Daegu, in July.<sup>8</sup> Some reports say that it was enacted on July 10 or 12, but this is unlikely.<sup>9</sup> Most of the related research states that it was enacted on June 28. Although one scholar contends that the date of enactment is not very significant (Kim Deuk-Jung 2010, 25). The official date of enactment of the Special Order has been debated because if it was enacted around mid-July, then it means that no action was taken for a whole month there-

---

7. Minister of Justice, Kim Jun-yeon, said on December 23, 1950, that the Special Order was promulgated in Daejeon on June 28, and it was confirmed later by the National Assembly (*Chosun Ilbo*, December 24, 1950).

8. Yu Byeong-jin remembered that it was enacted in July when “defensive maneuvers to guard the Geumgang line took place” (Yu 1957/2008, 98). This part is published in the 1952 edition by Shinhan Munhwasa. However, the 1957 edition, revised and published by the Seoul Gosi Hakhoe, states that it was prepared and promulgated at the end of June when the capital was moved to Daejeon.

9. The record on the former refers to the “Diary after the outbreak of the Korean War” (*Daegu Maeil*, August 15, 1950). The record on the latter refers to the comments made by Prosecutor Kang Yong-gwon (*Busan Ilbo*, July 20, 1950).

after. According to legal records, it was enacted on June 25, but it was clearly a retroactive bill because it is highly unlikely that the government had the time to legislate on the very day that the war broke out. More likely, the Rhee administration wanted to track down every last collaborator through the retroactive bill.

Article 1 sets forth the purpose of the Special Order: "This order aims at dealing with those who have committed anti-national or anti-humanitarian crimes in a stern and prompt manner in cases of an emergency." The order prescribed the period following the outbreak of the Korean War as the state of emergency and it specified the terms to deal with the wide range of criminal cases that arose during the aforementioned period. Provisions relating to the punishment of collaborators provided the legal basis for such punishment. Article 4 of the Special Order stipulated that those who had committed crimes by taking advantage of the state of emergency shall be subject to capital punishment, life imprisonment, or imprisonment of 10 years or longer. The specific type of punishment was determined, based on the criteria established in the following provisions:

3. Act of arresting, detaining, damaging, and violence through the abuse of one's title or power or to benefit the enemy.
4. Act of abusing an official title or authority or providing information to the enemy.
5. Act of assisting the enemy by supplying arms, food, fuel, or any other valuable goods.

Those who violated the abovementioned provisions were executed based on a single-trial system. The trial was held within 20 days from the indictment and the final ruling was made within 40 days. With the legal basis provided by the Special Order, the government launched its efforts to hunt down and execute collaborators immediately upon the recapture of Seoul.<sup>10</sup>

---

10. The analysis of the Special Order is based on Han In-Seop's paper. He considers the Special Order as the most unjust law since the foundation of the country (I. Han 2000, 174).

The JIC was formed in early October as the reckless executions of collaborators led by the police began to raise serious concerns, and the need to launch a “scientific investigation by an investigative agency” was becoming evident (*Dong-A Ilbo*, October 22, 1950). The JIC was established based on the agreement of the Ministers of Home Affairs, National Defense, and Justice because it was deemed not appropriate for a single investigative authority to deal with cases related to collaboration (SPO 1976, 286-287). The JIC had its office in Donggwang-dong, Busan, and consisted of General Manager Kim Chang-ryong (commander-in-chief of the Counter Intelligence Corps [CIC]), Oh Je-do (prosecutor), Jeong Hui-taek (prosecutor), etc., under the supervision of the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters. After Vice Minister of National Defense Jang Gyeong-geun reported the establishment of the JIC in the cabinet meeting held on October 17, the JIC launched a full-scale investigation that identified collaborators, sent them to the prosecutors’ office or the military tribunal, or acquitted them.

Shin Seong-mo, Minister of National Defense, classified those who remained in Seoul into three categories. The first group included military personnel, police officers, and cultural figures that had escaped and maneuvered behind the scenes. Those who had escaped and barely survived made up the second group, and those who had unintentionally collaborated with North Korean communists constituted the third group. The minister announced the government’s firm stance to unconditionally arrest the first and second groups and punish the third group. He also stressed that the government would forgive those who had been drafted into the Korean Volunteer Corps (Joseon Uiyonggun). Oh Je-do, prosecutor of the JIC, provided specific lists of those who would be subject to punishment. Included were those who had carried out underground activities before the war with both the Workers’ Party of North Korea (Bungnodang) and the Workers’ Party of South Korea (Namnodang) and collaborated with the North, those who had been released from prison and collaborated with the North, those who were considered to be an *impure element* by the NGL and had collaborated with the North, those who did not do any good for South Korea as neutrals (*jungganpa*) and had collaborated with the

North, and those who had come from North Korea as a spy. According to Kim Chang-ryong, those eligible for court-martial included those who had worked as a member of the Workers' Party of South Korea even before the Korean War and accused of intentionally leaking military secrets. Those to be brought to the district prosecutors' office included those who had worked not very actively, regardless of whether their activities were intentional or unintentional, while those to be released were those who had blindly worked just to survive. The gravity of the offences of those arrested, therefore, determined whether they were brought to court-martial, the district prosecutors' office, etc. Although there existed principles and standards in classifying collaborators, as mentioned above, detailed instructions for their application in the real field were not provided. For instance, the criteria sent by the Ministry of Culture and Education to each public school to single out the collaborators among teachers were as follows (*Seoul Shinmun*, November 21, 1950):

- (1) Those who were involved with North Korean puppet groups (including the puppet government and social organizations).
- (2) Those who served as a senior official (manager of general affairs or higher) throughout the period occupied by North Korean communists or were actively engaged as a senior official.
- (3) Those who fled to the south to avoid the attack by North Korea (or had served in a region not attacked by any of North Korea's puppet groups) and served the interests of any North Korean puppet groups.
- (4) Those that excessively flattered or enthusiastically collaborated with any North Korean puppet group.

However, the criteria were based on subjective and vague terms, such as "those who were actively engaged," "those who had served the interests of the enemy (the puppet group)," "those who had excessively flattered," or "those who had enthusiastically collaborated." Worse yet, the ruling could even be influenced by favoritism, personal connections, or backdoor deals due to the vague provisions of the

Special Order. The provisions were significantly different from those enacted by the Constitutional Assembly to punish those who had collaborated with the Japanese colonizers during the Japanese colonial era. The standards prescribed to single out the pro-Japanese collaborators were clear and specific while the provisions to identify those who had collaborated with North Korean communists were vague and ambiguous.<sup>11</sup>

### *Conflict between the Rhee Administration and the National Assembly*

At the 24th plenary session held on September 17, 1950, the National Assembly began discussing the bill for the screening of those suspected of having collaborated with the North Korean forces as well as the bill on the prohibition of private punishment. However, the Act on the Special Disposition of Suspected Collaborators (*buyeok haengwi teukbyeol cheoribeop*; hereafter “Act on Suspected Collaborators”) did not pass the National Assembly until December 1, due to a political conflict between the Rhee administration and the National Assembly. Although both of the bills were revised and approved by the 30th plenary session of the National Assembly, held on September 29, President Rhee vetoed them on October 12. The National Assembly, however, overwhelmingly voted down the government’s review request on November 13, supported the original bill, and sent it back to the government. The government had no option but to promulgate the law on December 1, 1950.

Many executions of collaborators had already taken place by the time the law was officially promulgated. Although the country was in

---

11. According to the Public Security Office (PSO) of the Ministry of Home Affairs (1958, 268-269), collaborators were categorized into four groups. They were basically divided into active and inactive elements. The former included ideological sympathizers and those who used violence, while the latter included those who had anti-government sentiments, those who blindly followed others, and those who acted passively. These definitions were also abstract and vague. It seems that they were a categorization based on the author’s personal opinion rather than an official criteria actually applied at the time.

a state of war, arrests and executions of those convicted as traitors had been carried out before the promulgation of the relevant laws. In this context, the enactment of the Act on Suspected Collaborators provided legitimacy for the screening of collaborators by providing a legal basis and overcoming the limitations of the Special Order.

Article 1 of the Act on Suspected Collaborators (Law No. 157) sets forth the purpose of the act as a means “to deal with those who collaborated with the enemy in a region occupied by the enemy during the occupation period.” Articles 2 and 3 of the act provide detailed descriptions of the cases to which commutation or exemption of punishment is to be applied. Accordingly, commutation or exemption of punishment applied to those who unavoidably collaborated “under pressure by the North Korean forces,” those who gave shelter to military personnel, police officers, or public servants, and those who turned themselves in to the North Korean forces. Article 3, in particular, exempts from punishment those who blindly followed the crowds, joined the NGL, or performed related duties. In this sense, the law was more of a remedy based on tolerationism (IMHC 1951, 68-69).

The foregoing parts of the act reflect the efforts of the second National Assembly both to protect human rights and to hold the Rhee administration in check. This was the result of the conflict between the National Assembly’s strong belief in human rights and the government’s draconianism. Here, a closer look at some of the National Assembly’s members who opposed the Rhee administration is warranted. In the general election held on May 30, shortly before the outbreak of the Korean War, moderate nationalists made great advances while far right-wing conservatives suffered a defeat (Seo 2007, 89).

The second National Assembly’s strong belief in human rights was clearly reflected in the Act on the Prevention of Private Punishment (*sahyeong geumjibeop*), which was passed together with the Act on Suspected Collaborators.<sup>12</sup> The carrying out of death sentences by

---

12. Han Jong-Il’s paper (1974) is one of the studies that shed light on the Act on the Prohibition of Private Punishment and the Act on Suspected Collaborators as being the first laws to protect civil rights, particularly protecting the basic rights of the people from abuse by governmental authority in the name of national security.

anticommunist organizations, immediately following the recapture of Seoul, served as a critical factor that threatened and disrupted law and social order. With the police force in disorder, right-wing social groups, including the Korean National Association (Gungminhoe) and Korean Youth Association (Daehan Cheongnyeondan), maintained public order and security. However, they tried to punish the collaborators at their own discretion. It was more of an emotional punishment than a fair trial. Kim Chang-ryong recognized that small subgroups in rural areas, such as the Local Defense Corps (Hyangto Bangwidae) or Korean Youth Association, were carrying out punishments against collaborators at their own discretion, and believed that they had been persuaded to do so by communists, thus passing the responsibility to the communists.

The amendment to the Special Order, which was passed on November 23 by the National Assembly, significantly lowered the sentence severity and guaranteed retrials for more careful and fair judgments. The minimum sentence was lowered to two years of imprisonment from ten years and, therefore, those who blindly collaborated or were forced to do so just to survive were able to receive a generous ruling. The amendment to Article 9 of the order allowed the accused to apply for a retrial and, thus, the limitations of the single-trial system was addressed. Moreover, the 20-day period allowed between trial and indictment was changed to 30 days and more time was given to make a final ruling (from 40 days to within 60) to guarantee the fairness of the judgment. Above all, the National Assembly tried to make it clear that the purport of the amendment was to protect human rights. However, the government asked the National Assembly to review the decision, citing the insufficient number of judges as the reason. The government believed that, under these conditions, the amendment would lead to the abuse of human rights rather than their protection. In response, the National Assembly dismissed the review request (115 ayes and one nay out of 124 possible votes),<sup>13</sup> claiming that the government should be required to increase the number

---

13. National Assembly, 10th sess., January 18, 1951, stenographic record.

of judges to effectively implement the amendment. With this, the amendment was promulgated as Law No. 175 on January 30, 1951, and soon after, on February 7, the revised law guaranteeing the right of those sentenced to ten years of imprisonment or longer to apply for a retrial was announced.

In 1952, public sentiment against the Special Order began to grow. One year had already passed since the period allowed for appeals (90 days from the date of promulgation), and public opinion that the Special Order could be replaced by Criminal Law or National Security Law (*gukga boanbeop*) began to prevail. Thus, the National Assembly tabled a bill to abolish the Special Order on June 5 and approved the bill by a vote of 86 to 0, which gave the chance to apply for a retrial to those who had received a final ruling.

The Rhee administration and the National Assembly also confronted each other over whether to keep or disband the JIC. With the four prosecutors, including Oh Je-do, who had been dispatched to the JIC, returning to the Seoul District Prosecutors' Office as of April 10, 1951, a rumor about the possibility of the JIC being disbanded spread. However, Kim Chang-ryong denied the rumor. President Rhee also showed his commitment to keeping the JIC (NIKH 2006, vol. 21, 178). On the other hand, the National Assembly engaged in heated discussions over the unlawfulness of the JIC and the need to unify several investigative bodies into one. A resolution on the disbandment of the JIC was submitted by 28 members of the National Assembly, including Kim Jong-sun, on April 29. They pointed out that "The JIC was established with no legal basis. It has served as an independent institution rather than providing substantial cooperation in criminal investigations. Moreover, it went far beyond its original purpose and exceeded its authority. For this reason, the disbanding of the JIC is unavoidable." The resolution was passed by a vote of 94 to one in the 71st plenary session held on May 2 (*Daegu Maeil*, May 4, 1951). As a result, a disbanding ceremony was held on May 23, 1951.

## Execution of Collaborators

### *Scale of Arrests and Dispositions*

The roundup of the collaborators began the day following the recapture of Seoul. According to the reports prepared by the American Embassy in Korea, the JIC, led by Kim Chang-ryong, Oh Je-do, and Yi Ik-hun, arrested about 7,000 people suspected of being collaborators during the period from September 28 to October 16.<sup>14</sup> The JIC announced on October 29 that it had completed investigations of 9,984 cases from October 13 to 28, and of those 4,307 cases were found not guilty and discharged. These included 790 cases sent to a court-martial, 4,757 cases brought to the district prosecutors' office, and 130 cases sent to the military police. This high rate of release shows how indiscriminate and reckless the roundup was. Kim Chang-ryong also acknowledged that "public order and security was disturbed due mainly to the indiscriminate arrests by the Peace Preservation Corps (Chiandae), the Voluntary Security Corps (Jawidae), etc., in the name of cleansing the red elements" (*Kyunghyang Shinmun*, October 30, 1950). According to the announcement made by the Ministry of Home Affairs on November 15, the number of people arrested within Seoul had doubled in a month. The total number of suspected collaborators arrested during the 47 days from September 28 to November 13 reached 55,909 across the country (in addition, those who turned themselves in numbered 26,300). Among these, those sent to the district prosecutors' office totaled 12,377, those sent to martial courts 1,267, and those under examination 25,700. Those found not guilty and released numbered 15,891 (*Kyunghyang Shinmun*, November 16, 1950).<sup>15</sup> The detailed statistics on the arrests, referrals, and releases is as follows:

---

14. October 20, 1950, no. 281, 795.00/10-2050, RG 59, NARA (recited from Kim Gi-Jin 2006). NARA data hereinafter is based on this.

15. The statistics might not be accurate.

Table 1. Roundup of Suspected Collaborators for 47 Days Following the Recapture of Seoul (September 28–November 13, 1950)

Region	Arrests (%)*	Cases sent to the district prosecutors' office (%)**	Releases after investigation (%)**
Seoul	13,948 (25.3)	5,466 (39.1)	3,153 (22.6)
Gyeonggi	11,129 (20.2)	2,373 (21.3)	3,136 (28.1)
Gangwon	2,169 (3.9)	804 (37.0)	–
Chungnam	11,993 (21.4)	–	2,312 (19.2)
Chungbuk	955 (1.7)	–	–
Gyeongbuk	2,886 (5.1)	72 (2.4)	1,737 (60.1)
Gyeongnam	2,786 (4.9)	1,932 (69.3)	–
Jeonnam	2,780 (4.9)	132 (4.7)	1,041 (37.4)
Jeonbuk	5,596 (10.0)	943 (16.8)	1,874 (33.4)
Railway (Police)	1,667 (2.9)	653 (39.1)	637 (38.2)
Total	55,909	12,377 (22.1)	15,891 (28.4)

Sources: *Chosun Ilbo*, November 17, 1950; *Dong-A Ilbo*, November 16, 1950; *Kyung-hyang Shinmun*, November 16, 1950.

\* Each rate of arrests is the percentage of the people arrested in the relevant region out of the total number of people arrested.

\*\* The rate of cases referred and released is the percentage out of the total number of people arrested by region.

The foregoing data shows that an average of 1,189 people was arrested on a daily basis for 47 days following the recapture of Seoul. The reason why the number of people arrested was particularly high in Seoul, Gyeonggi, Chungnam, etc., was probably because these areas had been directly occupied by the NKPA. Twenty two point one percent out of the total were sent to the district prosecutors' offices while 2.3 percent were tried at a court-martial. Given that those sent to a court-martial were considered more active collaborators than those sent to the district prosecutors' office, the low rate of people tried at a court-martial shows that most of the people arrested had collaborated simply to survive. The fact that the number of people referred either

to the district prosecutors' offices or to a court-martial was particularly high in Seoul, Gyeonggi, and Gyeongnam (Busan) tells that there were many collaborators around the capital or other big cities. Accordingly, the punishment of collaborators was sterner in large cities compared to other regions. It is also worth paying attention to the different rates of transmission (either to court-martial or district prosecutors' office) and release rate by region. The rate of transmission in Gyeongnam stood at 69.3 percent, while that of Gyeongbuk was only 2.4 percent; the release rate of Gyeongbuk was 60.1 percent, while that of Chungnam was 19.2 percent. This shows that there was a high level of leniency toward the collaborators in the Gyeongbuk area while the sternest measures were taken in the Chungnam area. Overall, it appears that whether and how long the NKPA had occupied the region greatly impacted the different rate of arrest in each region. However, the difference in the transmission rate and the release rate by region indicates that there had been no consistent and clear principle or standard to deal with the suspected collaborators.

In the case of Seoul, the number of people arrested up to November 20 reached 14,441 (10,621 men and 3,820 women). Out of the total, 1,127 were sent to a court-martial, while 5,468 were sent to the prosecutors' office, and 5,468 released (*Dong-A Ilbo*, November 22, 1950). Kim Chang-ryong announced that, as of November 26, the number of suspected collaborators subject to investigation by police agencies and other investigative authorities was 16,390. This was limited to the Seoul area. Oh Je-do said, "I guess around 8,000 have been sent to district prosecutors' offices, about 6,000 released and some 1,500 sent to a court-martial." According to Oh, those brought by autonomous groups numbered about 7,000, those brought by youth groups stood at about 16,000, and those arrested by investigative authorities stood at around only 5,000 (*Seoul Shinmun*, November 28, 1950). This shows the rampant illegal arrest by organizations formed arbitrarily or randomly.

Other reports released by the American Embassy in South Korea give a more specific picture of the situation. The report said that the number of people arrested by the JIC as suspected collaborators in

Seoul and Incheon as of November 8 had reached 17,721. This is a similar figure to that calculated in Table 1. Disposition of the suspected collaborators based on the report is shown in Table 2.

*Table 2. Disposition of Suspected Collaborators in Seoul and Incheon (November 8, 1950)*

Total number of people arrested: 17,721	Released: 7,588			
	Transferred to general courts: 7,748	Trial: 1,609	Death penalty: 353	
			Life sentence: 239	
			Ten-year or longer imprisonment: 596	
	Less than Ten-year imprisonment: 188			
	Acquittal: 233			
	Released: 3,457			
	Waiting for trial: 2,682			
	Transferred to court- martial: 2,192	Sent to court- martial: 1,387	Sentenced at court-martial: 1,330	Death penalty: 713
				Life sentence: 304
20-year imprisonment: 6				
15-year imprisonment: 127				
Ten-year imprisonment: 134				
Five-year imprisonment: 46				
Released: 57				
Sentenced at central high court- material: 805	Released: 154			
	Death penalty: 232			
	Life sentence: 28			
	20-year imprisonment: 64			
	15-year imprisonment: 44			
	Ten-year imprisonment: 113			
	Five-year imprisonment: 77			
	One-year or longer imprisonment: 66			
Less than one-year imprisonment: 27				
POW (sent to M.P.): 193				

Sources: December 11, 1950, no. 561, LM 81, Reel 7, NARA; Institute for Military History Compilation, 1999, *Records of the U.S. Department of State, Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea: Korean War 52*, pp. 429-430.

Based on the statistics above, about 10.6 percent out of those arrested in Seoul and Incheon (17,721) received the death sentence (1,298) or life imprisonment (571) during the 40 days following the recapture of Seoul. Meanwhile, 11,489 were released (including 233 people found not guilty at civil trials), accounting for 64.8 percent of the total. More than half of those arrested were released, but a considerable number of people were handed extreme sentences. Those who were arrested as suspected collaborators had to go through investigations and trials before being released and such experiences served as a kind of ideological and political education for them.

Following is the number of death sentences and executions by November 23, 1950, based on the statistics of the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters:

Table 3. *The Number of Executions Compared to Death Sentences (September 28–November 23, 1950)*

	Death sentences	Executions	Rate (%)
High Court-Martial	475	65	13.6
Central High Court-Martial	169	96	56.8
Seoul District Court	233	161	69.0
Total	877	322	36.7

Sources: *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, November 25, 1950; *Busan Ilbo*, November 27, 1950.

About 36.7 percent of those who had been sentenced to death were actually executed. By each organization, the actual execution rate was highest in the Seoul District Court, which recorded about 70 percent. The press report in *Kyunghyang Shinmun* did not reveal the number of death penalty executions in the district courts. However, a report by the *Busan Ilbo*, based on a source from the United Press, said that 322 out of the 877 people determined to be guilty had been executed. In total, the number of death penalty executions by the Seoul District Court was 161.

It is very difficult to determine the actual scale of collaborators

arrested under the Special Order and the Act on Suspected Collaborators. However, based on the tables cited and fragmentary data, suspected collaborators arrested were between 150,000 and 160,000, including around 20,000<sup>16</sup> who had been arrested by the JIC across the country.<sup>17</sup>

### *Draconianism, Exclusionism, and Non-Citizenship*

The results of the general court-martials held from October 21 to 23 were as follows: among the total 125 cases, there were 62 cases of the death penalty, 14 life imprisonment cases, nine cases of a 20-year sentence, two cases of a 15-year sentence, 14 cases of a ten-year sentence, eight cases of a five-year sentence, ten cases of a one-year (or longer) sentence, six cases of acquittal, and two cases of transfer to a POW camp. One hundred twenty-five cases were judged in only two days. The rate of death penalty verdicts reached about 49.6 percent. Executions of 26 “malicious” collaborators took place by command of the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters on November 7. The number of death sentences over the month from October 4 reached about 180 and the first round of executions took place during the same period.

A close look at those 26 people who were executed tells us the following (*Seoul Shinmun*, November 10, 1950). First, the majority were in their 20s or 30s; 13 people were in their 20s, nine in their 30s, one in their 40s, and one teenager. Second, based on name, only one or two women were executed. Third, the occupations of the victims varied. While seven of them were unemployed, four of them were engaged in general businesses. There also were two farmers, two

---

16. The number of cases dealt with by the military police and the JIC from September 28 to January the following year was as follows: high court-martial (1,545) and local district prosecutors’ office (8,677). The total number of people arrested reached 18,253 (*Minju Sinmun*, January 29, 1951).

17. According to PSO (1958, 267), the number of people arrested was 153,825, while the U.S. Embassy said those detained on the basis of communist activities stood at about 162,763 as of December 31, 1950 (December 31, 1950, File 338-134, Box 19, RG 338, NARA).

office workers, and two students. Small traders and workers were in the majority. Fourth, most of them lived in Seoul (20 in Seoul and three in Gyeonggi-do province). Almost half of the Seoul citizens lived around the Mapo and Seodaemun areas. Taken together, many of those executed by the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters were *unemployed young men who lived in Seoul*. This could indicate that young male sympathizers had collaborated with North Korean communists during the Korean War period and served as an advance guard for the North Korean forces.

On November 9, 1950, Public Prosecutor Seo Sang-hwan announced the Leniency Policy for Collaborators. He also revealed that the prosecutors' office had accepted a total of 4,767 cases, among which 976 cases were indicted and 113 cases were unindicted. Among those under indictment, 94 were sentenced to death, 23 life imprisonment, 51 more than ten years of imprisonment, seven less than ten years of imprisonment, and three acquitted. The fact that 11.9 percent of those indicted (20 percent of the total cases accepted) received extreme sentences, such as the death penalty or life imprisonment (9.6 percent and 2.3 percent, respectively), reflects the *draconian* approach of the authorities.<sup>18</sup>

The draconianism exhibited against the collaborators is well recorded in a report by the U.S. Embassy to South Korea on November 17.<sup>19</sup> According to the report, the JIC was planning to conclude its investigations on 16,115 arrested by November 15. Among these, 7,030 were sent to civil court, 1,042 to a court-martial, 6,588 were released, 162 classified as POWs and transferred to the military police, and others were still under investigation. The results of the trials of those sent to a court-martial (888 people) were as follows: death sentence 451 (50.7 percent), life imprisonment 154 (17.3 percent), 20-

---

18. Seo Sang-hwan explained, "The considerable number of extreme sentences resulted from the government's policy to deal with grave crimes before others. Therefore, the number of minor sentences will increase" (*Dong-A Ilbo*, November 10, 1950).

19. November 17, 1950, no. 397, LM 81, Reel 7, NARA.

year imprisonment 37 (4.1 percent), 15-year imprisonment 66 (7.4 percent), 10-year imprisonment 90 (10.1 percent), five-year imprisonment 46 (5.1 percent), one-year or longer imprisonment 25 (2.8 percent), less than one-year imprisonment 12 (1.3 percent), and acquittal 13 (1.4 percent). The death sentence accounted for half of the sentencing. Adding up the number of those who received sentences of ten years or longer in prison, the rate reached 89.6 percent. This was partly because those with relatively more serious offences were sent to a court-martial. However, the rate of death sentences was still excessively high. In the case of the civil courts, despite the slow progress due mainly to a shortage of judges, the death sentence rate at 22.6 percent was lower than that of the court-martials.

The strong draconianism of the Rhee administration first came from the wartime. The administration was bound to have hostile *revanche* against the North Korean communist army, and this *revanche* was intensified as the administration projected this hostility onto the collaborators. Moreover, the strong anxiety that the administration might collapse was expressed in the form of strong anticommunism, and it started holding ideological trials. In reality, the excessive number of trials and the limited number of attorneys led them to process the trials with haste, which in turn perpetuated the Rhee administration's draconianism.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that the issues of collaborator and citizenship were connected. Kim Chang-ryong and Oh Je-do said in a press conference held on November 6 that the investigation to root out communists was moving on to its second stage, adding that they were thoroughly reviewing the citizen certification project. Under the project, if anyone was suspected as a collaborator, he or she could not receive citizen certification, and the list of such people was submitted to the investigative authorities. Those who failed to obtain citizen certification found it practically impossible to get a job in a public organization or government office because Lee Ho, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters, officially requested that employers conduct a thorough background check and ascertain the citizenship status of every job applicant with the community

service center (*donghoe*).

The government explicitly tried to exclude collaborators by branding them as non-citizens. For instance, in Jinju, the Jinju Police Agency issued a so-called *citizen pass card*. The citizen pass card represented a verification exempting one from suspicion of collaboration and was even regarded as a life guarantee certificate. The resident card issued by the Jinju Police Station later replaced the citizen pass card (Kim Gyeong-Hyun 2007, 378-387). Since those without the pass card were considered to be collaborators, the main purpose of the citizen certificate project seemed to have been to single out collaborators. By connecting the issuance of citizen certificates with the hunting of collaborators, the government tried to single out and exclude rebellious elements from society.

Furthermore, the government also tried to punish collaborators by controlling their means of communication. The Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters, in its efforts to strengthen its counter-espionage activities, compelled each household to register their telephone and radios. On December 22, Kim Jong-won, Commander-in-Chief of the Gyeongsang region, issued a manifesto on the mandatory registration of wireless devices, telegraphs, telephones, transmitters, short-wave transmitters, radios, etc., possessed by households and social organizations. If anyone concealed any means of communication without the proper registration and got caught, the offender would have the relevant communications device confiscated and also suffer a severe punishment befitting a collaborator. The government nullified the existing registration and issued a new one probably because it wished to toughen its monitoring of those who possessed means of communication. The political authorities, obsessed with harsh punishments against collaborators, tried hard to divide *citizens* and *non-citizens* by every possible means, and intended to achieve their goal in the form of control.

### *The Adverse Effect of Governmental Authority*

The then Minister of Home Affairs, Cho Byung-ok, issued a stern warning against police torture on November 21, 1950. He ordered a massive investigation and crackdown on “retaliatory acts of brutality based on hatred toward collaborators.” This was the government’s response to the rising criticism of the Korean police by the foreign media (*Dong-A Ilbo*, November 22, 1950). The statement by the minister virtually admitted that the police had used violence and torture against suspected collaborators. The State Department of the United States called attention to what the Korean government had done to those who had collaborated with North Korean communists and took precautions against any media coverage that could adversely affect public sentiment toward the UN coalition forces. It believed that the statement issued by President Rhee for prompt trials and the execution of collaborators encountered excessively negative feedback in the United States and other countries (ASS 1950/1976, 1567). Critics considered the government’s desire to punish and the police’s torture of the collaborators to be hallmarks of inhuman governmental authority.

Several problems came to the fore in the process of arresting and investigating the collaborators. For instance, a police agency released a suspected collaborator while another agency rearrested the same person. This was the result of a lack of communication between investigative bodies. Moreover, it was difficult to judge what was right and wrong in individual cases. Slander and libel in the process of hunting down collaborators had serious negative repercussions. For example, those who left Seoul to take refuge tended to regard the actions of those who did not or could not flee to the south as condemnable heresy. Some, on the other hand, were obsessed with the hardship and trouble suffered by those who remained in Seoul. Some of the collaborators tried to define collaboration by their own standards. Others tried to rationalize their acts of collaboration by saying that they were acting as an agent for the South Korean government. Some people tried to set up others, falsely accusing them as collaborators. Some even branded innocent civilians as communist *red ele-*

ments who allegedly sold the conservative *white elements* to the NKPA during the North Korean occupational period. Accusations of large number of people to be *red elements* following the recapture of Seoul made difficult finding the truth in individual cases.

There were also favoritism and interference in the punishment of collaborators. Those who worked as investigative authorities released or freed on bail their relatives or friends in many cases. Complaints rose that those who had money and power were released while those who did not were arrested, regardless of the gravity of the offence. In some cases, certain collaborators remained untouched for fear of possible revenge after their release (*Kyunghyang Shinmun*, November 15, 1950). Because some military personnel also unlawfully released collaborators, the Chief of the General Staff issued a warning to military personnel against such behind-the-scenes maneuvers and secret activities (*Kyunghyang Shinmun*, November 18, 1950). There were even instances of parents shifting their burden of suspicion of collaboration onto their children. The Ministry of Culture and Education, therefore, warned against such shameful behavior when investigating students' involvement in collaboration. Another problem was that some influential figures carried out campaigns to have collaborators released. They visited police agencies and other authoritative bodies to petition for the release of collaborators (*Dong-A Ilbo*, November 18, 1950). However, about 90 percent of those who sent anonymous letters or petitions were acquaintances of the investigators, which unfortunately meant that ordinary people did not benefit from such campaigns. Thus, favoritism and personal connections had a greater impact on the judgment of suspected collaborators than their actual political or ideological offences.

The property rights of collaborators were not protected. The Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters announced "an interim measures to dispose of the property of collaborators" on November 10, 1950. The measures stipulated that movable objects be taken into the city or county custody, while agricultural products be converted into money and placed in a special account in order to support collaborators' families for a set time period. However, the dispossession of collaborators'

houses (real property) was carried out in a more systematic manner. Following the government's return to the capital, the need for governmental offices or residential buildings increased. The Property Administration Bureau of the Seoul City government, therefore, used the lawful means of placing a notification on the houses owned by collaborators in order to seize the houses and then reassign them to war-time victims. The Bureau also issued temporary resident certificates for collaborators' houses as well as dealt with the disposition of their property. According to the Bureau statistics, the number of temporary resident certificates issued on collaborators' houses reached about 180 by February 1952, and the number of houses disposed was 46. Military personnel constituted the large majority of those who obtained temporary resident certificates. Once the government and citizens completely returned to the capital, the government planned to enter into lease contracts only with those who had obtained temporary resident certificates (*Jayu Sinmun*, February 23, 1952).

By not protecting the private property rights of collaborators and confiscating their houses, the government had stepped up its efforts to brand the collaborators as non-citizens. The government deprived *non-citizens* of their property and distributed it to *citizens*. From the perspective of the government, those who had acted to benefit its enemy—North Korea—could not be regarded as *citizens* any longer. Accordingly, the property they owned was treated as *jeoksan* 敵産 (enemy property) in the same manner as Japanese property had been treated following the Japanese colonial era.<sup>20</sup> The Release of the Property Reverted to the Government Act (*gwisok jaesan cheoribeop*) promulgated in December 1949 released and returned the property once seized by the Japanese authority, and this reclaiming process made steady progress even during the Korean War. Upon an increasing number of citizens returning to Seoul, fierce fighting over the houses formerly owned by the Japanese or collaborators frequently occurred. By July 16, 1953, the number of petitions that had been filed over

---

20. Seo (1999, 760-763) refers to the relationship between the witch-hunt against North Korean sympathizers by the extreme right and the property accumulation.

such matters reached approximately 120. Conflicts had increased between those who had obtained temporary resident certificates and the original owners who had returned. In some cases, the original owner was falsely accused of being a collaborator. Moreover, some military personnel and civilians attached to the military unlawfully seized the houses of collaborators under various pretexts, while some police officers took the property of collaborators. There was also a CIC fraud case in which a man set up a fake branch of the CIC in Hoe-hyeon-dong, Seoul, arrested people in the local area as suspected collaborators, and then released them for 100,000 won to 150,000 per person (*Seoul Shinmun*, November 29, 1950). Though he was later arrested, this reveals the extent to which some would go to satisfy their selfish interests by taking advantage of the government's obsessive punishment against collaborators.

## Conclusion

The matter of best how to deal with collaborators attracted people's keen attention following the recapture of Seoul.<sup>21</sup> There were many people who vociferously expressed their desire to severely punish those who had collaborated with the enemy. The hostility toward North Korea was projected onto suspected collaborators. The growth of this open hostility resulted in people ignoring the criteria by which a collaborator should be judged, the level of punishment, fact-finding, etc. Indeed, such behavior bordered on national fanaticism and hysteria. The government tried to take a firm anticommunist stance by branding all collaborators as *non-citizens* and eliminating the potential threat of communists within the South, while declaring the recovery of the national land and the protection of the South Korean governmental system. It was rather a stopgap measure rather than a rational,

---

21. The number of petitions regarding collaborations was 32, the highest among the total 164 petitions filed with police agencies located in Seoul on December 2, 1950 (*Chosun Ilbo*, December 8, 1950).

foresighted solution to the problem. As a result, illegitimate arrests and executions occurred on a massive scale. Moreover, there were also many problems regarding arrests and executions carried out under the legitimate governmental authority.

*Collaborators* during the Korean War refer to those who collaborated with the People's Army of North Korea. This could actually refer to the former members of the Workers' Party of South Korea residing in South Korea or the members of the reconstituted Workers' Party of South Korea. In this context, it can be assumed that the goal of the punishments against collaborators was to completely eliminate the organization of the Workers' Party of South Korea. With the arrest of Kim Sam-ryong and Yi Ju-ha, the central organization of the Workers' Party of South Korea was almost wiped out before the Korean War. However, local organizations connected with communist-sympathizers, including the Seoul City Party and the Seoul District (Gu) Party, continued their activities scattered across the country. It seemed that the connection between the city party and the district party had been severed following the recapture of Seoul, but the district party organization had survived (*Seoul Shinmun*, November 28, 1950). In this sense, the executions of collaborators in Seoul could be viewed as a mop-up operation against the members of the district party organization.

The punishment against collaborators during the Korean War was also used as an effective means of strengthening social cohesion during the war, to distinguish the potential threat of communists, and to arouse people's fighting spirit. The ideological conflict during the war changed public enemy number one of South Korea from pro-Japanese collaborators to those who had collaborated with the North Korean forces. Meanwhile, the Pro-Japanese Collaborator Prosecution Act (*banminbeop*) was abolished on February 16, 1951. The abolition of the act signaled that the focus of the *collaborator* issue had switched from being one of *nation* or *people* to one of *ideology*.

With suspected collaborators tracked down in almost every corner of society, extreme anticommunism was taking strong root in Korea, and everyone was forced to join the process. If they failed to find hiding collaborators, they had to report the whereabouts of those

who had any relations with the collaborators (H. Kim 2007, 316). Small groups called Gungminban and Aegukban were mobilized to track down collaborators. Each local community center and small group had a screening committee to single out and investigate suspected collaborators, and the members of the committee sent the results of their investigations to the investigative authorities. The government also required lodging facilities to register in the hunt for collaborators. This shows how thoroughly and actively the Rhee administration mobilized and used the existing civilian organizations and networks to track down collaborators.<sup>22</sup> One of the main drivers behind the hunt for and punishment of collaborators came from cross-monitoring and reporting enforced by the government. In this sense, the punishment against collaborators during the Korean War ushered in a period of extreme right-wing anticommunism after the war.

---

## REFERENCES

- Compilation Committee of the History of the Korean Police (CCHKP). 1973. *Hanguk gyeongchalsa* (History of the Korean Police). Vol. 2. Seoul: Republic of Korea, Ministry of Home Affairs, Public Security Office.
- Han, In-Seop. 2000. "Hanguk jeonjaeng-gwa hyeongsabeop: buyeokja cheobeol mit minganin haksal-gwa gwallyeondoan munje-reul jungsim-euro" (The Korean War and the Criminal Act: Legal Issues Relating to Collaborator Executions and Civilian Massacres). *Seoul daehakgyo beophak* (Seoul Law Journal) 41.2: 135-179.
- Han, Jong-Il. 1974. "Hanguk uijeongsa-e natanan mingwon-e gwanhan yeongu: 1950 nyeon mingwon beoban-ui sarye" (A Study on Civil Rights in the History of Legislative Politics in Korea: 1950 Cases of Civilian Rights Bill). *Hanguk jeongchihak hoebo* (Korean Political Science Review) 8: 63-86.

---

22. However, President Rhee's official position was that the government had forgiven the collaborators (Alleged Atrocities by the Republic of Korea, December 6, 1950, File 795B.00/12-650, Box 4299, RG 59, NARA).

- Institute for Military History Compilation (IMHC), ed. 1999. *Hanguk jeonjaeng jaryo chongseo* (Record of the U.S. Department of State, Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea: Korean War). Vol. 49. Seoul: Institute for Military History Compilation.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1951. *Hanguk jeollan ilnyeoni* (One Year of the Korean War). Seoul: Republic of Korea, Ministry of National Defense.
- Kim, Deuk-Jung. 2010. "Hanguk jeonjaeng jeonhu jeongchibeom gwallyeon beopje-ui seongnip-gwa unyeong" (The Establishment and Operation of Political Prisoner Laws during the Korean War). In *Jeonjang-gwa saramdeul* (Battlefield and People), by Seo Joongseok et al. Seoul: Seonin.
- Kim, Dong-Choon. 2000a. "6.25 Jeonjaeng-gwa bundan-ui naejaehwa: jeomnyeong, subok-ui cheheom-eul banchu-hamyeonseo" (The Korean War and the Internalization of the Division: Occupation Reflections and Recapture Experiences). *Tongil siron* (Forum on the Reunification of Korea) 7: 54-68.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000b. *Jeonjaeng-gwa sahoe* (War and Society). Seoul: Dolbegae.
- Kim, Gi-Jin. 2006. *Hanguk jeonjaeng-gwa jipdan haksal: miguk gimil munseo-ui choecho jeungeon* (The Korean War and Mass Killings: First Testimony of the U.S. Secret Documents). Seoul: Pureun Yeoksa.
- Kim, Gyeong-Hyun. 2007. *1950 nyeon jinju, minjung-gwa jeonjaeng gieok* (Jinju in 1950, Civilian Memories of the Korean War). Seoul: Seonin.
- Kim, Hak-Jae. 2007. "Gukga gwollyeok-ui mose hyeolgwan-gwa 1950 nyeon-dae-ui daejung dongwon" (Capillaries of National Power and Mobilization of the General Public in the 1950s). In *Jugeum-eurosseo nara-reul jikija: 1950 nyeonda, bangong, dongwon, gamsi-ui sidae* (Safeguarding Our Nation with Death: The 1950s, the Era of Anticommunism, Mobilization, and Monitoring), by Kim Deuk-Jung et al. Seoul: Seonin.
- Kwon, Young-Jin. 1989. "Bukhan-ui namhan jeomnyeong jeongchaek" (North Korea's Occupational Policy against South Korea). *Yeoksa bipyeong* (Critical Review of History) 7: 297-306.
- Lee, Im-Ha. 2010. "Hanguk jeonjaenggi buyeokja cheobeol" (Punishment of Collaborators during the Korean War). *Sarim* (Forest of History) 36: 101-140.
- National Institute of Korean History (NIKH). 2005-08. *Jaryo daehan minguksa* (Sourcebook on the History of Korea). Vols. 18-29. Seoul: National Institute of Korean History.
- Oh, Je-do, et al. 1951. *Jeokhwa samsak guinjip* (The 90-day Experience of an Enemy-Controlled World). Seoul: Gukje Bodo Yeonmeng.
- Park, Chan Seung. 2010. *Maeul-ro gan hanguk jeonjaeng* (The Korean War in

- the Villages). Seoul: Dolbaegae.
- Park, Myung-Lim. 2002. *Hanguk 1950 jeonjaeng-gwa pyeonghwa* (Korea, the 1950 War and Peace). Seoul: Nanam.
- Park, Won-soon. 1990. "Jeonjaeng buyeokja 5 man-myeong eottoeke cheori-doeonna" (How were 50,000 Collaborators Dealt with?). *Yeoksa bipyeong* (Critical Review of History) 11: 172-198.
- Republic of Korea. Ministry of Home Affairs. Public Security Office (PSO). 1958. *Gyeongchal simnyeonsa* (The Ten-Year History of the Korean Police). Seoul: Republic of Korea, Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Republic of Korea. Secretariat of the National Assembly (SNA). 1950-1952. *Gukhoe sokgirok* (Stenographic Records of the National Assembly), 8 sess.-12 sess.
- Republic of Korea. Supreme Prosecutors' Office (SPO). 1976. *Hanguk geom-chalsa* (History of the Supreme Prosecutors' Office of the Republic of Korea). Seoul: Republic of Korea, Supreme Prosecutors' Office.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1972-1974. *Jwaik sageon sillok* (Annals of Left-Wing Cases). Vols. 9-11. Seoul: Republic of Korea, Supreme Prosecutors' Office.
- Seo, Joongseok. 1999. *Jo Bongam-gwa 1950 nyeonda* (Jo Bong-am and the 1950s). Vol. 2. Seoul: Yeoksa Bipyeongsa.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. *Rhee Syngman-gwa jeil gonghwaguk* (Rhee Syngman and the First Republic). Seoul: Yeoksa Bipyeongsa.
- U.S. Department of State. Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Korea (ASS). 1950/1976. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950 Korea*. Vol. II. Repr. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Yu, Byeong-jin. 1957/2008. *Jaepangwan-ui gomin* (The Judge's Agony). Ed. Shin Dong-Woon. Repr. Seoul: Beopmoonsa.
- Zhong, Shanzheng 中山正. 1983. *Angma-ui sontop jaguk* (Devil's Nail Marks). Translated by Lee Chang-Shik and edited by Oh Sang-Geun. Seoul: Mirae Munhwasa.