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Korean Democratic Party Statement on the Anti-National Acts Punishment Bill

한국민주당의 반민족행위처벌법 관련 담화

Kim Jun-yeon, Korean Democratic Party · 20 August 1948

Original Korean source · English translation, Gwangbok Archive

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Document information

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: Newspaper-reported political statement

Speaker
: Kim Jun-yeon (金俊淵), publicity director, Korean Democratic Party

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: 21 August 1948

Contemporary source
: Kyunghyang Shinmun (경향신문)

Textual witness
: National Institute of Korean History, 자료대한민국사, vol. 8

Text language
: Korean, including Hanja expressions

Edition
: Korean original and English translation

Historical context

The statement was delivered while the Constituent National Assembly was debating the proposed Act on Punishment of Anti-National Acts. Kim Jun-yeon, speaking as publicity director of the Korean Democratic Party, cautioned against excessively severe penalties and overly broad exclusions. His argument appealed to the breadth of Japanese colonial influence across professions and to the need to retain personnel for the establishment of a democratic nation-state. These are the speaker’s arguments, not independent findings of this edition.

The Assembly passed the bill on 7 September 1948; the Act was promulgated as Law No. 3 on 22 September 1948. The present source predates both events and therefore discusses a bill, not a law already in force.

Editorial basis

The base text is the National Institute of Korean History's transcription of a report printed in Kyunghyang Shinmun on 21 August 1948. The newspaper's introductory sentence is distinguished from the quoted statement below. This edition has not independently compared a facsimile of the original newspaper page; the Korean wording should therefore be cited as the database transcription of the contemporary report.

The primary source

Bilingual Text

Source reported on 21 August 1948; statement delivered on 20 August 1948.

NEWSPAPER INTRODUCTION 한민당 선전부장 金俊淵씨는 20일 오전 기자단과의 정례 회견 석상에서 반민족행위처단법안에 대하여 다음과 같은 담화를 발표하였다.	NEWSPAPER INTRODUCTION At the regular press conference with reporters on the morning of the 20th, Kim Jun-yeon (金俊淵), publicity director of the Korean Democratic Party, issued the following statement concerning the bill to punish anti-national acts.
STATEMENT — SENTENCE 1 "우리가 주의하여야 할 것은 그 처벌의 정도를 너무 과도히 하고 그 범위를 너무 확대하여서는 아니될 것이라는 것이다.	STATEMENT — SENTENCE 1 "What we must guard against is making the penalties excessively severe or extending their scope too broadly.
STATEMENT — SENTENCE 2 일제치하 36년 동안에 경제·산업·교육·행정·문예 등 각 방면에 있어서 그 세력과 접촉되는 부면이 너무도 광범하였기 때문에 그에 관련되지 아니한 편이 극히 적었던 것은 부인치 못할 사실이다.	STATEMENT — SENTENCE 2 During the thirty-six years of Japanese rule, contact with Japanese power extended so widely across such fields as the economy, industry, education, administration, literature, and the arts that it is undeniable that very few people remained entirely unconnected with it.
STATEMENT — SENTENCE 3 그러므로 그 문제를 너무 심히 추궁하면 矯角殺牛의 폐를 각출할 염려가 있을 것이니, 이 점에 있어서 국회의원 제씨의 특별한 주의를 요청하는 바이다.	STATEMENT — SENTENCE 3 If, therefore, this matter is pursued too severely, there is a danger of "killing the ox while trying to straighten its horns" (矯角殺牛). We accordingly ask the members of the National Assembly to give this point particular attention.
STATEMENT — SENTENCE 4 우리는 민주주의적 민족국가를 창설함에 있어서 모든 방면의 有爲有用한 인재를 기용하지 아니하면 아니 될 것이니, 너무 과도한 배제는 우리의 건국을 위하여 신중히 고려하지 않으면 안 된다는 점을 명심하여야 할 것이다."	STATEMENT — SENTENCE 4 In establishing a democratic nation-state, we must make use of capable and useful people in every field. We must keep firmly in mind that excessive exclusion requires careful consideration in the interests of building our country."

Textual arrangement: the newspaper quotation is a single paragraph in the source. It is divided into

sentences here solely for facing-text alignment; spelling, Hanja, and wording are preserved.

Editorial apparatus

Notes and Sources

Translation and editorial notes

1. Nature of the document. This source is a newspaper account introducing and quoting a statement at a regular press conference. It is not labelled a signed party resolution, official government proclamation, or verbatim stenographic transcript.

2. Bill rather than enacted law. The newspaper calls the proposal 반민족행위처단법안. The title of this edition uses “Punishment Bill” to reflect the legislative stage on 20 August 1948. The legislation was later passed and promulgated under the formal title 반민족행위처벌법.

3. The thirty-six-year period. The text says “36년” (“thirty-six years”). This is preserved without replacing it with a retrospectively calculated figure.

4. Contact and responsibility. The expression “그 세력과 접촉되는” describes contact with Japanese power across social and professional fields. The translation does not treat such contact, by itself, as proof of punishable collaboration.

5. 矯角殺牛. Literally “to kill an ox while trying to straighten its horns”: a warning that an excessively severe remedy may destroy what it is meant to correct. The original four-character idiom is retained in the translation.

6. 有爲有用. Literally “capable of accomplishing things and useful.” Here it qualifies 인재, rendered “capable and useful people”; the wording is part of the speaker’s nation-building argument.

7. 國會議員 제씨. A polite collective address to members of the National Assembly, rendered as “the members of the National Assembly.”

8. Source limitation. This edition follows the text made available by the National Institute of Korean History, which attributes it to Kyunghyang Shinmun of 21 August 1948. No manuscript, audio recording, or independent newspaper facsimile was used to verify the reported speech against its original oral delivery.

Primary sources and references

1. “韓國民主黨, 반민족행위처벌법과 관련하여 담화를 발표,” 자료대한민국사, vol. 8, 20 August 1948; reproduced from 경향신문, 21 August 1948. National Institute of Korean History, record dh_008_1948_08_20_0180. https://db.history.go.kr/contemp/level.do?levelId=dh_008_1948_08_20_0180.

2. National Law Information Center, 반민족행위처벌법, Law No. 3, promulgated 22 September 1948 (original enactment). https://www.law.go.kr/LSW/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=3398.

3. National Institute of Korean History, 헌정사 자료 DB, section on the 1948 enactment of the Act on Punishment of Anti-National Acts, https://db.history.go.kr/item/cons/level.do?levelId=cons_001_0020_0020_0010.

Suggested citation

Kim Jun-yeon (金俊淵), statement concerning the bill to punish anti-national acts, 20 August 1948, as reported in Kyunghyang Shinmun, 21 August 1948, transcribed in 자료대한민국사, vol. 8 (National Institute of Korean History), record dh_008_1948_08_20_0180; English translation, Gwangbok Archive, 2026.

Editorial status

Research edition based on the identified published transcription. Comparison with an original newspaper facsimile and confirmation of source-text republication rights are recommended before public release.

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