

“Liberation Space” and Times of Resistance in Visual Records

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Introduction

The “liberation space” (haebangkonggan) period was a dramatic time. It was a time when liberation, division, left-wing and right-wing, revolution and counter revolution co-existed. The joy of liberation from Japanese colonial rule and hopes for the new world came and went in a flash. Young scholars who decided to share their fate with the democratization movements in the 1980s began to study the history of socialist movements and modern Korean history. Although the “space of liberation” only lasted for less than three years, research in modern history yearned for a change for that period of time. Studies in modern Korean history focused on the space of liberation, or the “three-year history of liberation,” and the main topic was the history of social movements. During that time, this was an obvious matter and no one objected.

However, a lot has changed now. As we all know, Korean history was also immersed with postmodernism and new cultural history in the mid-1990s. Existing research on the three-year history of liberation has been criticized for proclaiming a bottom up revolution without including the voices of the principal agents. Although these studies claim to discuss the “history of the masses,” they were criticized since there were no masses or the formation of a mass consciousness in the research. Therefore

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scholars are required to write a new history, breaking free from the traditional historical narrative aimed at a universal history. Today, critical historical narratives contest the notion of a single historical perspective. Instead, they discuss the multi-layered colonial situation where multiple layers of time, the encounter of the traditional and the modern, the duality of modernity, and ethnic group/nationalism occurred and existed.

Amid interests in the new historical methodology, research in Korean history expanded beyond political history to include diverse topics and time periods. Research topics diversified, and scholars also began to concentrate on methodology. Scholars began to move away from focusing solely on written documents, and other historical resources such as oral records, photographs, and posters, began to come into use. Recently, a book on the analysis of Korean films was published as well, proposing that we need to focus on visual historical studies in the internet era.¹

A book written by Marc Ferro, who positioned film as a historical source and used films as an object of research, also offered a fresh perspective in Korean history. In his book, Ferro argued that the relationship between texts and images was turned around, and discussed the importance of images. He claimed that we come to reconfirm that images

1 Visual historical studies can be defined as a type of historical studies that study the creation and utilization of “visual documents” and “historical materials realized through visual images.” Even in historical studies, where there is a great emphasis on written texts compared to other academic disciplines, “scholars must focus not only on written texts but also on visual resources, and store and utilize countless visual records from the past and the present. Kim, Ki-d ōk, *Yōngsang yōksahak*, Saengak ūi namu, 2005.

Recently, in Korean history, a Ph.D. dissertation was published, which focused on visual documents as products that give a look into government institutions and their policy directions. By analyzing films as the main historical source, this study showed the characteristics of the political authority that regulated the popular culture, represented by films, and reconstructed the social characteristics of the time after liberation up until the 1960s. (Lee, Ha-na, *Gukgawa yōnghwa: 1950-60nyōndae ‘Taehanminguk’ ūi munhwajaegōngwa yōnghwa*, (Hyeon, 2013) ; *Pūllōsūro iknūn hanguk hyōndaesa: ‘Taehanminguk, jaegōnū sidae (1948-1968)*).

are historical sources and principal agents of history in a society where audio-visual media creates images.² In Korean film history, films are actively used in relation to history, but in Korean history, the relationship between film and history has only begun to be utilized.

In this context, there are two goals for this study. The first is to focus on visual records as historical resources. The main research object for this study is documentary films such as newsreels. Newsreels are often called news films, and Korea's *Taehan News* is one such example. Documentary films basically begin from facts. Although newsreels are short records that only reveal fragments of history, they are composed of elements that can reflect historical situations more than written documents.

All documentaries are “resources with a perspective.”³ Foreign documentary films that contain images related to Korea allow us to understand a foreign perspective on Korea. They show the motives of the country or the institution which produced the images, as well as the foreign perspective on Korean politics and society. Very few attempts have been made to bring news films and other documentary films into the field of Korean history because it is not easy to historicize visual records.

The second goal of this study is to reveal images of resistance in the space of liberation captured in visual resources. Discussions of revolution in the liberation space seem somewhat hackneyed today. However, whether passive or active, aspirations of the people of the time who dreamt of a better world deserve respect in our history. For scholars still asking the question “how can we derive historical practices?” on the brink between traditional history and a new critical history, the space of liberation presents an obstacle to overcome.

This study examines visual records of the three years after Korea's liberation from Japanese rule and attempts to expose images of people who

2 Marc Ferro, translated by Ju, Gyöng-chöl, *Yöksawayyöngghwa*, (Kkachi, 1999), 9-15.

3 François Niney, translated by Jo, Hwa-rim and Park, Hüi-tae, *Dakyumentöri ranmösinga*: “*dakyumenteoriva gü aryudül*,” (Yerimgihoek, 2012), 15-16.

resisted oppression. Also, I would like to note that this paper is not an attempt at writing a new history, but rather a work that began from the question, “To what extent can visual records be used in traditional historical studies?”

The Space of Liberation and Visual Records

Haebang News and Go to Liberated Korea

This study begins with an analysis of newsreels produced in Korea and foreign documentary films. Since newsreels directly deliver state and government policies, they are a medium through which we can understand the ideology of the producers. This is a major reason the United States of America Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) encouraged screening newsreels and produced them as well. Numerous newsreels were screened during the period under the USAMGIK, the “heyday of newsreels,” and the experience of this time led to the production and promotion of *Taehan News* after the establishment of the South Korean government.⁴

The USAMGIK upgraded the information agency, which was part of the Military Government Office, to the Department of Public Information (DPI) on March 29, 1946 to reinforce its publicity activities. The purpose and the direction of the USAMGIK’s publicity policies lay on publicizing the activities of the USAMGIK and guiding public opinion to form a bond between the USAMGIK and Koreans, and to spread anti-communist ideology. At first, the DPI imported and distributed American films and newsreels through dubbing in Korean and double printing. Then it gradually began to produce and distribute its own newsreels and documen-

4 Jo Hye-jöng, “Migunjönggi nyusü yönghwaüi gwanjömgwa inyömjök giban yöngu”, *Hanguk minjok undongsa yöngu* 68 (2011): 324.

taries.⁵

The first official newsreel that the USAMGIK produced, instead of permitting or commissioning Koreans to produce them, was probably *Sibo* (時報, “Times”), which began in early 1946. The *Sibo* series were produced until the end of 1947. Then starting in January 1948, a newsreel series titled *Progress of Korea* was produced and screened in theaters. This series was often recorded in texts and documents as *Taehan Chŏnjinbo* (대한전진보) or *Chŏnjin Taehanbo* (전진대한보), and produced until the autumn of 1950, when US Information Service-Korea (USIS-Korea) started a new series titled *World News* (segye news). Among 33 films produced by the DPI between 1945 and 1946, the *Sibo* series account for 26, which show the significance of this series.⁶

Haebang News (Liberation News) was the first series of newsreels made after Korea’s liberation.⁷ In records kept during the rule of the USAMGIK, different spellings of *Haebang News* exist in Korean: *haebangnyusû* (해방뉴스) and *haebangnyu-ssû* (해방뉴스). If changed to the standard spelling of today, they would both be written as

5 Kim Min-hwan, *Migunjŏnggongbogiguui ŏllonhwaldong*, (Sŏgangdae ŏllonmun hwayŏ nguso, 1991), 32.

6 *Sibo* (時報) has not yet been unearthed in Korea, but it is assumed to the same as the four episodes of *Korean Newsreel* series at NARA. In the opening title, ‘時報-公報部 製作’ is specified, and based on the English title found in the records at NARA, this series seem to be the same ones as *Korean Newsreel*, which was produced by the Department of Public Information (DPI) under the USAMGIK. (Kim Han-sang, “1945-48nyŏn Juhanmigunjŏng mit Juhanmigunsaryŏngbuui yŏnghwa sŏnjŏn: Miguk gungnimunsŏ girokgwan licheong (NARA) sojang jakpumeul jungsimŭro,” *Miguksayŏngu*34, (2011): 183-19).

7 Studies on *Haebang News* areas follows: Jo Hye-jŏng, “Migunjŏnggi nyusû yŏnghwaui gwanjŏmgwa inyŏmjŏk giban yŏngu,” *Hanguk minjok undongsa yŏngu* 68, (2011); Han Sang-ŏn, “Dakyumentŏri *Haebang Chosŏn ūl gada yŏngu*,” *Hyŏndaeyŏnghwayŏngu*4, (2007); Jang Sŭl-gi, “*Haebangnyusû* (1946) reul-tonghaebon naengjŏnhyŏngsŏnggi migunjŏngui tongchisŏnggwa Chosŏn inminui juchehwagwajŏng,” Masters thesis from Chungang University, Graduate School of Advanced Imaging Science, 2014.

haebangnyusû (해방뉴스). However, both spellings of the same series exist in records of the time.⁸

On August 16, 1945, Korean filmmakers of the Chosôn Film Company broke into storage buildings where cameras were stored, took the cameras, and captured the historical moment. Images of North Korea immediately after liberation were captured on camera as well. At the time, Oh Yông-jin, a script writer who worked for the Chosôn Film Company, was in Pyôngyang. He contacted Lee Jae-myông at Chosôn Film Company and requested a camera crew to record the historical moments, including the Soviet soldiers entering Pyongyang. Chosôn Film Company dispatched two cameramen, Kim Hak-sông and Lee Yong-min, to Pyongyang and Hamhŭng. They recorded images of North Korea—the Soviet soldiers entering Pyôngyang, the disarming Japanese soldiers, and the funeral of Hyôn Jun-hyök.⁹

The recorded images were unable to be released immediately because Chosôn Film Company was placed under the management of the USAMGIK. On September 24, 1945, with the establishment of Chosôn Cinema Headquarters (*Chosôn yŏnghwa kŏnsŏlbonbu*, or “*Yŏnggŭn*”), the USAMGIK allowed the production of films using Chosôn Film Company’s equipment and materials. Then after about a month on October 21, 1945, four films, two episodes of *Haebang News* and two special reports passed USAMGIK’s censorship and were released. Images from these films are abridged in *Go to Liberated Korea*.¹⁰

Go to Liberated Korea (*Haebang Chosônŭlgada*) is a film consisting of edited footage from *Haebang News*. In this documentary, *Haebang News* episodes, produced by Chosôn Film Company, have been edited to fit into two reels to show Japanese and Korean people in Japan the situation in Korea after liberation. It contains valuable images of historical events immediately after Korea’s liberation. The total running time is assumed to

8 Jo Hye-jŏng, *Ibid*: 335-340.

9 Han Sang-ŏn, *Ibid*: 222.

10 Han Sang-ŏn, *Ibid*: 222-223.

be over an hour, but only 20 minutes of the film remains today. It is a compilation of abridged episodes of *Haebang News*.¹¹

Go to Liberated Korea contains major events and historical figures from immediately after liberation to April 1946. It is largely divided into two parts. The first part includes images since liberation to the Moscow Conference in December 1945, featuring liberation, Soviet occupation, American military occupation, and the Moscow Meeting, in chronological order. The rest of the film, subtitled the “Reconstruction of Chosôn Culture,” features various cultural events, the introduction of political organizations and their heads, events held to commemorate the Korean resistance against Japan, Democratic People’s Front and Korean Representative Democratic Council of South Korea, and the first US-USSR Joint Commission.¹²

Haebang News also appears in Japan’s Nippon (日本) News. It was presented as a short clip of 1 minute and 15 seconds in length, titled “米ノ軍政下新朝鮮の動向 (The Trend of New Chosôn under the USAMGIK).” The film relayed information about the first US-USSR Conference in

11 On August 9, 2007, the National Archives of Korea showed visual records about North Korea, which it has collected from Russia and the US. At the same time, the National Archives screened *Go to Liberated Korea*, produced in 1947 by the People’s Film Company and currently in the custody of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, in a special screening program. The People’s Film Company (Minjungyŏnghwasa), which produced the documentary, was a company established by Koreans residing in Japan in April 1946. About once a month, the company produced *Joryŏn News* (Korean Federation News), which the film unit at the Korean Federation of Korean Residents in Japan had produced before, and planned to make various documentary films. *Go to Liberated Korea* was produced as part of such planning. *Go to Liberated Korea* was the fruit of film activities by Korean residents in Japan, and at the same time, it was an evidence of exchanges between the Korean Film Alliance in Korea and the Free Filmmakers Group, progressive film organizations in Korea and Japan respectively, headed by the People Film Company immediately after liberation. Refer to Han Sang-ŏn, *Ibid.*

12 For a full description of *Go to Liberated Korea*, refer to Han Sang-ŏn, *Ibid.*: 225-234.

1946 with the Japanese narration describing the clip as “the first newsreel that came from Korea since the end of the war.” In the film, the narrator explains, “The US representative A. V. Arnold and the USSR representative T. E. Shtikov are meeting at Dōksu Palace in Seoul. The conflict between the two camps is serious, and independent Korea has a long way to go,” while featuring images of the conference. In the catalogues from Nippon News, the video clip is recorded as “民衆映畫提供 (The Public(Min-Jung) Film Presents),” from which we can assume that the Japanese media directly used clips from episodes of *Haebang News*.¹³

Currently in Korean history, newsreels that have been mentioned in historical documents include *Haebang News*, *Military Government Office News* (Gunjōngchōng news), *Sibo*, *Far East Film Company News*, *October News*, *National Front* (minjokjōnsōn), *Me-de*, and *Progress of Korea*.¹⁴ However, only episodes from *Haebang News* remain in Korea. A total of 14 episodes of *Haebang News* were produced until 1947 by Chosōn Film Company,¹⁵ yet only four episodes, each less than 10 minutes long, produced in the second half of 1964 can be found.¹⁶

Debates on the perspective and producers of *Haebang News* are still ongoing, because the discovered episodes reflect the perspective of the USAMGIK, which was not typical of the films produced by the Film Alliance, and a point was raised regarding the possible existence of multiple producers of *Haebang News*. Based on historical resources that are in existence today, the producers were concluded to be the Chosōn Film Alliance, the People’s Film Company, and the (new) Chosōn Film Com-

13 “Nippon (日本) News 1945-1948” has been collected and is under the possession of the Center for Korean History at Korea University.

14 Refer to Jang, Sül-gi, *Ibid*: 28-29.

15 Han Sang-ōn, *Ibid*: 224.

16 As of 2005, Korean Film Archive has discovered and is in possession of 4 episodes of *Haebang News*: *Haebang News Special Report*, *Haebang News Special 2*, *Haebang News Special3*, *Haebang News Special4*. They were all filmed in the latter half of 1946. Refer to Jo Hye-jōng, *Ibid*.

pany.¹⁷

Visual Records at the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

Since Korean video recordings on the space of liberation have not been well-preserved, resources owned by foreign institutions hold a significant historical value. The US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) holds the most amount of visual records, as well as written records, about modern Korean history. Among them, major documentary films on the space of liberation are included in groups of films from the US Army and North Korea. The first object of analysis for this paper from records at NARA is visual records produced by the US military. The US military produced myriads of video records during the Korean liberation and the Korean War through a troop of camera crews. The US Army, in particular, produced an extensive amount of films, which belong to RG 111.

RG 111(Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer) contains the largest number of video records that have been produced by the US military. The records belonged to the US Army Office of the Chief Signal Officer. The Office of the Chief Signal Officer was established in 1866 to oversee all communications and correspondence activities of the US Army, and it was dissolved in 1964. Most of the recordings that were filmed by the US military, including the US Army, until its dissolution belong to RG111. Among them, ADC (Army Depository Copy) and LC (Library Copy) contain the largest number of recordings of Korea. These are also groups of copies that are often used by the Korean media.¹⁸

17 Refer to Jo Hye-jöng, Ibid: 339; Jang Sül-gi, Ibid: 7-11.

18 Recently, research is being conducted on footages of the Korean War filmed by the US Army Signal Corps in connection with methodologies of visual history. (No Söng-ho, "A.S.C. yöngsang jaryorül tonghan hangukjönjaeng yyöngnuüi saeroun ganüngsöng," *Hanguksahakbo*27 (2013): 101-132)

In RG 111, there are over 130 records dating up to 1949, including films about the USAMGIK and the establishment of the Korean government. There are over 1,000 visual records on the Korean War, mainly footage without narration. Most of the films are short, under ten minutes, and they contain images from the three years after Korean liberation, including the “signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender,” withdrawal of the Japanese military, ‘May Day,’ which is about the April 3 Cheju Uprising, the launching ceremony of the Democratic Council, demonstrations protesting the American-Soviet trust administration, and the launch of the government of the Republic of Korea.” Video recordings of the Korean War feature “battle scenes, soldiers eating meals, funerals, and Christmas events.” In addition to military aspects of the war, such as the Inchön Landing, questioning of POWs, signing of the armistice, and exchange of POWs, images of the lives of ordinary people are featured in the recordings, including “orphans, American food aid, and merchants selling goods in a devastated marketplace.”

The second type of records is films produced by North Korea. RG 242 (National Archives Collection of Foreign Records Seized, 1941-) contains seized North Korean films. Visual records in this group contain the establishment of the North Korean government, its relations with the USSR, as well as information about North Korea after liberation including its politics, economy, society, and life, as well as North Korea’s activities during the war: “Welcoming Event for Kim Il-sung immediately after the liberation, elections in South and North Korea, South-North joint meeting, election of representatives, factories in North Korea, farming villages for free distribution, an academic, medical, cultural and children’s exchange with the USSR, North Korean schools, daily lives of North Korean soldiers, etc.”

In an official document, North Korea pointed out the importance of documentary films, stating, “Autonomous documentary films are of revolutionary nature, and film documents are valuable historical records of the

[Communist] party.”¹⁹ This perspective had already been reflected in the times after liberation, and the North Korean regime produced numerous visual records as a propaganda tool. North Korea projected their perspectives on the liberation and the establishment of the governments in South and North Korea in the visual records they produced. Therefore analyzing the images and narratives of these films is closely related to explaining the division of South and North Korea.

The “Three-year History of Liberation” through Visual Records

Liberation came. The day was here. Just as Sim Hun wrote, “the day when Samgak Mountain will stand up and dance, when the Han River will turn and surge” finally came.

On the morning of August 16, 1945, youths, students, and citizens began to gather at Kyedong, where the headquarters of the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI) was located. “5000 people gathered together on the school grounds at Hwimun Middle School and listened to the speech of Lyōh Woon-hyōng, the head of the CPKI, cheering for independence. Wearing a white suit, Lyōh harangued a passionate speech, surrounded by people. It was a moment, full of overwhelming emotions about liberation and expectations for the new society for Lyōh, a legendary independence fighter, and for ordinary citizens of Korea.”

Korean filmmakers of Chosōn Film Company broke into the storages, took out the cameras, and captured this historical moment on film. They filled the tape with overwhelming emotions about liberation. This was the emergence of *Haebang News*.

The first theme of *Go to Liberated Korea*, “Liberation,” includes imag-

19 North Korea’s *Jucheŭi Kirokyōnghwa* was published by Munhakyeseuljonghapchulpansa in 1999.

es of “Lyōh Woon-hyōng declaring the independence of Korea, people shouting *manse* (hoorah!) in the streets (of Namdaemun and Jongno), posters informing people of Korea’s independence, pamphlets containing the words 米·中·英共同宣言 (the U.S·China·United Kingdom communiqué), the prison where political prisoners were released, the meeting of the CPKI, returning Koreans disembarking from ships, and Japanese returning home.”

The video recording contains images of “liberated Chosōn,” as noted in the title. Political prisoners are released, and the faces of returning Koreans are full of happiness and joy. The images reflect not only the people’s overwhelming emotions about Korea’s liberation, but also expectations of a new society through the activities of the CPKI. People’s faces are bright and their actions seem energetic.

Lyōh Woon-hyōng, who had been preparing for liberation, organized the CPKI on the evening of August 15 along with An Jae-hong and members of the Restoration Brotherhood (gōngukdongmaeng). The very first thing that CPKI did was free political prisoners. Lyōh argued with the Vice Governor-General for the release of prisoners from Sōdaemun Prison and other prisons all over Korea, and as a result, the prisoners were freed on August 16. Between Dongnipmun and Sōdaemun Prison, waves of people surged through the street, holding up placards that said “Welcome Revolutionary Comrades.” The large-scale release of political prisoners strengthened the structure of the CPKI, which reinforced the left-wing in turn.²⁰

At 3, 6, and 9 pm on August 16, An Jae-hong, the vice president of the CPKI delivered a speech titled “Roar to the 30 million people at home and abroad” at Gyōngsōng Broadcast Station.²¹ This speech had an influence over the establishment of CPKI branches and allowed people to

20 Sō Jung-sōk, *Hanguk hyōndae minjokundongyōngu*, (Yōksabipyōngsa, 1992), 200-201.

21 Song Nam-hōn, *Haebangsamnyōnsa I*, (Kkachi, 1985), 36-37.

think that the country was now in the hands of Koreans.²² The CPKI not only claimed to maintain public order but also to establish a new society.

The joy of “liberated Chosôn,” however, did not last long. With the advance of the US and the USSR into Korea, darkness began to loom over the Korean Peninsula. “US Military’s Advance” in *Go to Liberated Korea* includes images of a “line of US military; aircrafts dropping leaflets about the surrender; US military automobiles heading to the Government-General building; the signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender; the lowering of the Japanese flag and the raising of the American flag; the welcome reception for the Allied Forces on October 20; General Hodge, Military Governor Arnold, and Syngman Rhee at the welcoming reception; streets full of people shouting *manse*; placards and flags; and the US military marching in the streets.”

“General Hodge and the 24th Corps of the US military landed in Inchön on September 8. At 8 am on the next day, the advance unit of the US military on 11 armored vehicles drove through Kyöngin Highway into Seoul, and went to the Government-General building and to the Chosôn Hotel. At 9 am, 500 to 600 American soldiers went into the Government-General building grounds and set up camp in the East Square.”²³ On September 9, a ceremony for the signing of surrender was held with Japan. At 4pm, the hoisting of the Japanese flag was banned in the southern part of the Korean peninsula, and consequently the Japanese flag on the front entrance of the Government-General building was lowered at 4:30 pm. However the flag that replaced the Japanese flag was not the Korean flag, but the Star-Spangled Banner.²⁴

When images of the advance of the Soviet Union are featured in *Go to Liberated Korea*, the subtitle says, “ソ連軍来る (the Soviet Union Army comes),” and the film continues with images of the Soviet military advancing into Pyongyang on the train and the welcoming of the Soviet

22 Sō Jung-sōk, *Ibid*: 201.

23 *Haebang Joseoneul gada*.

24 Song Nam-hōn, *Ibid*: 96.

military at Pyongyang Station on August 29. Cho Man-sik, the head of the People’s Committee of South Pyŏngan Province, stands at the podium at the welcoming ceremony in one scene, and the film continues to show the meeting of the People’s Committee and Cho Man-sik, Korean police disarming the Japanese military, and the funeral of Hyun Jun-hyŏk of the Communist Party of Korea, who was also the vice-chairman of the People’s Committee of South Pyŏngan Province.²⁵

The Soviet Union declared war against Japan on August 9, 1945 and began their attack on the Japanese military in Manchuria. The Soviet military landed in Unggi on August 12, proceeding to Chŏngjin on August 16 and Wonsan on August 22. They then advanced to the south, disarming Japanese soldiers on the way. The advance unit of the Soviet military drove tanks into Hamgŭng, disarmed the 34th Army of the Japanese military on August 23. On August 24, Colonel General Chistiakov, the commander of the Soviet army in North Korea, arrived in Hamhŭng on an airplane.

However, the US and the USSR took different first steps on the Korean Peninsula. MacArthur’s Proclamation No. 1 used the word “occupation” instead of “liberation,” while Colonel General Chistiakov shouted “Hurrah to the liberated Korean people!” in his proclamation. At the very least, the Korean people had distinctly different impressions of the US and the USSR immediately after the liberation.

US General Hodge declared the implementation of a military government in South Korea, and on October 10, the USAMGIK Military Governor Arnold announced that “there is only one government, the USAMGIK, in South Korea.” This in effect denied the People’s Republic that the Koreans had established. On the contrary, the first step that the USSR took in Korea was different from that of the US. The Soviet military advanced into North Korea, accepted Japan’s surrender and the administrative authority disarmed and captured Japanese soldiers, police officers, and leaders of the administration, and thoroughly eliminated traces of Japanese

25 *Haebang Joseoneul gada.*

forces. Furthermore, the USSR recognized the People's Committees in every province, which were made up of local socialists and nationalists.²⁶

Oh Yŏng-jin, who was present during the filming of the US military's advance and deployment as well as the signing of the Japanese surrender, expressed "disappointment" when the Japanese flag was pulled down and the American flag was hoisted up:

The US military is unsympathetic to the feelings of Koreans who had been liberated after 36 long years of oppression. The liberated people needed heartwarming, emotional publicization of independence, but the American military had prepared nothing of the sort. Instead they displayed complete indifference. The proclamations made by USAMGIK were all about business, such as military scrip and public order. In particular, the announcement that the Japanese officials in charge will be kept in place for now seems to hint at the restoration of the situation before liberation, when we thought finally the leaders of this country would change.

How different it is from the moving announcement of the Soviet colonel general who declared "Korea and all the facilities and properties in Korea are all yours as of this moment."²⁷

John R. Hodge, who was assigned as the military governor of the USAMGIK, was a military man and known as a soldier's soldier. He was blunt and famous for resolving issues through direct approach.²⁸ Hodge conducted a series of affairs in an absurd manner, leaving the institutions set up under the Japanese rule intact. The two imperialist powers who had been former enemies turned amicable as soon as the US stepped into Ko-

26 Song Nam-hŏn, *Ibid*:105-106.

27 O Yŏng-jin, *Sogunjŏnghaui Bukhan-hanaui jŏngŏn*, (Jungangmunhwasa, 1983), 46-51.

28 Jŏng Yong-uk, *Haebangjŏnhu migukui Taehanjŏngchaek*, (Seouldaehakgyochulpanmunhwawŏn, 2013), 126.

rea.

Video images filmed by the US military are full of images of “the Japanese military peacefully withdrawing from Korea escorted by the Japanese police which was more than what a defeated country deserved, and the Japanese people peacefully walking about in Seoul, as well as the Korean people watching the US military marching in the streets and being pushed around at gun point by the Japanese police.”²⁹ On the other hand, in the north of the 38th Parallel under the Soviet Army, “Korean police are disarming the Japanese soldiers.”³⁰

The joy of liberation did not last long. The collusion of two external forces stationed in the Korean Peninsula, divided by the 38th Parallel, and the representatives of desire ended shaking up the situation at hand. Syngman Rhee, who returned to Korea on October 16, strengthened his position by criticizing the Soviet Union and Communism. This cunning politician knew exactly what the USAMGIK wanted. There was nothing he was unable to do in order to overturn the current political situation dominated by the leftwing and get what he and the US wanted. And it did not take long to reverse the situation.

On December 16, 1945, foreign ministers from the US, UK, and USSR arrived in Moscow to discuss the affairs after the war. On December 27, the US Secretary of State J. F. Byrnes, the UK Foreign Secretary E. Bevin, and the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs V. Molotov confirmed the decision of the Moscow Conference, and at 6 am on December 28 (local time), a communique of the meeting was announced. Key points of the communique included the “establishment of an interim government in accordance with the principles of democracy is necessary to make Korea into an independent country. For this, a joint commission of the US and USSR was to be launched, and the trust administration (of the US, UK, China, and USSR) was to be established within 5 years in cooperation with the interim government that will be established in Korea.”

29 NARA, RG 111, ADC 5264.

30 *Haebang Joseoneul gada.*

The part about the trust administration announced at the Moscow Conference was a huge blow to Korea in the winter of 1945. Waves of pro-trust administration groups and anti-trust administration groups filled the streets. Like Syngman Rhee, “老完固” Kim Ku moved the hearts of the Korean people through his anti-trust administration movement. It was a new world where anyone calling for “anti-trust administration” was considered a patriot even if he had been pro-Japanese before, and where anyone calling for “pro-trust administration” was considered a traitor even if he had been an independence fighter. There was no room for reasonable criticism or debate.

The US planned for the establishment of an interim government, structured as a consultative representative institution, around the time of the Moscow Conference. On February 14, 1946, the Korean Representative Democratic Council of South Korea (Democratic Council) was organized in South Korea. However, the Democratic Council was only made up of right-wing politicians.³¹

The recording of the launching ceremony of the Democratic Council filmed by the US military features “meetings and speeches of Syngman Rhee, Kim Ku, Kim Gyu-sik, and Hodge.” From the back of the conference room, Goodfellow, who was Hodge’s political advisor, stares at the people in the conference.³² It was he, P. M. Goodfellow, who had conceptualized the Democratic Council. The person who introduced Goodfellow as a political adviser to Hodge and MacArthur was Syngman Rhee. Among Hodge’s political advisors, Goodfellow had the most influence over the Korean political scene in the first half of 1946.³³ Although those dominating the meeting were Koreans, the US, which had a hand in the formation of the Democratic Council, is subtly present in the film through Goodfellow’s view.

After the first US-USSR joint commission fell apart, and the collabora-

31 Jǒng, Yong-uk, *Ibid*: 210.

32 NARA, RG 111, ADC 5766

33 Jǒng, Yong-uk, *Ibid*: 217-218.

tion movement of the left-wing and the right-wing began, the USAMGIK started to actively suppress the leftists. On May 15, 1946, the USAMGIK announced that the Communist Party of Korea produced counterfeit money, an incident known as the “Jǒngpansa Counterfeit Money Incident.” The oppression by the USAMGIK led to the search of the Communist Party of Korea headquarters on May 18, the suspension of *HaebangIlbo*, a newspaper published by the Communist Party of Korea, an attack on the office of the All Korea Farmer’s Union on July 9, an attack on the Seoul headquarters of the South Korean Federation of Trade Unions on August 16, arrests of Park Hǒn-yǒng, Lee Kang-guk, and Lee Ju-ha on September 7, and the suspension of the *Chosǒn People’s Newspaper*, *Chungang Newspaper*, and *Hyǒndae Daily*. Although the Communist Party of Korea was not considered illegal, it was practically illegal.

The recordings of the trials about the “Jǒngpansa Counterfeit Money Incident” show scenes of “Lee Kwan-sul and other related officials with their hands cuffed, waving at the people on the outside of the court while smiling, and a number of people who were unable to go see the trial, watching the trial on the roofs of buildings or from the hallways.”³⁴

The so-called “Jǒngpansa Incident” was an incident where the “USAMGIK suppressed the Communist Party of Korea on the grounds that the Communist Party of Korea, which was suffering from financial difficulties, requisitioned Chosǒn Jeongpansa after finding out that the original currency printing plate were there. The plan was carried out by one of the members, Park Nak-jǒng, who received orders from Lee Kwan-sul, the financial officer of the central committee of the Communist Party, as well as Kwon O-jik, the president of *HaebangIlbo* and a member of the party’s central executive committee.”

On July 6, 1946, Lee Kwan-sul was arrested. On October 21, the trial for the incident was held, and on October 24, the final testimony and the four-hour-long defense of the attorneys continued. The hearings concluded on October 21, and people showed interest in the hearing of Lee

34 NRAR, RG 242, MID 5114.

Kwan-sul, which was kept separate from the hearing of Park Nak-jöng and eight others.³⁵

Although this record belonged in the group of seized image records, it seems to be part of *Haebang News*. While the court was in session, Lee Kün-ho, a member of the Chosön Film Alliance who was filming the trial, was beaten and imprisoned; his camera equipment confiscated.

The beginning of the year of 1947 was also colored with the struggle between the anti-trust administration and pro-trust administration groups. The footage filmed by the US military on February 28, 1947 features a placard from the All Korean Students Association, a right-wing organization, which says, “WE WANT INDEPENDENCE OR DEATH (ALL KOREAN STUDENTS ASSOCIATION),” and in the building marked by the “All Korean Students Association,” Cho Pyöng-ok delivers a speech and inspects the police along with American men.³⁶

The youth and student movement organizations that Syngman Rhee and Kim Kurelied on was the All Korean Students Association, which was an organization that had been formerly known as the anti-trust administration student association. The financial support for them came from Inchon Kim Söng-su, to the point it was rumored that “Inchon’s pocket is Lee Chöl-süng’s pocket.” Cho Pyöng-ok, the head of the police department of the USAMGIK and Jang Taek-sang, the police chief of Seoul, protected the association as well. Jang often took the members of the association to the police station for “fair investigation,” but they were only superficial gestures to capture the leftists.³⁷

The records from the UK’s British Pathé also contains information about the struggle between the left-wing and the right-wing. “At the memorial event for the March 1st Movement which was held in Seoul in 1947, a number of images are shown of people participating in the movement, holding placards; citizens gathered in the streets clashing with

35 *Dong-a Daily*, 22th, Oct. 1946.

36 NARA, RG 111, ADC 6432-1.

37 Sö, Jung-sök, *Ibid*: 330-333.

another groups of citizens; the police trying to suppress the riot; American soldiers and Korean soldiers inspecting a building and taking people into the police station upon finding the Soviet flag.”³⁸ The first part of the images in the recording focuses on the “the National Declaration of Korean Independence Event, held by the right-wingers at Seoul Stadium on March 1, 1947, and the clash between left-wing and right-wing citizens that took place near Namdaemun and Seoul Station after the event.”

On March 1, 1947, commemorative events for the March 1st Movement were held at Namsan Park and Seoul Stadium in Seoul. The event hosted by the left-wing Democratic People’s Front, called the “Citizen’s Event in commemoration of the March 1st Movement,” was held at Namsan Park in Seoul. The event that was held by the right-wing in Seoul Stadium was called the “National Declaration of Korean Independence Event.” After the events ended, both parties went on marching instead of dispersing and clashed in Namdaemun. The two parties began to throw stones at each other, and a number of casualties resulted from the police’s firing at the crowd for dispersion.³⁹

The Cold War was accelerated with the announcement of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947 to stop the expansion of the Soviet Union, and the US-USSR Joint Commission was resumed on May 21, but it was adjourned in September.

The video recording of the US-USSR Joint Commission contains “Hodge speaking at the opening meeting of the second US-USSR Joint Commission on May 21, 1947⁴⁰; members of the US-USSR Joint Commission arriving in Seoul on July 7, 1947; Shtikov disembarking from a train; handshakes between the officials of the US and the USSR; and the

38 *Korean riots*, British Pathé, 00059536. British Pathé as over 300 visual images about Korea in possession. Most images are related to the Korean War, and many are the same as the materials owned by the US military. These films have been collected by the Center for Korean History at Korea University.

39 Kim Nam-sik, *Namrodanggyōngu I*, (Dolbege, 1984), 275-278.

40 NARA, RG 111, ADC 6256.

people watching them.”⁴¹ The reasons for the derailment of the second US-USSR Joint Commission were the same as the first commission on the surface, but it was nothing more than a step toward separation.

The event held on the second anniversary of liberation in 1947 was completely different from the year before. The left-wing and the right-wing held separate memorial events, and, in the recording, only one political force dominates the screen. “Placards and flags marked, ‘South Korean Interim Government,’ ‘Federation of Korean Trade Unions,’ and others” are overflowing in the streets.”⁴² It is the memorial event held by the right-wing. Meanwhile in North Korea, only the people holding the portraits of Kim Il-sung and Stalin held an event, which proceeded in perfect order.

The US transferred the control of the issues surrounding Korea to the UN on September 17, in an attempt to make the situation advantageous for themselves by dealing with the Korean Peninsula through the UN, which was under the influence of the US. This put an end to the decision at the Moscow Conference to establish an independent nation in Korea through an agreement between the US and USSR. The UN organized the UN Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) on November 14, 1947 and decided to hold an election in North Korea and South Korea based on the population ratio.

The UNTCOK arrived in South Korea on January 8, 1948, but the Soviet Union and North Korea refused to let the UNTCOK into the North, asserting that Korea “needs to establish an autonomous interim government after the withdrawal of the US and the Soviet Union militaries.” The UN held a Little Assembly on February 26 and passed the proposal to hold elections in regions where possible. The election was to be held on May 10.

The news that an election was to be held in South Korea was a huge shock to the Koreans who had been dreaming of an independent nation.

41 NARA, RG 111, ADC 6550.

42 NARA, RG 111, ADC 6602.

Not only the left-wingers and the moderates, but also the Federation Korean National Independence established by Kim Kyu-sik and the right-wing Korean Resistance Party headed by Kim Ku protested the election. All across the country, the struggle to protest the South Korean election began, and the protest that took place in Cheju Island was the most organized. As a result of the protests, elections in two of the three electoral districts in Cheju Island were nullified due to an insufficient number of voters. However, it brought on US suppression and a massacre soon afterward.

The US also captured images of the April 3 Cheju Uprising,⁴³ in the recording, titled “May Day.”

The film contains images of “the police advancing into a village on fire, and the villagers testifying about the fire.” It also captured images of “Cheju Island taken from an American military aircraft; Military Governor Dean; Civil Administrator An Jae-hong; the landing of Commander Kim Ik-ryŏl of the 9th Regiment; the US soldiers lined up; Halla Mountain; meeting between Dean and Cheju Military Governor Mansfield; Dean inspecting the sea and villages in Cheju; and Dean staring off into the Cheju sea.”

The Ora-ri incident recorded in this film was an incident where the police set fire on Ora-ri and killed the villagers, and then blamed it on the people in the mountains. With the attention of the world focused on Korea, the USAMGIK had to conclude the South Korean elections successfully, for which they needed the Korean military, police, and right-wing youth organization to suppress the protests. As is evident in Dean’s statement “the US needs Cheju Island, not the people of Cheju Island. We need to secure Cheju Island even if it means we have to kill all the residents of Cheju Island,” the US was behind the massacre.⁴⁴

Although most political parties and the general public, with the excep-

43 *Cheju Do May Day*, NARA, RG 111, ADC 7114.

44 Yang Jeong-sim, *Cheju4.3.hangaeng-jŭhanggwa apŭmŭyŏksa*, (Sŏnin, 2008), 128-129.

tion of the extreme right-wing, opposed the election, the May 10th election was enforced. Not only the left-wing and moderate parties, but also Kim Ku and Kim Kyu-sik did not participate in the election. The police, a right-wing youth group, and USAMGIK officials threatened those who did not vote in the election by refusing to distribute rice rations or falsely branding them as Commies. On the Election Day, the polls were guarded by the National Defense Guard, police, and members of a right-wing youth group. Most of the politicians of the Constituent National Assembly organized on May 10 through the election in South Korea were independent. The Constituent National Assembly was held on May 31 and the official name of the country was declared as the Republic of Korea. On July 17, the assembly proclaimed the constitution of Korea.

In North Korea, on the other side of the 38th Parallel, a People's Congress was held in Haeju on August 21, 1948, and representatives were elected. In the end, the Supreme People's Assembly was held on September 2 to enact a constitution. Finally on September 9, the Democratic Republic of Korea was established as a single regime.

In the recording of the establishment of governments in South and North Korea, the image of the Northwest Youth Conference is overpowering, rife with placards marked with "WELCOME GENERAL MACARTHUR," and 'The Back-Side of State (國後) with blood!' at the establishment ceremony of the government of the Republic of Korea on August 15, 1948." "Huge portraits of Kim Il-sung and Stalin" decorate the screen in the north of the 38th Parallel.⁴⁵ Half of the political force was missing in both the South and the North, and only strict and authoritative images remained on camera. This period in time began to be filled not with images of liberation and people shouting hurrah, but with images of division, where people regarded each other as enemies.

45 NARA, RG 111, ADC 7196, 7197.

Times of Resistance

Visual records are “visual newspapers” that provides certain images of events we did not personally experience. Visual images, such as newsreels, were filmed with a purpose, and therefore the intention of the producer permeates the records. Visual records about the space of liberation also contain the motives of the producers. The nature and the perspective of the four episodes of *Haebang News* do not stray from the policies of the USAMGIK.⁴⁶ However, newsreels are based on facts, and therefore it is possible for the films to contain images that the producer or the filmmaker did not intend to include. Amidst the whirlwind of transformation in the political situation during the time of liberation, political images surfaced prominently. Although most images were intended by the producer to be shown on the screen, images that the producer did not intend to show remain in the records as well.

In visual records of the space of liberation, there are points that deviate from the propaganda that the USAMGIK or the North Korean regime intended to portray. There is one such scene in the 10-minute-long episode of *Haebang News* about the “first anniversary celebration of the August 15 Liberation.” Although most of the film is about commemorating the liberation, there are placards and leaflets protesting USAMGIK policy at the event.

At the event held in Taegu public hall to celebrate the Korea-US coalition, people were asserting, “Give us one 石 of rice,” and calling for “land reform like the one conducted in North Korea” and “resumption of the US-USSR Joint Commission.” The presence of these placards under the “flags of labor unions” and the “flag of the Democratic Youth League” illustrated the strong commitment of Koreans to participate in protests even under the oppression of the USAMGIK.

Popular organizations including the Federation of Trade Unions boasted the power of the left-wing by mobilizing various protest rallies and

46 Jo Hye-jōng, *Ibid.*: 340.



events. As soon as Korea was liberated, laborers took charge of the factories, set up a management committee, and managed and operated factories. Based on the factory management movement and labor unions, laborers established the South Korean Federation of Trade Unions (FTU) on November 5, 1945, made up of smaller organizations by industry. On December 8, farmers also established the All Korea Farmers' Union (AKFU). The AKFU pushed for reducing the proceeds from farmers' income to a 3 to 7 ratio for certain Korean landlords who were not pro-Japanese traitors. In December, a Korean Youth League organization for women, called the Korean Women's League, was established. The Korean Democratic Youth League, in particular, was established on April 25, 1946 to succeed the Korean Youth League, and it was one of the major activist organizations for the Democratic People's Front.

Immediately after liberation, the problem that directly affected the general public was food. The amount of food was insufficient, and therefore fair distribution was of utmost necessity. However, the food policy that the USAMGIK implemented for a year after liberation failed. The Free Rice Market policy that the USAMGIK implemented in the beginning exacerbated the food problem and brought on starvation. The policy only benefited capitalists and landlords who already had money and rice, as well as the profiteers in the middle. Since the free market policy only

caused a food crisis, the policy was changed into a ration system. In order to produce enough rice for distribution, the USAMGIK implemented a quota system and forcibly collected rice from farmers. Moreover, the USAMGIK established a quota system for summer crops as well, collecting the only food available for the people of farming villages to last through the “barley hump.” The protests surrounding the collection of autumn crops in 1945 and summer crops in 1946 started outside of Seoul. Before the Taegu Protest in October, residents of Taegu rushed to government offices to request rations of rice as many as four times.⁴⁷

Survival was at the root of the general strike in September and the Taegu Protest in October. Although there were political strikes and protests led by the Communist Party of Korea, the root of the issue was the right to survive and the desperate attempt to make a living—opposing the “day-rate system, requesting food rations and 600 won per person for family allowances.”⁴⁸ While real income fell, prices rose. Combined with the food crisis, the situation for laborers further deteriorated.

On October 1, 1946, street demonstrations were held at the Taegu Station to protest against the USAMGIK which was forcefully suppressing the labor strike. The police opened fire at the protesters. The Taegu Protest in October not only spread over Kyōngsang Provinces, but also to Chōlla, Chungchōng provinces and Cheju Island, continuing for about two months. Women demanded rice; laborers demanded higher wages and more rice rations; students demanded the police be forbidden from opening fire and also for the imprisoned patriots to be freed.

While south of the 38th Parallel was embroiled in the trust-administration debate, in the north, a series of so-called “democratic reforms” was implemented. The key to this series of reforms was land reform. People had long demanded land reform, and even during the colonial period there was a history of struggle for tenant farmers. The “3 to 7 system,” which the People’s Committee proposed also incited huge pro-

47 Jōng Hae-gu, *10wwōlinminhangjaengyōngu*, Yōlūmsa, 1988: 96.

48 Jōng Hae-gu, *Ibid.*: 107.

tests from farmers, who had to give up more than half of their proceeds.

The North Korean Provisional People's Committee announced the Law on Land Reform on March 5 and carried out land reform. With the slogan "Land for the Farmers who Plow the Field!" land was confiscated without compensation and distributed free of charge. The landlord class, as well as the feudal landlord-tenant relationship, disappeared, and North Korean society entered upon a new phase. The land reform was supported by farmers, who were mostly tenant farmers, and it gradually began to put pressure on South Korean society.⁴⁹

In another seized North Korean record about the commemoration event of the March 1st Movement in 1946, slogans about land reform appears on the screen. The film shows the "speeches of Kim Il-sung, Choe Yong-gŏn, and the representative of the Soviet Union and the commemoration march." Placards that the marching people are holding, with slogans "Land to the Farmers," "Hurrah to the Communist Party of Korea, the Leader of the Poor Property-less People of Korea," fill the screen.⁵⁰ This clearly reveals the confidence people had in the success of the land reform, and shows the principal agents who enabled the reform.

In early 1948, after the UNTCOK arrived in Korea and it became evident that the election would only be held in South Korea, the South Korean Labor Party began protesting against separate elections and separate governments on the Peninsula. The South Korean Labor Party asserted the need for Korea to establish an independent nation without presence of foreign powers after the withdrawal of the US and USSR military from Korea. The South Korean Labor Party and Democratic People's Front started the "February 7th Struggle to Save the Country," "protesting

49 On February 8, the North Korean Provisional People's Committee was established. The committee acted as an interim central authority until a unified government was formed. The chairman of the committee was Kim Il-sung, and the vice chairman was Kim Tu-bong. The Provisional People's Committee began a series of "democratic reforms," the most representative of which was land reform and the nationalization of major industries.

50 NARA, RG 242, MID 5049.

against the UNTCOK scheming for a single South Korean election and a single-track government, and demanding the withdrawal of the US and the USSR militaries.” The struggle led to protests, demonstrations, students boycotting classes, leaflets, and uprisings.

Political forces opposed to the establishment of a South Korean government held a South-North joint meeting. On April 4, 1948, at the Moranbong Theater in Pyŏngyang, a joint meeting was held for the representatives of South Korean and North Korean parties and social organizations. Major political leaders, including Kim Ku, Kim Kyu-sik, Cho So-ang, Hong Myŏng-hee, Kim Il-sung, Park Hŏn-yŏng, Hŏ Hŏn, and 659 leaders from 56 political parties and social organizations from both the South and the North, demanded the withdrawal of the US and the USSR troops. They also declared that they will do whatever they could to stop the separate elections and that they would not recognize the results of the election even if the election in South Korea took place.

In seized North Korean records, information about the South-North joint meeting is relatively well explained in detail.⁵¹ This is a 34-minute-long video, filmed by the North Korean National Film Studio in May 1948.

In the middle of the meeting hall and the platform in the center, there is a map of the Korean Peninsula as well as Korean flags. Kim Il-sung and Park Hŏn-yŏng deliver their speeches, and images of the North and the South are inserted throughout their speech. Images of North Korean propaganda appear during Kim Il-sŏng’s speech, publicizing the success of North Korean land reform and industrial development: “land reform, “Confiscation without Compensation, Distribution Free of Charge” placard, peaceful scenes of people in the rice paddies, ripening rice, harvests, piles of harvested grains, building a thatched house, peaceful images of a farming village, an old woman and a woman holding a baby, laborers working in a factory, laborers waving aboard a train, etc.” Propaganda statements, such as “Laborers restored the factories with their own hands

51 *South-North Meeting*, NARA, RG 242, MID 5141.

and operated machines,” and “Fruits of the people’s economic plan will overflow,” in particular, attract the viewer’s attention.

On the contrary, negative images of starving South Koreans and posters that criticize the situation are inserted during the speech delivered by Park Hŏn-yŏng. The film features posters with statements such as “Give us rice; Let’s establish our own government that will give us rice. We need a true democratic government who will give us rice, clothes, and protect our rights. Let us fight off the reactionaries and bring about a successful US-USSR joint commission.” Also, people marching with a placard that says “Ration 一日四函食糧 (4ham of foods for a day)” are shown on the film as well.

This recording of the South-North joint meeting compares and contrasts South Korea and North Korea during the speeches of Kim Il-sung and Pak Hŏn-yŏng, emphasizing the superiority of the North Korean government. On the path to division, the film highlights tragic images of South Korea, implying the justification for the North Korean government and already anticipating the result of the competition between the North Korean and South Korean Labor Parties, represented by Kim Il-sung and Park Hŏn-yŏng respectively.

However, even the film that depicts South Korea’s tragic situation still contains a possibility of resistance that does not succumb to the crisis. Even under the oppression of the USAMGIK, the organizations of laborers, farmers, and youths still stand strong. Although these organizations were under the influence of the Communist Party of Korea, they were also organizations for the masses as well. They were not puppets of the left-wing political party but people who acted based on the real-life situations they faced.

Go to Liberated Korea captures the representatives of all organizations during the establishment of the People’s Committee. Posters from organizations and the image of the representatives giving speeches were alternately edited into the film by organization: an image of Lee Hyŏn-sang follows the image of a poster of the South Korean Federation of Trade Unions with the slogan “Factories by the Hand of Laborers”; an image of

Lyōh Woon-hyōng after the poster of the Youth League with the slogan “The Future is the Youths””; an image of Yu Yōng-jun after the poster of the Korean Women’s League with the slogan “Liberation of the Women””; an image of Lee Gu-hun after the poster of the All Korea Farmers’ Union with the slogan “All Farmers under the Flag of AKFU””; an image of Hong Nam-pyo after the poster of the All Korea Farmers’ Union with the slogan “Solidarity””; an image of people applauding after the Communist Party of Korea’s slogan, “Land to Farmers,” followed by an image of Lee Kang-guk. Then the placard with the schedule of the conference appears on the screen, followed by an image of Hō Hōn of the Central People’s Committee.

The voice of the laborers, farmers, youths, and women who were active in the political scene in Korea after liberation are silenced when the representatives of their organizations disappear. Immediately after liberation, they were full of enthusiasm and confidence, proud of the fact that they were building a new society. Such images became difficult to come by south of the 38th Parallel. In the north, their faces and voices still appear in the images, but at their center were the portraits of Kim Il-sung and Stalin, and their energetic voices as the liberated people began to stiffen in the presence of authority.

In an interview at Pyongyang, Kim Ku, who went to North Korea for South-North negotiations says, “It’s sad to see people shouting ‘*manse, manse*’ at the meeting, carrying a portrait of Stalin, since in the South people don’t carry around a portrait of Truman.”⁵²

“May Day,” which was held in Pusan on May 1, 1948, was a right-wing event attended by the “branch offices of the Federation of Korean Trade Unions.” The image of the flag of “South Kyōngsang Province Union of Women Divers and Sailors affiliated with the Federation of Korean Trade Unions” appears on the film, but the flag of the South Korean Federation of Trade Unions has disappeared. However, “posters opposing

52 Kim, Nam-sik, *Ibid.*: 325.

the May 10th election line the streets that tanks pass through.”⁵³ Images of resistance against the independent South Korean election are shown, wedged between the armed forces of guns and swords.

People who dreamt of liberation and a new society disappeared around the time of the division of the Korean Peninsula. There are barely any records that capture what remains. We can only identify the hopeful future they tried to accomplish through the remnants left by those who oppressed them.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to discuss the social aspects of the space of liberation, or the so called “history of three years after liberation.” The targets of analysis were visual resources, specifically news films and documentary films that were derived from facts. The research began with the question, “How or to what extent can visual records be used as historical resources?” In addition, this paper focused on the points that deviated from the motives and intentions of the principal agent that produced and screened the films, the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). This paper attempted to capture the moments of struggle for the right to live and of political protests to stop the division under the oppression of the USAMGIK, and ruminate on its significance.

However, it is certainly a difficult task to reconstruct history with short films that are only a minute long or less than ten minutes-long, containing various footage. Also, further progress in concretizing methodologies will be made when analyses and research are expanded to include documentaries in general. Therefore we need to conduct research not only regarding the content of the film but also the technological aspects of the film. It is necessary for scholars to continue to wrestle with the fundamentals of historical methodologies in examining the relationships between visual

53 RG 111, ADC 7194.

images and history, and the relationship between film and history.

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<Abstract>

“Liberation Space” and Times of Resistance in Visual Records

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This paper attempts to discuss social aspects of the “liberation space” or the history of three years after the Korean liberation from the Japanese colonial rule, through audiovisual records of the time. The object of analyses will be audiovisual resources, specifically news films and documentary films, which are rooted in facts. The use of not only written documents but also photographs, posters, and other historical resources is increasing in studying Korean history. This paper will reconstruct the space of liberation based on vivid audiovisual records of the time. In particular, this paper focuses on the points in films that deviate from the motives and intentions of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK), which was the principal agent that produced and screened the films examined in this paper. This study attempts to capture and ruminate on the significance of the moments of Korean peoples’ struggle for the right to live and their political protests to stop the division of the Korean Peninsula under the oppression of USAMGIK.

Keywords: Visual Records, Image, Haebang News, Resistance, Historical Materials

〈국문초록〉

영상기록물에 담긴 ‘해방공간’과 저항의 시간들

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이 글은 해방공간, 소위 ‘해방3년사’를 다룬 영상기록물을 통해 당시의 사회상을 다루고자 한다. 분석 대상은 사실(fact)에서 출발하는 영상자료인 뉴스영화와 기록영화를 대상으로 한다. 한국사에서도 문헌기록 뿐 만 아니라, 사진, 포스터 등 사료의 활용 영역이 넓어지고 있다. 여기에서는 생생하게 보여주는 영상기록을 토대로 해방공간을 재구성해보고자 한다. 이 글에서 특히 주목하는 것은 영상기록의 촬영과 상영 주체라 할 수 있는 미군정의 의도가 벗어나는 틈새 지점이다. 미군정의 탄압 속에서도 생존권 투쟁과 분단을 막고자 하는 정치적 저항을 함께 하는 순간을 포착하고 그 의미를 되새겨보고자 한다.

주제어: 영상기록물, 이미지, 해방뉴스, 저항, 사료

