

revision of Manila
draft

Historical background to the system of "comfort women"

15/9/2000

Behind the system of "comfort women" were a) colonial domination of Taiwan, Korea and other areas and b) development of Japanese system of licensed sexual slavery and its introduction to and development in the colonised areas.

First of all, had there been no Japanese colonial domination, there would have been no making of such a massive number of Korean and Taiwanese women into "comfort women". The victimisation of those women in such a massive scale was made possible by the institutional violence that existed at the time in the forms of: poverty, and destruction of farming communities and families, both brought about as a result of the economic policy of the colonial rule; maintaining and reorganising of patriarchy as a convenient tool of control; the kind of education system in which deprived the people of poorer classes of access to education and so on. The racism / ethnocentrism deeply rooted in the mentality of the Japanese military and government of the time, to think that it was not favourable to have Japanese women as "comfort women" but it was all right to make women of the colonies as such, also contributed.

Secondly, the modern Japanese system of licensed sexual slavery was a product of re-organisation in the Meiji period of its antecedent, taking the European system as a model [but not exactly following it]. The Japanese women of the proletariat / unpropertied class were gradually integrated into the system.

As the state and military of Japan's Emperor system pushed its aggression and colonisation over Asia including Korea, Taiwan, "Manchukuo" etc., this Japanese system of licensed sexual slavery was also transplanted into those areas, and the local women in those areas were knitted into the bottom of the system. During the course of this development, the transborder routes for trafficking of women were established. In the background of the invention itself of the "comfort women" system was the existence of this already established Japanese system of licensed sexual slavery [a very organised system for sexual exploitation of women].

[end]