

All the articles in this volume deal with the subject of forced prostitution and sexual slavery—whether on an organized basis in times of war and peace, or occurring as a marginal phenomenon alongside human trafficking and abduction. All the articles are based on the problem that women are used, abused, and mentally and physically violated. The aim of the book's academic articles, expert observations, and reports is to shed light on the suffering of the women in question in current and past situations. To do so, the authors analyze the causes and effects. By means of a well-founded critical discussion on these violations of human rights committed en masse, the present volume also intends to contribute toward critically evaluating these crimes and coming to terms with them from a political and human perspective. The publisher, the editors, and the authors hope that the book will also help those women who have been victims of forced prostitution and sexual violence in times of war and peace, by preventing the world from forgetting their terrible experiences. The goal is that these women's voices are acknowledged and heard within society, and above all that they experience justice.

This concern is particularly clear with regard to the section focusing on the so-called “comfort women” issue. These forceful and moving articles deal with the atrocities committed by Japan during the Asia-Pacific War, in conjunction with the mass sexual enslavement of women from occupied countries, primarily Korean women, in Japanese military brothels.

However, thousands of women and girls were also victims of military or state-organized sexual violence and forced prostitution in Europe during World War II, including in Germany under the Nazi regime, as several articles document. In Nazi Germany and the countries it occupied, large numbers of women were prostituted by force and sexually exploited on an organized basis in prisoners' brothels in concentration camps, military brothels, and brothels for forced and foreign laborers.

The present volume is based on a German-language edition published by Kleine Verlag in October 2006. This book aroused major public interest in Germany and abroad, not least due to its broad-based discussion of the “comfort women” issue. On account of this reception, we then received a great deal of encouragement and support from abroad, particularly from Asia, to publish a revised edition in English featuring important new material.

The academic analyses and expert articles are underscored by the current political dimension of the subject matter. There have been several clear developments in recent months toward a political solution to the “comfort women” issue. These include the political initiative called for by US Congress by means of Resolution 121, the planned hearings and debates on the issue in the European Parliament and the Canadian and Australian parliaments, and the World Conference held in Los Angeles in October 2007, where academics and NGOs came together to map out a joint strategy for finally gaining official acknowledgement of the mass sexual enslavement of girls and women by the Japanese imperial army during World War II as a violation of human rights. In the context of these developments, the immanent political profile of our book has come to the fore, making it a decidedly “political” book, as well as a work of part-academic non-fiction.

From the contents:

Ilse Lenz: *Thinking about Human Security, Gender Violence, and the Social Construction of Men*; Nivedita Prasad, Babette Rohner: *Human Trafficking in Germany*; Marion Böker: *Forced Prostitution in Europe*; Selmin Çalışkan: *The Work of medica mondiale in Combating Forced Prostitution in Bosnia and Kosovo*; Gabriela Mischkowski: *Abducted, Raped, Enslaved: the Situation of Girl Soldiers in the Case of Uganda*; Monika Hauser: *Wartime Rape—an Unspoken Chapter in German History*; Christa Paul: *Forced Prostitution of Girls and Women under National Socialism*; Robert Sommer: *Forced Prostitution in National Socialist Concentration Camps—The Example of Auschwitz*; Insa Eschebach, Katja Jedermann: *Sexual Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps—Notes on a workshop exhibition in the Ravensbrück Memorial Museum*; Hirofumi Hayashi: *Japanese Imperial Government Involvement in the Military “Comfort Women” System*; Rumiko Nishino: *The Japanese Citizens' Movement against Nationalism and Gender Issues in their Work Using the Example of “Comfort Women”*; Daniela Rechenberger: *The “Comfort Women” Issue: On the Treatment of a Japanese War Crime in the Japanese Mass Media*; Chin-sung Chung: *Discourses of the Japanese Right Wing Groups and the Japanese Government's Approach to the “Comfort Women”*; Mi-gang Yang: *The Role of East Asian Civil Society and its Response to Japan's Falsification of History*; Won-sang Han: *The Japanese Armed Forces at War and Their System of Sexual Slavery*; Won-sun Park: *Legal Disputes on the “Comfort Women” (Sexual Slaves) Issue*; Myung-sook Yoon: *Facts about “Comfort Women” and Other Victims of Forced Mobilization*; Chung-ok Yune: *Findings from 50 Years of Research on the “Comfort Women” Issue*; Son-ok Hong: *International Cooperation with North Korea on the “Comfort Women” Issue*; Mee-hyang Yoon: *Fifteen years of the Asian Solidarity Conference: Upcoming Issues and Further Solidarity for Resolving the Issue of Japan's Military Sexual Slavery*; Yoon-ok Kim: *The 2000 Tokyo War Tribunal—the Trial and its Rulings*; Barry A. Fisher: *Japan's Wartime Military Sexual Slavery and the Courts: Coordinating Legal Strategies*; Ok-cha Soh, Lane Evans: *Legislation on “Comfort Women” in the US Congress*; Jean Chung: *A Healing Hand to Japan: the Pursuit for Justice for “Comfort Women” in the United States*; Mike Honda: *House Resolution 121*; Jong-hwa Lee: *The World Conference on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery: Globalizing the Movement*; Hyo-jae Lee: *Looking Back at the Work of the Korean Council*; Young-sook Shin, Sung-soon Lee: *The Research Institute and the Halmonis*; Shin-kweon Ahn: *The House of Sharing—A Report on Nanum-ui jib.*

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Barbara Drinck, Chung-noh Gross (Eds.)
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Sexual Violence against Women and Girls

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This book is dedicated to the women who have fallen victim to forced prostitution and sexualized violence in past and present times of war and peace. Its aim is to help make sure that their terrible experiences are not forgotten, and their voices are heard all around the world. In 29 academic and expert articles by renowned authors on current and historical topics, the book deals with the global phenomenon of women's sexual enslavement. The spectrum of sexualized violence against women and girls addressed ranges from today's civil wars in Africa and the recent armed conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, through forced prostitution under National Socialism, to the book's main subject, the Japanese military sex slaves during the Asia-Pacific War. A political

discussion on this so-called “comfort women” issue is highly topical, as illustrated by the World Conference held in Los Angeles in October 2007, for example.

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