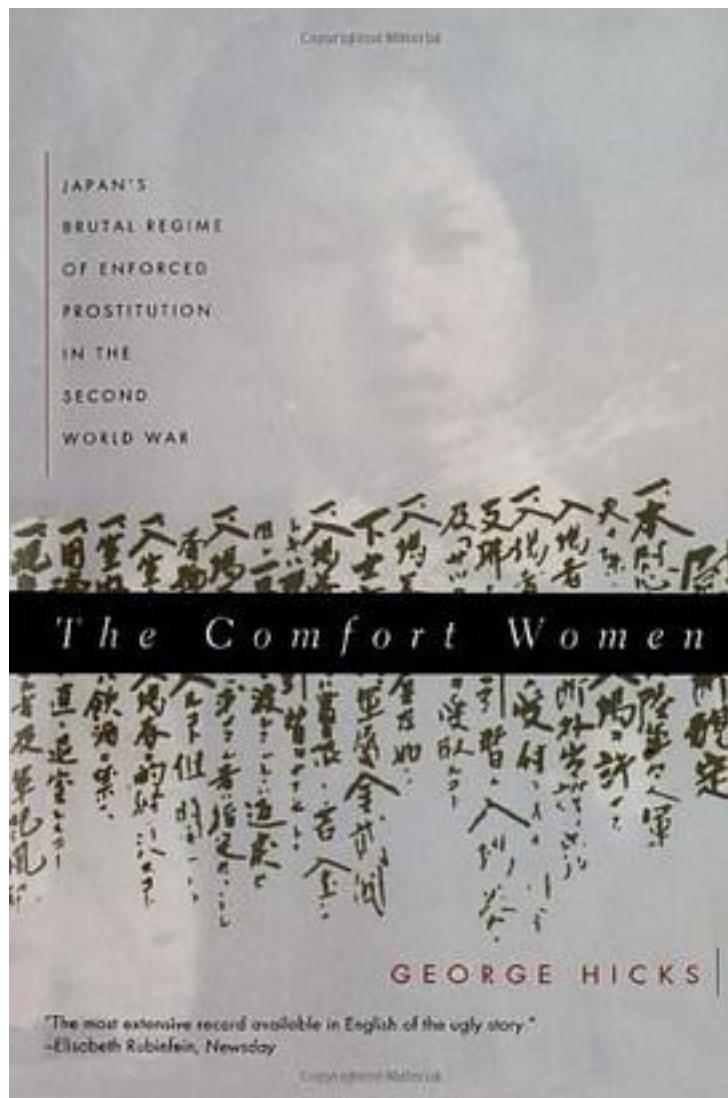


# The Comfort Women



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In an era marked by atrocities perpetrated on a grand scale, the tragedy of the so-called comfort women - mostly Korean women forced into prostitution by the Japanese army - endures as one of the darkest events of World War II. These women have usually been labeled victims of a war crime, a simplistic view that makes it easy to pin blame on the policies of imperial Japan and therefore easier to consign the episode to a war-torn past. In this revelatory study, C. Sarah Soh provocatively disputes this master narrative. Soh reveals that the forces of Japanese colonialism and Korean patriarchy together determined the fate of Korean comfort women - a double bind made strikingly apparent in the cases of women cast into sexual slavery after fleeing abuse at home. Other victims were press-ganged into prostitution, sometimes with the help of Korean procurers. Drawing on historical research and interviews with survivors, Soh tells the stories of these women from girlhood through their subjugation and beyond to their efforts to overcome the traumas of their past. Finally, Soh examines the array of factors - from South Korean nationalist politics to the aims of the international women's human rights movement - that contributed to the incomplete view of the tragedy that still dominates today.

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